

CWA 7250

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CWA 7250 Union Update - June 2022Kieran Knutson <kieran.knutson@cwa7250.org>
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CWA 7250 Union Update - June 2022**Happy Juneteenth! Happy LGBTQ Pride!****See below for Notes and/or Links on . . .**

Buffalo/Uvalde Massacres - Mobility/DirecTV Bargaining Continues - WFH Fight Continues - Minnesota Frontline Worker Pay - UNION Thursdays - District 7 Organizer - Tower, Tech, Retail & DTV Grievances & Updates - CWA 7250 Solidarity - Reproductive Freedom - Labor Notes - Juneteenth - PRIDE



1. **Our hearts go out to the families of those murdered at a grocery store in Buffalo NY by a white supremacist and the children murdered by a mentally ill teenager at a grade school in Uvalde TX.** We're going to have to have hard conversations about how to deal with this violence and hate. We can't rely on the politicians to fix this - they are mostly all just servants of the corporations. Working-class people are going to have to build the bonds of solidarity ourselves. We have to replace this insane dog-eat-dog system that is driving this madness with one that actually cares about and defends our people - especially children and elders.



2. **Bargaining continues for our members under the Mobility Orange contract and the DTV Orange Call Center contracts.** The last bargaining report from Mobility noted major progress being made, with some big areas still yet to be resolved. DTV bargaining is going slower - a big hold up has been the incomplete/inaccurate medical benefits financials that the company had initially shared. They've now updated the bargaining team with (supposedly) accurate information that the union is now verifying.

We know that this process has been very long - and not transparent enough - but it's very important that we continue to stand strong and mobilize - wear RED or CWA gear on UNION Thursdays, and attend union meetings and actions. Our Solidarity is Our Strength! If the company understands that we are unified and determined enough to strike, they will be more likely to concede to more of our demands.



3. A permanent WFH option was the topic of a meeting between CWA 7250 AVP Charli Haataja, CWA 7200 AVP Sundee Severson and CWA International Vice President Lisa Bolton and her staff on May 19th. Charli posted a full report on the meeting to the 7250 mobilization fb group:

"First, we told Lisa and Ken that the company has already started making it a point to communicate to members that the company is receptive to a permanent work from home option and that no one in the union has reached out to bargain. This was received with some flippancy, as we all know the company makes a habit out of scapegoating the union. That said, we leaned in and really emphasized that the membership has spoken loud and passionately on this demand. Lisa brought up that our current WFH agreement articulates the time frame of when an extension would be negotiated as 14 days before the agreement expires, so there's months before either side would be reaching out on this.

We clarified; while we're sure we'd all take whatever extension of the current agreement we could get, that's not what we're asking for. We're asking for the union to negotiate a permanent WFH option. Our ask at this meeting was to not hold this off until September. We brought up that some of the dissatisfaction with the Legacy T extension was due to there being this huge bargaining demand from the membership that didn't get negotiated, and that's what we're meeting today to discuss. We want bargaining on this.

We argued that anti-union propaganda often highlights 'the union' as a barrier between member demands and the company's ability to meet those demands and that now is a key time in the labor movement for CWA to show that member demands are represented and bargained for. We pointed out that a lot has changed in the last few years for our members and our money doesn't stretch as far as it used to. Many of us are supporting family members and friends, and an increased cost in commute or childcare could be a deciding factor in whether they take a pay-cut to continue working from home for another employer.

As far as commitments we received from Ken and Lisa, there's not a lot to report. They were upfront that no promises could be made and no commitments could be given. I asked what I could take back to our members from this meeting and they said they heard us, they wrote down our demands, and their takeaway of our 'ask' is that they reach out to the company to begin negotiations sooner than September.

There was some flattery directed at us/our Locals for the good job we do reaching out to members and being so engaged. We thanked them, but also let them know, this isn't us reaching out to members, this is members reaching out to us. This is the most uniform and consistently agreed upon bargaining demand I've ever seen the membership make, and while we appreciate being heard, we will continue fighting to get a permanent WFH option."

Local President Knutson will be delivering hard copies of the Local 7200/7250 WFH petition (The petition now has more than 2300 signatures!) to CWA President Chris Shelton, VP Lisa Bolton and the other CWA VPs at the CWA Local Presidents' meeting in June. **We'll also be putting together a committee of concerned members to help guide the fight for a permanent WFH option - let us know if you'd like to participate.**



4. Minnesota unions fought hard for "Minnesota Frontline Worker Pay" which was finally signed into law at the beginning of May. **AT&T Retail workers** are explicitly eligible for this one-time benefit of up to \$1500.00 payment. The State is still setting up the forms and process - but there's a way to sign-up to get updated when the process is ready to

go. AT&T, DirecTV (and all employers) are supposed to notify all eligible employees once the system is ready to go.

MN Technicians MAY also be eligible - but are not specifically included in initial notices. Eligible employees must also have made less than \$85K per year (single) or \$185K (married, joint filing).

It does not appear that employees who could work from home or had the option to work from home are eligible. **DTV Call Center workers** who did not have seniority to get offered a WFH position MAY be eligible.

Please see this official notice and sign-up for updates: <https://frontlinepay.mn.gov>

Minnesota Frontline Worker Pay Fact Sheet: https://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/fwp_application_fact_sheet.pdf



Sean.jpg

5. UNION Thursdays Continue . . .

Every Thursday all year long and ESPECIALLY when we are mobilizing for a new contract - our members wear **RED** and/or **CWA** gear to show our Unity and Determination. Check out this video from CWA activist Sandy Branch from the CWA T&T National Mobilization Committee:

Let's Talk - Why We Wear Red

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEawaheVcyc>



6. CWA District 7 has placed a paid union organizer with our Local. In June, Gabbi Pierce will begin working for CWA 7250 with her main project helping organize the workers at the Activision Blizzard video game-maker's Quality Assurance group in Minnesota (approx 200 workers). Her secondary responsibility will be to assist other video game organizing drives around the country, and finally to assist CWA 7250 in organizing projects. District 7 came to us with this offer in May and the E-Board recommended it to the May Membership meeting, where it was overwhelmingly approved. Gabbi's salary and benefit costs will be 100% reimbursed by the CWA National Organizing Committee. Gabbi will give an organizing report at each bi-monthly Membership meeting and can be reached at gabbi.pierce@cwa7250.org . If you know someone working for Activision QAMN - get in touch!

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7. Tower, Tech, Retail & DTV Grievances & Updates:

Tower: We are continuing to fight the company's "vacation snatching", where they have been using vacation days to cover sick days without the members permission - we have filed multiple grievances, and the first one is now at 3rd step in D.C (Along with our grievances over Alliance Funding, and the vaccine mandate); other open grievances include disability denial, unfair appraisal, and an unjust termination - we were also able to keep a member on a Final rather than going to termination. **Forgot to include this last month - we finally got a huge victory winning Paid Parental Leave owed to 9 new parents in the Tower!**

Techs: Our AVP Sean McCawley was able to stop the company from using non-union outside vendor Pilot - and we have started a shared spreadsheet for our Tech stewards to monitor and collect data on outside vendors doing AT&T work. We asked CWA to bring up the issue of our North Dakota techs having their tickets vetted in Ohio, by people that don't know the geography or the accuracy of the industry maps - at the Labor Advisory Forum (LAF). We were able to protect a member's job in a recent discipline hearing, and we will be orieting two new members thi month in Plymouth and

Duluth. The Comm Tech jobs at the AT&T Tower Teleconference Center are going away this year - with our three members being offered Comm tech jobs in Denver CO.

Retail: We continue to add new stewards - welcome Dylan N. from the Highland store in St. Paul - and several stewards will attend District 7 steward training this week. We have an open grievance over unjust discipline (A Final warning for customer mistreatment, with no prior discipline), and are working to defend a member back from military leave after the company demanded back pay for time worked and vacation paid during his leave. AVP Larry Thompson was able to cut through the BS and get management to order business cards for the Oseo RSC's after months of excuses.

DTV: Welcome new steward Zach S. at the Eden Prairie call center! **Our AVP Ann Jensen found through an RFI (Request for Information) that one of our members was being paid less than two new hires - this resulted in the senior member receiving an immediate raise.** New CWA T-shirts for DTV members have been ordered and should be in sometime this week - look for mobilization packages with T-shirts and other union swag to go out in the next week.



8. CWA 7250 Solidarity - members of our Local traveled to Brainerd MN for this year's Mayday labor rally. Poor weather kept the number down, but our union is committed to building unity between the whole working class - from the big cities to the suburbs to the small towns and rural areas.

MNA, the Nurses union will be holding rallies across the metro area on Wednesday June 1st to highlight their demand for Patients Before Profits. Please join their informational pickets at one of these hospitals:

Abbott Northwestern Hospital

7:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Children's Hospital - Minneapolis

7:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Children's Hospital - St. Paul

7:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Fairview Riverside Hospital

7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

Fairview Southdale Hospital

3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

HealthEast St. John's Hospital

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Mercy Hospital

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Methodist Hospital

6:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

2:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

North Memorial Hospital

7:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

United Hospital

7:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Unity Hospital
4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m



9. At the Local's May meeting, soon after the Supreme Court leak suggesting that Roe v Wade was in danger of being overturned, the members overwhelmingly passed a resolution declaring reproductive freedom a workers right:

"RESOLVED that members of CWA 7250 along with other unions declare that reproductive justice & reproductive rights are workers' rights & that we will defend & support efforts to obtain and maintain healthcare for working people that covers all reproductive care."



10. In June, members of CWA Local 7250 will travel to Chicago for one of the biggest cross-union Labor gatherings in the country: the **Labor Notes Conference**. Labor Notes describes itself as a "a media and organizing project that has been the voice of union activists who want to put the **movement** back in the labor movement since 1979." Among the speakers will be representatives of the Amazon Labor Union and the Starbucks Workers Union, as well as the new president of the Teamsters and CWA's own Association of Flight Attendants President Sara Nelson. There will be panels, workshops, and breakout groups by industry - including Telecom. If you want to know what's going on in the Labor Movement - a good place to start is by reading Labor Notes: <https://labornotes.org/> - bookmark it!



11. **June 19th marks the commemoration and celebration of Juneteenth, the day that news reached African-American workers in Galveston, TX in 1865 that slavery had been abolished.** Read more of the history here: <https://www.blackagendareport.com/hidden-history-juneteenth>

Events are planned for:

Minneapolis: Saturday, June 18th 12:00PM-6:00PM Bethune Park 1304 10th Ave. No Mpls. MN 55411

Duluth/Superior: Saturday, June 18th 1:00PM-6:00PM Barker's Island - Superior WI

Omaha NE: Saturday, June 18th 12:00pm-5:00pm Malcolm X Outside Event Plaza 3448 Evans St, Omaha, NE 68111



12. June became the month to mark LGBTQ Pride, in commemoration of the Stonewall Riots. To learn more check out these episodes from the Working-Class History Podcast <https://workingclasshistory.com/podcast/e21-22-the-stonewall-riots-and-pride-at-50/>

SOLIDARITY FOREVER!