

Newsletter

March 2022



President's/BA Report— Isaac O. Tate

Around Pierce Transit

Your ATU Local 758 leadership has been meeting with Pierce Transit management in regards to various items of importance to you the membership to include addressing a proactive approach to the **meth and fentanyl problem** that our Local 587 Sisters and Brothers are facing in King County (a memo of the agency's commitment was distributed to Operators). But still unresolved is the instance of the possible inhalation resulting in a positive drug test or the safe operation of a vehicle after exposure. Although not part of the memo, your Union suggests in the event of an individual using (smoking) these toxic substances you request the person leave the coach, report the usage to the Communication Center, request assistance and promptly remove yourself and passengers from the coach. After doing so, adhere to the directives of the responder "unless" you feel it's unsafe to do so (example; coach smells of toxic substance). If there are any issues in regards to the aforementioned actions, contact your Union immediately.

Electric coaches were also discussed, specifically the planned installation of at least two (2) charging stations in the Commerce Street tunnel for usage in the first quarter of 2023. The logistics of placement of the charging stations (left or right side of the tunnel) and the movement or hindrance of other coaches with the placement of the stations has not been figured out as to this date. Also, if these coaches are to be plugged-in/charged by Operators there will need to be adequate training to do so, as well as adequate time built into Operators runs to accomplish the task.

Facilities Maintenance has proposed the concept of on-call Transit Facilities Specialist. However, your Union leadership has many questions in regards to a/the position the least of which is the amount of pay, duration of on-call pay, travel pay, use of agency vehicle, response time, failure to respond within response time penalty (discipline), assignment of position (voluntary or ?), yes there are a lot of issues. We won't be moving forward until these questions are answered.

Vanpool discussion has started again in regards to contracting with ARI a fleet management entity out of Texas, wherein contracted companies with ARI would allow Vanpool Operators to use "neighborhood" vendors for PM maintenance (oil changes). All engine work, body work, warranty items etc. will be completed/serviced by our Automotive and Body Repair Technicians. The previous RFP (February 2021) included three services: vanpool leasing, maintenance and insurance services. The RFP was rejected due to the cost of the proposal.

Bloodborne Pathogen Training. Operators will be receiving training in the near future as soon as how to implement/develop opportunities for the training are being ironed out.

Retiree Rehires. There has been much discussion in regards to rehiring Retirees. However, until we can get "all the players" in the room at the same time regarding the concept, your Union feels nothing much can come of it. We cannot and will not sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) until we know what we are agreeing to.

Work/Life Balance is another topic of which your Union leadership has entered into initial discussions. Both VP Terry Leazer and myself feel that to address the dire need of Operators in the agency and to retain those of you that are here, there really needs to be a re-boot of everything from hiring practices to Operator retention and what can make the Transit Operator position one that a person wants to stay in until the decision to retire.

Prior to the covid pandemic the agency started to struggle with both retaining trainees and filling open work and this also seemed to be coupled with a rash of retirements. After the onset of covid there appears not only at Pierce Transit, but for many other potential employers a different mindset or concept of a "work or job model" and what is valued as important to a/the worker.

Many individuals have come to realize family time is more important than spending an inordinate amount of time at the job. Many have come to realize the ability to do more, or just as much with less. No one wants to be paid for forty (40) hours a week, and it takes 70 plus hours to receive it. No one wants flip-flopping days off and or inconsistent schedules. Perhaps one would prefer a 30-hour work week rather than 40-hour work week and receive full-time benefits. Perhaps one would prefer to work AM as opposed to PM or the reverse. What is abundantly clear is, something needs to be addressed sooner rather than later. We believe there will be movement, and the sooner the better. Stay tuned.

Tentative Agreement

City of Longview (River Cities Transit)

Your Union negotiation team has reached a tentative agreement with the City of Longview on behalf of the River Cities Transit Operators.

The wage increase places you as Operators in the position of being one, if not the best compensated Operators in an agency of your size.

There was also increased longevity pay, and the addition of a floating holiday. Bringing the total to 56 hours in addition to your previously negotiated holidays and no changes to medical benefits.

Also negotiated was the implementation of "new" Relief Dispatcher position/language, new "Hold Down" language and Vacation/Floating holiday leave.

A vote will be held on March 15, 2022 at the City Hall.

I would like to thank Executive Board Officer/Shop Steward **Shawnda Hurley** for her hard work in helping myself as well as ATU Local 758 Vice-President **Harold "Terry" Leazer** in negotiating this contract for our members.

The Early days of Unions – Did you know

Did you know that in 1910 Philadelphia Rapid Transit Co. fired 173 workers of Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America and replaced them with "scabs". Violence broke out, with trolley cars, tracks and wiring destroyed, police brutality and wholesale arrests of strikers. A 1,000 workers battled police in unrest that lasted "57" days. The result was a wage increase from 21cents to 22 cents.

Did you know that many mining companies hired their own police forces to intimidate, harass and make Union sympathizers disappear.

Did you know that in 1917 the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Adamson Act which established an 8-hour workday for interstate railway workers.

Did you know that in 1926 12,000 New York furriers (Fur Workers Industrial Union) went on strike, and they were the first Union to win a 5 day, 40 hour week.

Did you know that on February 27, 1937 Woolworth clerks started a sit-down strike for a 40 hour work week in Detroit Michigan. Don't be fooled by the term "sit-down" strike. These clerks brought bedding including mattresses, coffee pots, used the store's kitchen to prepare food, kept the store tidy using some of the on-hand cleaning supplies, occasionally helping themselves to candy and headache tablets and feeding the caged birds. These same clerks were eventually evicted by police, however were also able to negotiate a 48 hour workweek.

The Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) and Transport Workers Union (TWU) led a strike against the New York City Transit Authority in 1966.

In a fight for higher wages in 1919, 35,000 shipyard workers in Seattle were joined by 25,000 other Union members in what was deemed the first (solidarity) "general strike".

The struggles of workers, Unions and their members seem to be intentionally scrubbed from the annals of history. There has been much heartache, bloodshed and loss of lives in the struggle for decent wages and working conditions and the right to support our families and loved ones. There have been numerous disasters in workplaces that were only rectified because workers were unified in their opposition to those very same unsafe working conditions. Obviously, many of us are the benefactors of the sacrifices of labor advocates before us. Many of us are the benefactors of human rights advocates many borne from the labor movement. Unionism and membership is on the rise again although mainstream media likes to tout the opposite. Don't believe it, it is.

Be Safe and be well.
Isaac

Apprenticeship Program Promotions by Harry Morris, Lead Mechanic

We are proud to announce that the ATU Local 758 sponsored Apprentice Diesel Mechanic program is going strong. Congratulations to Giselle (**Arrie**) **Arredondo** and **Gunar Sund** who have completed their apprenticeships and have now been promoted to Journey Level Mechanics. Jameson Brown has entered the third year of his apprenticeship and learning more every day. The ATU 758 / Pierce Transit Joint Diesel Mechanic Apprenticeship program was reborn two years ago with three Apprentices being hired. The program is competence-based, so you may finish the four-year program early if you have prior education or experience. The path to a Journey Level Mechanic is a marathon, not a sprint. It took me the full four years to finish the program.

Just like most Employers today, Pierce Transit is having a hard time finding qualified employees, Operators, Mechanics, Service Station Attendants, etc... Because of this problem, the ATU will be asked to partner with Pierce Transit to sponsor two new apprenticeship programs. One will be Communications Technician, the other Body Repair Technician. There will also be one Apprentice Diesel Mechanic. You "do not" have to work in maintenance to apply for these positions. What we are looking for in an apprentice(s) is aptitude and attitude. There are currently three JLM(s) that completed the apprenticeship program that started their careers at Pierce Transit as Operators. If you are interested in applying for one of these positions they should be posted in the next few months.



Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 758

6923 Lakewood DR W B1 Tacoma, WA 98467-3221

(253)474-3123 atu758.org

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

Vonda Marshall, Rec. Sec.: recsec758@atu758.org (253)376-8854

Pattie Clark, Office/Web Admin: unionoffice@atu758.org (253)474-3123