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Newsletter



JUNE 2022

President's/BA Report— Isaac O. Tate

Operator Barriers

Due to the uptick of assaults on ATU Local 758 Operators, your co-workers, fellow Union members and passenger on passenger, I penned the following letter to CEO Mike Griffus.

Operator Shields

pres758 <pres758@atu758.org>

Tue 5/17/2022 8:13 PM

To: Mike Griffus <mgriffus@piercetransit.org>

Cc: vpres758 <vpres758@atu758.org>

CEO Griffus,

In light of the recent attacks on the Coach Operators of Pierce Transit and members of ATU Local 758 and a matter of safety, the leadership of ATU Local 758 is requesting that Pierce Transit install Operator shields that cannot be accessed (opened) by members of the public in carrying out attacks on our/the Operators. ATU is requesting this be a #1 safety priority of Pierce Transit and purchased with the or back-filled by the \$46 million ARP Act funding for Operating Assistance for sustained and safe operations within the Pierce Transit service area. In addressing this issue with Safety Officer Reese, he has responded with his overwhelming experience at "165" transit agencies wherein he has overseen the installation of Operator barriers and replied he knows of no shield that is 100% effective and the fact that the agency spent \$800,000 which I guess he figured was enough money to spend for the safety of Operators. The Union knows no shield is 100%, but there are more adequate shields that are available to protect our members your employees. A shield that can be snatched open by a passenger(s) is "zero percent" effective against "spit"? If it is zero percent effective against spit and can be opened by any customer who chooses to do so, and now is a known fact to others, how long before someone attacks one of my members, your Operators with something more serious than spit because someone believes that these shields are adequate to protect the Operators. No, nothing is 100% but it is better to be closer to 100% than closer to zero. The world (public) is changing every day. There is a rise in passenger-on-passenger attacks and attacks on our Operators. Don't let one of our Operators be the next victim of a serious or worse attack because of a mindset of we've spent enough money on their safety, and nothing is 100%.

The Union leadership is more than willing to work with Pierce Transit the Employer, in regards to the procurement of adequate Operator shields that can afford its members, your employees, an increased level of safety in the performance of their duties.

Respectfully,

Isaac O. Tate
President/Business Agent
Amalgamated Transit Union Local 758
6923 Lakewood Dr. W B-1
Tacoma, WA. 98467
Cell: 253-329-1655

And his response;



June 1, 2022

Isaac Tate, President
Amalgamated Transportation Union, Local 758
6923 Lakewood Drive W, #B-1
Tacoma, WA 98467

Good afternoon Isaac,

Thank you for your recent email and your interest in working with the agency to make sure our buses are equipped with the best possible security systems and Operator shields,

As you may be aware, Pierce Transit made the decision to begin installing Operator shields in 2018/2019. Substantial progress has been made with this initiative. As of today, of the 111 active buses in service in the PT fleet, 70 of them are equipped with the Arow Global security barrier. Also, of the remaining PT and Sound Transit buses in service, they are equipped with the PT designed barrier system that is geared towards protecting the Operator per COVID protocols. So while solid progress has been made, we know that our work with this initiative is not complete. Towards that end, we are implementing a plan to retrofit the remaining PT buses with the Arow Global security barrier. The timeline for completing this work is the next 12-14 months. Further, as new buses are purchased, they will have preinstalled the Arow Global security system. Finally, we are in continuous discussions with representatives from Sound Transit regarding Operator safety systems on their buses.

Isaac, in your email you also refer to a rise in passenger-on-passenger assaults and assaults on Operators. Passenger and employee safety has been and will always be a critical element in the daily operations of Pierce Transit. And while one assault is one too many, I do believe it is important for everyone to keep their eye on the trends taking place with respect to Operator assaults. With that thought in mind, I would like to summarize for you the number of employee assaults that have occurred within the PT system over the last few years.

2020 – 19 Employee Assaults	2021 – 17 Employee Assaults	2022 (Through May 12 th) - 12 Employee Assaults
12 Operators	12 Operators	5 Operators
4 Service Supervisors	2 Service Supervisors	3 Service Supervisors
2 PSOs	2 PSOs	4 PSOs
1 Maintenance Employee	1 Maintenance Employee	

*****ATU Assault Count (4) since May 12, 2022=9 Operator Assaults**

While this limited data set does not tell the full story, it does keep the issue front and center: Safety is a corner stone of our operation and thus everyone; management, employees and our two Unions, must be fully committed to doing everything possible to make PT the safest transit operation.

Thank you for your continued support,

Mike Griffus
Mike Griffus
CEO

May Union Meeting

We were able to schedule a Union meeting on Wednesday May 18th kudos to those that attended. Due to the ongoing COVID crisis we are still running into issues trying to find space for the meetings. Around Pierce transit as of this writing since April 18, 2022 there have been 56 new positive cases, and in Pierce County the case rate has gone from low to medium.

In the meeting was discussed the fact that my Union signed a “management proposed” **Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)** eliminating the Relief Operator position until the end of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) which expires on December 31, 2023, and my Union accepted. During the time period from May 2, 2022 Transit Operator Trainee pay will increase to \$25.29 per hour, and effective January 1, 2023 go to \$25.92 per hour. As I explained to the members in attendance some of who were disgruntled because of management’s action, these are unprecedented times and employers are instituting unprecedented hiring practices such as bonuses to attract workers. Pierce Transit is no different. However, while they are willing to spend more money to attract new hires, my Union has not softened its stance in regards to internal processes and changes that need to be made to stem the exodus of our present Operators, but also to keep new hires in the workplace.

My Union did propose across the board increases which management rejected, however accepted was that “70” Operators presently at Step 1 would be moved to Step 2 effective May 2, 2022. (Some Operators step increase were 11 months early) Every Operator moving to Step 2 received a memo to that effect. Unless as an Operator I am at the top Step, I along with the others will continue to receive a general wage increase on January 1st as well as a step increase on May 1st which will be “every one of us “70” Operators” new anniversary date.

In the aftermath of the meeting a member requested a copy of the (MOA), why? Because said member had received different information from an Assistant Manager whom she chose to believe rather than the Union leadership. However, if one wants to view a copy of the (MOA), it may be viewed in the Union office. Probably the better source for this individual would be to request it from the Manager whom she chooses to believe has her best interest at heart and share it with her fellow Operators that have become riled up due to a “baseless claim or issue”.

Remember, “loud does not make right”, and a Union is not about placating individuals. Your Union and your Union leadership’s job is to work for the good of “all” and as a Union we do not turn down the chance to better the working conditions of any of our members.

But beneath this I see something unsettling. I see members being upset with other members who are making more than they did when they were in the same position. Why? That will happen after every contract when new wages are negotiated. Members are upset or jealous of others that finally have a decent job with good benefits. Why? Isn’t that why you came here?

Members are upset that others are getting a chance to have a job to better provide for their families. Why? Why wish a struggle on someone else because again I’m thinking that is why you came here. For the first time in my career as an employee, Operator and Union leader/advocate, I had a member advocate that new hires take a test that was for a “promotional opportunity”, that they were not successful in passing. Why? This test is not required to become an Operator. It wasn’t required when that Operator started and is not part of the Operator hiring process now. The only reason I can think of is; so it would reduce the possibility of these applicants’ ability to get a job. Again, why?

But that's not what Union's do and that's not what being a Union member is about, or at least it didn't used to be. Unions have always fought for better wages, benefits and working conditions for all its members. Some members feel they are treated differently than others at any given time. But this is a Union that represents many different classifications with diverse wage disparities factored in with differing qualifications and market driven wage rates. There is no one set base wage. The Union's job is to negotiate the best wages and benefits for each and every classification. So instead of spreading false rumors and spewing hate among and against other members, we have to as a Union and Union leaders be smart and use these intermittent (MOA)s, Memorandum of Understandings (MOU)'s and Side Letters of Agreement (SLA)s that have occurred in the workplace (s) and workgroups during upcoming contract negotiations, and stick together to see the changes through that you and we feel need to be addressed.

Something else that came out of the meeting was one of my fellow Operators who had a concern. His concern was the lack of unity and unwillingness for us to help each other out. It could be something as simple as helping another Operator pull into traffic by blocking vehicles behind the both of you so the Operator in front can pull out. It's a little thing but try it if you don't do it, and see how much better you feel by helping that Operator and someone doing the same for you. **Wave.** When I was driving there were maybe 2 Operators who didn't. We're all doing the same job and you'll find that waving and acknowledging another Operator will communicate an acknowledgment that **we are some of the few that can handle this type of job.**

Amalgamated Transit Union Legislative Council (ATU LC)

Both VP Terry Leazer and I attended three (3) days of the Washington State Legislative Council endorsement committee meetings in May and June. The purpose of the meetings are to endorse Labor friendly candidates especially ones that can help us as employees and Union members of a public entity. The candidates were from as far east as Spokane, west to Shelton, north to Bellingham, and south to Olympia. Several of the candidates were part of the State Transportation Committee including (Chair Jake Fey 27th LD and Bill Ramos 5th LD) who in the last legislative session helped create and push through the transportation package, and are up for reelection this November. We as delegates made a strong emphasis on the need for apprenticeship programs for public employee Unions and our memberships. Representative Ramos did admit that was an oversight in the last transportation package.

One of the brightest moments of the interviews was the overwhelming support given to the idea of legislation modeled after the state of New York **wherein non-members/non-dues payers would have to pay the cost of their own representation for disciplinary meetings or arbitration.** It is an excellent piece of legislation. Also included in the interviews was April Sims candidate for President of the Washington State Legislative Council (WSLC) who would also back the non-member payment for representation legislation. Additional south Sound endorsees included Maria Seguenza 22nd LD, Emily Randall 26th LD and Dan Bronoske 28th LD. These individuals will need our support as we fight for the rights and betterment of Union members.

Open Issues

Your Union will continue to address many issues on behalf of the membership on June 2nd the following open issues will be addressed:

- Concurrent seniority on behalf of our Service Station Attendants (SSA)s who were promoted to the classifications of Bus Lot Attendant and Preventive Maintenance Service Technician. **A (MOA) is being created to make it happen.**
- The elimination of “sick leave occurrences” from “all” departmental policies. **All Departments have been notified and corrections made.**
- Clarification of “Unexcused absence” language. **Still open, but still being discussed.**
- The matter of issuing documents that contain language that is contrary to the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). **Corrections and update to the practice are being addressed.**
- Updating the Operator’s Manual especially as it applies to the collection of fares and Operator responsibilities in doing such. **This is being addressed with proposed Union modification of directives.**
- Updating the Operator’s Manual wherein there are directives that cannot be adhered to because the Employer has ceased to provide Operators with the materials to do so, and conflicting directives. **Ongoing. The most important “fare collection” is a priority.**
- Further discussion in regards to “alternative Operator run scheduling”. We have two meetings scheduled on July 12th and 28th with all parties involved in creating the “work”.

That about wraps it up. I know I forgot something it always happens. Anyway, be safe and if it does warm up. keep hydrated. For those that will be able to make it to the picnic please do, and if you are unable, we will bring some of the picnic to you in the workplace; Operator Lobby and Maintenance lunchroom.

Take care and be safe, Isaac

From: G Turner <vrodvrs@shaw.ca>
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2022 1:19 PM
To: pres758 <pres758@atu758.org>
Subject: Transit Operator Motorcycle Group

Hi Isaac, we have a number of active and retired Transit Operators who share a love and passion for motorcycles. However, unlike the Police, or Fire, or a host of other Trades or Unions, Transit Operators have no representative motorcycle group. Trust me, we Googled and found nothing... Well, we thought, considering how many transit systems there are nationwide and worldwide and the number of motorcyclists in those systems we thought we should change that. So we have formed T.O.R. which stands for Transit Operator Riders. We are on FB at T.O.R. Transit Operator Motorcycle Riders and we have a website transitoperatormotorcyclegroup.com . We don't discriminate as to the type of motorcycle you ride, nor do we discriminate against gender, race, religion. Our patch is designed to showcase the 3 types of systems transit operators work on, road, rail, and marine. The whole idea behind our group is to share the love of motorcycling and camaraderie. We respect all motorcycle groups, our patch is a one-piece patch that represents the three venues that Transit Operators can be found, road, rail, and marine. We don't support any causes, nor do we promote any agendas. The idea behind the group is to share a love of motorcycling. Can you please let the membership know that we exist? Thanks in advance,

In Solidarity
Geoff Turner

ATU LOCAL 758

ANNUAL PICNIC

Saturday, July 9, 2022

12:00pm - 5:00pm



RAFFLE PRIZES:

1ST PRIZE - \$300

2ND PRIZE - \$200

3RD PRIZE - \$100

COME FOR THE
FOOD AND THE FUN!!

~DOOR PRIZES

~GAMES



Tacoma Sportsmen's Club

16409 Canyon Rd E, Puyallup, WA

For information call

Union office 253-474-3123



Camp-out Saturday July 9, 2022

(BYOB)





ATU Local 758 Ronald Thornton Memorial Golf Tournament

**Saturday, August 13,
2022**



Eagles Pride Golf Course
1529 Mounts Rd SW, DuPont, WA

9:00 am—Shot gun

Included with your entry fee of \$85.00

- 4 Hole in one prizes
- Long Drive (Men's/Women's)
- KP's
- Tee prizes
- Putt off contest
- Golf /Cart
- Tournament Banquet

For information please contact: Jery Hardeman 253-405-7086

Start planning your teams now!
All are invited to play!



Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 758

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Weingarten rights

This statement could save your job! "If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated I respectfully request that my shop steward be present at the meeting. Without Union representation present, I choose not to respond to any questions or statements."

UNION MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE

Local 758 Union meetings will be held based on availability of IBEW Hall.

EMAIL ADDRESSES AND CONTACT NUMBERS

Isaac Tate, President B.A: pres758@atu758.org (253)329-1655

Terry Leazer V. Pres A.B.A: vpres758@atu758.org (253) 686-1435

Vonda Marshall, Fin-Sec/Trea: 758finsec@atu758.org (253)474-3123

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