

BULLETIN
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NABET-CWA/ABC-DISNEY
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The first week of negotiations for a successor Master Agreement concluded on Friday evening.

During the past three days, since our last Bulletin, the NABET-CWA Network Negotiating Committee (NNC) has been advancing the Union's proposals to improve working conditions and the quality of life for Staff and Daily Hire members working in all business units covered by the contract.

On Wednesday morning, September 29, 2021, proposals for the Newswriter Units in Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco were discussed, including proposals to increase producing fees, expand them to cover digital platforms, and to create a "Booth Buddy" producing fee. The afternoon session was devoted to discussion of Sideletter DN and the use of digital cameras to gather show materials by non-NABET-CWA-represented employees or outside providers. The NNC repeated its mantra to ABC management that the Union is here to negotiate for our members' benefit and not to negotiate rights for non-represented employees. ABC's proposals on this provision, when taken at face value, would virtually eliminate all camera jurisdiction. NABET-CWA's proposals on digital cameras would provide the Company with additional flexibility, but with sensible safeguards to maintain job protections and secure more work for our members. The Union pushed for stronger limits on outside news services like "Stringr."

Thursday morning's discussion was anchored around the Union's proposal to make good-faith offers to convert up to 100 Daily Hires to Staff employment if the individual so desires. The OTV general managers explicitly stated that they see "no problem" with the current system because the pay and benefits should be enough to make Daily Hires happy. NABET-CWA Chief Spokesperson, Sector President Charlie Braico, expressed outrage at that sentiment, as did Local 31 Representative Alex Staherski, a full-time Daily Hire at ABC in Washington, D.C. for the past 17 years. "The members will be very interested in hearing this," Braico stated, referring to the Company

committee being tone-deaf on this very important subject. “This was the number-one issue brought to us by Daily Hires everywhere to propose to you... if you use us as Staff, we should be Staff,” added Brad Belstock, a Daily Hire Newswriter at KGO in San Francisco. The Union also pointed out that such an arrangement would be mutually beneficial to both parties, and that ABC’s main competitor, NBC, agreed to a very successful staff conversion agreement with NABET-CWA ten years ago. Again, ABC selectively ignored that fact.

Other items discussed on Thursday included Union proposals that would expand the number of paid sick days for Daily Hires. The Company elaborated on its proposals in the Newswriter Contracts (F, K and O Units) to broaden its use of non-represented producers on weekends and non-represented specialty/segment producers. The parties also discussed ABC proposals calling for the elimination of certain schedule-posting requirements and the elimination of paper statements of earnings.

Today’s sessions were exclusively focused on the NNC proposals for improving benefits and working conditions for all Daily Hires, especially those who work for ABC in excess of 156 days in a year. The Union made a strong case, in particular, to significantly increase payments in lieu of benefits (PILOB). ABC’s Chief Spokesperson, Sean Quinn, stated that the realistic increase that the Union is seeking for our members, was “unacceptable.” This led to an immediate and fact-based rebuttal by several Union committee members and contributors regarding the cost of medical benefits. It is clear that the ABC management committee is out of touch with reality with the projected double-digit percentage cost increases for purchasing medical benefits in 2022. NABET-CWA also discussed today many proposals intended to make significantly more staff provisions applicable to all Daily Hires.

The NNC will spend the weekend working in caucus. Negotiations will resume on Monday, October 4, 2021, when discussions commence on the Sports Event Agreement, impacting members working for ABC on sports broadcasts and streaming platforms. Several Daily Hire NABET-CWA members who work on these events will be in New York at the table to contribute to these talks on behalf of their colleagues in the field.

Please continue to monitor Sector and Local Union websites and check email notices for updates relating to negotiations and mobilization activities.

In Solidarity,

The ABC NABET-CWA Network Negotiating Committee