

1100 N. E. FRONTAGE ROAD
JOLIET, ILLINOIS 60431
Phone 815.729.1240
Fax 815.729.2176



Electrical Work
for Electrical Workers



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

April 28, 2020

Local Union No. 176 Joliet, Illinois

Brothers and Sisters,

As you all know, the COVID-19 pandemic has created many challenges when it comes to conducting business as usual. The Union has had to adjust in the way we conduct the business of the local in order to comply with guidelines from the CDC as well as "stay-at-home" orders issued by state and local governments. We are hopeful that we will be able to start to go back to some normalcy soon. The problem is, it is unclear exactly when that will be.

Last Thursday the E-Board conducted a virtual meeting, along with other officers of the local. A discussion was held at this meeting, and it was decided that one of the things we must do differently than we would normally do is to hold a ratification vote on our inside contract settlement agreement by mail. We have consulted the International IBEW and our legal counsel on guidance for holding a ratification vote by mail. We will be mailing out ballots to the membership by the end of this week. The mailing with the ballot's will also include a unique self-addressed stamped envelope, that the ballot must be mailed back to the hall in. We will only accept ballots that are mailed back to the hall in the envelope provided. The ballots must be post marked by May 15, 2020 in order to be counted. We will count the ballots on May 22, 2020. We will publicize the results of the vote as soon as the votes are counted.

I have written in previous letters as to why the negotiating committee has negotiated a good contract that is deserving of ratification, so I am not going to go into those details again here. I would just like to remind everyone that if this vote were to fail, our agreement would then go to CIR which is not scheduled to meet until the middle of July. We would work under our current agreement until such time CIR renders a decision. Going to CIR also opens the possibility for NECA to pursue language changes that they were not able to obtain in our negotiated settlement. I would strongly encourage everyone to vote yes on ratification.

Along with ratifying the agreement, there is also the issue of allocating the hourly wage increase. One of the questions that we needed to get answered was how much money does health and welfare need. I have been in frequent consultation with our actuaries and other fund professionals looking at our finances and trends with our health and welfare fund. While the current pandemic situation has caused fluctuations and some uncertainty in the health care industry, our professionals have done their due diligence researching this situation and they are recommending a contribution to health and welfare of thirty cents (\$0.30) per hour.

We have been looking at many possible scenarios for taking suggestions and then voting on an allocation. If you remember, last years wage allocation was \$2.65, the same as in the settlement agreement, that if approved, will take affect on June 1, 2020. When we took contract allocation suggestions last year, almost all proposed contract allocations included thirty cents (\$0.30) for a health

and welfare contribution, the same amount that has been suggested by our fund professionals for this year's contribution.

The allocation issues were discussed at last Thursday's virtual E-Board meeting with all E-Board members and other officers who were participating in the meeting. After discussing the fact that the wage allocation and health and welfare contribution in the settlement agreement were the same as last year, we all agreed on the following method to approve allocating this year's wage increase. First, we will include with the ballots that get mailed out this week ten (10) different contract suggestions that were made last year, by the membership, at our April 2019 monthly union meeting. We are then going to ask you to rank each proposal from one to ten. One being the proposal you would most like to see approved and ten as the proposal you would least like to see approved. Your ranked choices will be sent back to the hall, along with your ballot, in the unique self-addressed stamped envelope provided in the original mailing. We will then tally all the points using a ranked choice voting system to insure the most popular proposal is approved. Using this method, we are using proposals that were originally proposed by the membership and providing everyone a say in where our money goes.

Using the voting and allocation methods laid out above, we would be able to conclude this process by May 22, 2020. Our current contract expires on May 31, 2020. Ideally, we would like to be able to conduct this business in person, at meetings at our union hall, but the current pandemic situation leaves our ability to conduct business in that manner in limbo. We could wait to see what happens with the current "stay-at-home" orders and wait for changes in the CDC guidelines that would allow us to deal with these matters as we have in the past, but if we wait and the current situation stays as is, we will put ourselves in a bind in that we would not have enough time to deal with these matters prior to our contract expiration on May 31, 2020. In consulting with other members, the E-board, the other officers, our legal counsel, and the International IBEW, I feel that voting and allocating in the method described in this letter provides the best option for our members to have the opportunity to express their voices in a situation where there aren't a lot of great options.

I once again just like to encourage everyone to vote yes on the contract settlement. It is a good contract that our sister locals are envious of. I personally appreciate everyone's patience and understanding with this situation that we find ourselves in. We are constantly adjusting and working on finding answers to new questions that seem present themselves on an almost daily basis. I implore everyone to look out for one another and remain unified in these turbulent times. Our strength comes from our solidarity, so stay united and we will come through this stronger than when we went into this situation. Stay safe brothers and sisters.

In Solidarity,



Michael J. Clemmons
Business Manager