



Pavement Pounder

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Branch 111 N.A.L.C. “The Wasatch Branch”

Midvale - Millcreek - Murray - Northwest - Orem - Sandy - South Salt Lake - Sugarhouse - Tooele - West Jordan - West Valley

The President's Report The Tentative Agreement

On October 18th, after nearly 20 months of negotiations, the NALC announced that a tentative agreement had been reached. In the last 12 days, I have heard and seen more feedback from Letter Carriers about this contract than about any other National Agreement, and I first started way back in 1987. I have my own opinions about this contract, and while I would never tell anyone how to vote, I have no problem discussing what I believe are the good and bad points of the proposed contract.

We don't have room to print the entire proposed contract, but the financial highlights are as follows:

[For career employees]:

- *Effective Nov. 18, 2023 – 1.3% paid retroactively*
- *Effective Nov. 16, 2024 – 1.3% paid retroactively*
- *Effective Nov. 15, 2025 – 1.3%*
- *The first full COLA will be \$978 annually effective August 26, 2023, paid retroactively*
- *The second full COLA will be \$353 annually effective March 9, 2024, paid retroactively*
- *The third COLA will be \$978 annually effective September 7, 2024, paid retroactively*
- *The fourth COLA will be effective in March 2025*
- *The fifth COLA will be effective in September 2025*
- *The sixth COLA will be effective in March 2026*
- *The seventh COLA will be effective in September 2026*

MOU Re: Modification of City Carrier Pay Tables – Additionally, Steps AA, A, and B will be eliminated from Table 2. All city carriers in Steps AA, A and B will be advanced to Step C and begin a new 46-week waiting period to be completed before advancing to Step D. After implementation of this change, the total time to reach top step will be reduced by 92 weeks. These changes will be effective and implemented within 180 days of ratification.

Also effective and implemented within 180 days of ratification, the annual wage in Step P in Tables 1 and 2 shall be increased by \$1,000. This increase is in addition to general wage increases and COLAs.

In lieu of COLAs, City Carrier Assistants will receive an additional 1% increase on the effective dates of the three general increases, for a total of 2.3% in November 2023 (paid retroactively), 2.3% in November 2024 (paid retroactively), and 2.3% in November 2025. City Carrier Assistant hourly rates in Table 3 will also be increased by an additional \$0.50 per hour. This ratification increase will be implemented within 180 days of ratification.

(continued on next page)

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Note: Letter carriers who have retired since the expiration of the 2019-2023 National Agreement will also receive back pay from USPS and will have their annuities retroactively adjusted by the Office of Personnel Management.

[Uniforms]

- May 21, 2025: \$536 plus an additional \$125 for a newly eligible carrier
- May 21, 2026: \$549 plus an additional \$128 for a newly eligible carrier”

Ok, now on to the discussion. There are gains to all wages, especially to the starting wages and ending wages of the pay scale, so people coming into the Letter Carrier craft will start two steps higher than they used to, and top step will go to just over \$40 an hour by the end of the contract, assuming the COLAs match the projections. However, this contract is not nearly as glamorous as many that we have seen in the last couple of years. The UPS contract gained \$49 an hour by the end of their contract, and other Unions were able to negotiate far more significant gains than we are seeing in this contract, albeit they were negotiating with companies that are “for profit”, and not claiming losses like the USPS historically claims.

One problem that I see with the wage gains is for employees currently in the middle of the pay scale. They do not get the two step jump that starting employees will receive, so their journey to top step will still take over 13 years, which is extremely long in today’s world. Some employees will be bumped up to step C, but will have to start a new waiting period to advance to step D, which might feel like a slap in the face if you were almost to step C anyway.

Keeping CCAs is a horrible thing, as CCAs are a lower-tiered workforce without career benefits, and are treated as second class citizens. I was hoping to have an all-career workforce as we have had in times past. In the Salt Lake Installation, when we had CCAs last year, we couldn’t hire enough people, and Letter Carriers were mandated to the point of exhaustion.

The minor increases to the Uniform Allowances are unacceptable. It is reprehensible that the USPS would not provide us with sufficient funds to adequately clothe ourselves both to look professional, and to survive in extreme weather conditions. To buy a good winter jacket would take nearly the entire uniform allowance, and buying enough shirts, pants, and shoes (so that we don’t look raggedy) is impossible.

There are many other aspects of the contract, but I don’t have space enough to write about them here. To sum up the financials; there are increases in this contract, but I am not convinced that they truly keep up with costs that Letter Carriers are actually facing, (increased cost of housing, daycare, groceries, travel, etc...). I know that COLAs are supposed to factor all of that in, but they always seem to fall a bit short of reality. I am not convinced that we will be attracting workers with the starting wages this contract offers, unless we were to go to an all-career model, as we have done in several of the installations in Branch 111.

I said I would not tell anyone how to vote, and I meant that. On the NALC.ORG website, they have put a wage calculator to show the wage that each of us will be making at the end of the contract, and it also shows the percentage of increase in the wage. I encourage everyone to do their research and decide for yourselves if this is a contract that we want. Each one of us will get to ratify, or to vote against this contract, so please vote! If the contract is ratified, it will go into effect quickly, though the backpay will likely take many months to be completed. If the contract is rejected, then the contract will go to arbitration, which typically takes about six months to complete from the first day of arbitration. I love democracy... I love the fact that everyone in this union gets a say about whether this contract will serve us, or whether we want to fight it out in arbitration. And when the dust settles and we finally have a contract, we can look back and know that is OUR contract.

Michael Wahlquist – President
Branch 111, NALC

Letters of Demand

There are many reasons that a Letter Carrier might receive a Letter of Demand (LOD) from the Postal Service. If you ever find yourself in a non-pay status for a full pay period and the Postal Service covers your healthcare premiums, salary overpayment, a pay advance, leave buyback, or damage to Postal property are some of the reasons you might receive a Letter of Demand. I have also seen some of the more uneducated supervisors attempt to collect a debt for completely inappropriate reasons like not making your estimate or for stationary events.

Some of the debts are legitimate and some are not. Either way, if you receive a Letter of Demand in the mail you ***always need to take it to your steward to learn your options.***

Article 28 of the National Agreement states in relevant part: In advance of any money demand upon an employee for any reason, the employee must be informed in writing and the demand must contain the reason therefore.

There are several other things found in Article 28 that are very important that you should know. ***Section 2 ensures that employees are not liable for any loss, rifling, damage, wrong delivery of, or depredation on, the mails or failure to collect or remit C.O.D. funds unless the employee failed to exercise reasonable care.***

Section 3 ensures that an employee shall be financially liable for any loss or damage to property of the Employer including leased property and vehicles only when the loss or damage was the result of the willful or deliberate misconduct of such employee.

Reasonable care and willful misconduct mean that the loss or damage must be deliberate. Dropping a scanner or hitting a mailbox are accidents and the carrier can not be held liable and if a supervisor attempts to hold you liable then a grievance must be filed. Section 4 of Article 28 states that by filing a

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grievance the debt collection process will be delayed until disposition of the grievance had been had. Section 4 also states the amount that can be withheld if the debt is legitimate. No more than 15% for disposable pay or 20% of the biweekly gross pay can be withheld, whichever is lower may be deducted each pay period.

Elm 462 outlines the applicable collection procedure and your right to file a grievance or petition for a hearing. Remember that your steward only has 14 days from the day you receive the LOD to file a grievance. If that 14 day deadline is missed, management will send a second letter outlining their intent to withhold the 15% or 20% from your paycheck beginning in 30 days. A hearing may be requested before the 15th day after receiving the second letter.

The important thing to remember is to immediately notify your steward if you ever receive a LOD from management. There are other options as well, even if the debt is legitimate. Requests for a waiver is also an option and are often granted for hardship or when the error was the fault of the Postal Service. This is outlined in ELM 437.

Management has many responsibilities when it comes to collecting a debt and they often fail in meeting those responsibilities. It is also important to know that simply filing a grievance will stop collections but management must file form 1007 in order to get those collections to stop and most managers don't know this. Stewards need to make sure they educate management of their responsibilities. Form 1007 can also be filed by management to reduce the amount withheld each pay period, if that is what is agreed upon in the grievance settlement.

Always talk to your steward and never just let management collect a debt that might not be owed.

In solidarity
Mike Hansen
Executive Vice President
NALC, Branch 111

NALC BRANCH 111
Minutes of the Regular Union Meeting
Oct. 10, 2024

Convened at 6:30 pm

The meeting was also broadcast over Zoom for those unable to attend in person.

Conducting: Mike Wahlquist, President

Pledge of Allegiance conducted by Mike Simonsen

Moment of Silence for Tyrone Moody, John Cross and Steve Lopez who have passed away.

Special Guests:

Monnica Manuel – Is running for State Senate District 16 (W Jordan). She believes she is more representative of those who live in the district. She supports working people and wants to represent them.

Alisa Van Langeveld – State Senate District 8 (Rose Park and north). Current senator Weiler votes with the super majority. She believes that people should not be restricted in joining unions and should be allowed to pay union dues through their employer. She is running as an independent.

Steve Eliason, State House District 43 (was called to work). His friend, NALC member spoke for him. Steve was interested in his friend's union activity and they talked about it often. He supports the union principles they talked about.

Steve pushes mental health. He is endorsed by some other unions. He believes union dues should be deducted by employers.

Roll Call by Steve McNees

Minutes of the September 2024 union meeting were posted. Without objection, they will be filed for future reference

Reading of the Communications by Steve McNees

- Reservations and Registration to the Regional Assembly in Sunriver, Oregon on Nov. 11-14, 2024 were submitted to our Regional NBA.

Application for Membership by Mike Hansen

- Neve Mortensen, Pheakdey Thong, Tyler Moose-Wardle, Charles Moran, Rachel Gurrola, Phong To, Prinya Kehavivatcharatkul, Laura Hernandez, Maria Rodriguez, Kenneth Dille, Amber Fulkeresin, Kimball Bryner, Drayden Ricks, Tyson Kennemer, Vincent Simms, Flo-Aliceann Toleafoa, Cristian Walker, Tiffany Hansen, Nirman Pokharel, John Tracey, Brandise Aguodo, Ammon Steinbeigle, Sophia Hartnett, Brock Barlow, Kyle Fuller

LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND (LCPF) by Josh Thibodeau – Excused

MDA COORDINATOR by Nathan Chester

- Nov 23rd, about 7pm, is poker night with prizes. \$25 buy in (goes to MDA). Email an officer so he can determine how many will attend and how many prizes to get. Watch the Pavement Pounder for more info.

DIRECTOR OF VETERAN AFFAIRS by Jimmy Fleming - no report

LEGISLATIVE by Chad Mortensen

- A motion to endorse all three candidates was made. The motion passed. • Vote with your gut based on who is going to help us.

TRUSTEES by Chad Mortensen

- They met Tuesday and reviewed three months of transactions. A couple of warrants were not completed but were verified.

MBA / COMPENSATION by Bob Jewell - no report

HEALTH BENEFITS by Jim Kerekes

- The rates are out for 2025 health plans. • Nov 11-Dec 9th is open season. Etna, UPW, GEHA NALC, and rural carriers were among the plans listed. • Active and retired members will be automatically put in a plan. Check the code of your new plan and compare with their website. • New hires may be put in a plan during the open season. • In the future, if you get a divorce your spouse will have the opportunity to revert to your old plan. • Part D is now part of all of the federal plans. If you cancel part D you won't have insurance anymore.

ORGANIZER by Justin Lindquist

- He has signed up every new employee since our last meeting.

SAFETY AND HEALTH by Justin Lindquist / Nathan Chester

- Management don't give a *. Make sure you take care of yourself.

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES by Jeff Asay

- Oct 24 is the retiree dinner at the Chuck-a-Rama in Draper from 3:30 to 5:30. It is free to all retirees and a guest.

Retirees that are happy with their current health plan won't have to do anything to stay in it. • Retirees will have 2 additional drawings tonight for \$100 each.

TREASURER by Mike Madsen

- We had \$34,500 of income last month. \$700 of that was from progressive/permissive remedies. We brought in \$10,333 more than we spent. (continued on next page)

Minutes (continued)

VICE PRESIDENT by Destiney Carrillo

- The next steward training will be on October 16th. It will be about Letters of Demand.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT by Mike Hansen

- 2,614 grievances filed so far this year.
- There are 22 people registered for Rap session. Progressive/permissive remedy money will be used to send members. It will cost \$1,595 per person for a total of \$33,594 for the event. Most of those going are young first-time stewards.
- Contract negotiations are still going on with an impending agreement, hopefully in the next week. Don't expect any back pay until next year.

PRESIDENT by Mike Wahlquist

- Support your local stewards. They are the ones to get you through the crazy bureaucracy known as the Post Office. 5 days ago, President Renfro said that within one week we will have a tentative agreement. That means it could/should be soon.

SPECIAL ORDERS: none

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: none

• **Nomination of delegates to the 2025 Utah State Convention.** Nominations will remain open through the next two meetings. Self-nomination is allowed as well as text, email, or in person nominations. All nominees are automatic delegates because we have more delegates allotted than we will ever have nominees. The only issue is that to receive funding from the branch you must meet the meeting attendance requirements for the previous 2 years. You must also certify that you have not applied for or served as a supervisor in the last two years. The convention is April 4th & 5th next year in St. George. It is during spring break. We are considering renting a large house that will have many bedrooms.

• **Nominated:** Jennifer Ogden, Quincy Mason, Mike Simonsen, Chad Mortensen, Mike Porter, Keith Warner, Connor Lawrence, Jimmy Kerekes, Kim Mortensen, Fernando Palafox, Monte Jones, Stormy Blood, Keenan Ortiz, Nate Chester, Bob Jewell, Robert Cottrell, Donovan Mamo, Destiney Carrillo, Brent Console, Jennifer Ogden, Josh Thibodeau, Aaron Johnson, Kornie Chatterton, Michael Galvan, Jay Reupena, Elisha Satini, Joe Horsley, Mike Hansen, April Pettley, Alan Nagata, Daniel Langton(-accept) , John Mister, Daine Rask, Phil Rodriguez , Zebulon Keith

NEW BUSINESS: none

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:

- There is a **Desperate Need For Uniforms** for new employees. New retirees please give us your uniforms. Active carriers, uniforms that aren't shredded please bring them in (or give them to your steward).

IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION: none

DRAW AND ADJOURN – 8:01 pm

Special Retiree Drawing: Keith Warner (\$100), Brent Bray (\$100)

- \$25 drawing winners: Robert Cottrell, Keith Warner
- RETIREES – \$550 (George Schmidt was not present). Next month it will be \$575.
- PROGRESSIVE A - \$950 (Colleen Einerson was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$975.
- PROGRESSIVE B - \$850 (Jeremy Crispin was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$875.

Election Day is Tuesday, November 5. Branch 111 encourages all it's members to participate in the electoral process.

HERE ARE THE CANDIDATES ENDORSED BY **BRANCH 111**: THESE CANDIDATES CAME TO OUR UNION MEETINGS AND SECURED OUR ENDORSEMENT.

Salt Lake County Treasurer:	Sheila Srivastava
House District 30:	Jacob (Jake) Fitisemanu
SL County Council District 6:	Zack Robinson
Salt Lake County Assessor:	Joel Frost
State Senate 16 :	Monnica Manuel
State Senate District 8:	Alisa Cox Van Langeveld
House District 43:	Steven Eliason

THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN ENDORSED BY THE CENTRAL UTAH FEDERATION OF LABOR, AFL-CIO:

Salt Lake City Mayor:	Jenny Wilson
SLC City Council, District 2:	Katie Olsen
SLC City Council, District 4:	Ross Romero
SLC City Council, District 6:	Zach Robinson
SLC City Council, At Large:	Natalie Pinkney
SL County Assessor:	Joel Frost
SL County Treasurer:	Sheila Srivastava
SL County Recorder:	Rashelle Hobbs

The Utah AFL-CIO has numerous other endorsed candidates on their website. NALC endorsed Kamala Harris for President at Boston National Convention

HEALTH BENEFITS

OPEN SEASON this year is **NOV- 11 through DEC-9th**.

Remember if you want to do a change or if you are a new employee during open season and are signing up you have until 9:59 pm Mountain time because OPM's time is 2 hours ahead of us.

OPM has released the names of Health Plans for 2025. Also, the options and rates of the plans.

If you go to opm.gov/insure, you will find the following information.

- An overview of the PSHBP (Postal Service Health Benefit Plan), the new health plan program.
- Information titled Auto Enrollment.

In the Auto Enrollment information there was written the following:

OPM is working to make the transition to PSHB as simple as possible by automatically enrolling Postal Service members into a PSHB plan based on their current FEHB enrollment. The following table lists the plan options into which individuals will be automatically enrolled. The Auto Enrollment List shows all new ID code changes for each health plan and their options for Self, Self + One, and Self and Family.

The other information that came out was titled "PSHBP Overview:

It says Enrollees will get a letter prior to the 2024 Open Season that provides information on the PSHB plan they'll automatically be enrolled in. Enrollees can make changes to that plan enrollment during the Transitional PSHB Open Season.

The PSHB plan year will run from January 1 through December 31 each year for active employees and retirees. It used to be different for Active employees.

Those who signed up for Part B Medicare during the April 1st through September 30th their premiums will start in January. The new Part B premium, which I heard was going to be \$185.00. The Post Office will pay your Part B penalty for when you never signed up and were eligible. If you enroll later after Sept. 30th, 2024 you may have to pay a penalty.

They also gave the exceptions for not having to sign up for Part B Medicare.

- Postal Service annuitants who retired on or before January 1, 2025, and are not already enrolled in Medicare Part B.
- Family members of these Postal annuitants are also not required to enroll in Medicare Part B to be covered by a PSHB plan.
- Postal Service employees who are age 64 or older on January 1, 2025

These employees are not required to enroll in Medicare Part B after they retire to enroll in PSHB as an annuitant.

- Family members of these employees also are not required to enroll in Medicare Part B after the employee retires to be covered by a PSHB plan.
- Postal Service Compensationers (OWCP) people will also be automatically enrolled in a PSHB plan before the 2024 Federal Benefits Open Season.

They can make changes during this Open Season.

Current OWCP people are not required to enroll in Part B to enroll in a PSHB plan, regardless of Part A entitlement. At retirement, they may have to enroll in Part B if eligible, unless they meet an exception.

Contact OWCP at 202-513-6860 about self-payment of premiums if required.

Here is a list of the other information on the OVERVIEW:

- Surviving Spouses of Postal Service Employees and Annuitants
- Temporary Continuation of Coverage
- Former Spouses
- Direct Premium Payments
- Non-Pay Status/LWOP Postal Service Employee

NALC 2025 PSHB PLAN RATES:

Active Biweekly High Option

Self Only - \$109.98

Self Plus One - \$266.08

Self and Family - \$238.42

Retirees Monthly High Option

Self Only - \$238.29

Self Plus One - \$576.50

Self and Family - \$516.58

NALC 2025 CDHP RATES:

Active Biweekly Rates

Self Only - \$59.13

Self Plus One - \$133.88

Self and Family - \$144.92

Retirees Monthly Rates

Self Only - \$128.11

Self Plus One - \$290.08

Self and Family - \$314.00

NALC High Option Plan --- Aetna Medicare Advantage Plan members pay monthly rates.

Call me if you have questions. When more information comes out, I'll share it with you.

Jim Kerekes

801-557-6033

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or discharged, I request that my Union representative be present at the meeting. Without representation, I choose not to answer any questions."



Come down to the union hall on Saturday, November 23 at 7 pm for Poker, conversations and fun.

Light refreshments provided. Feel free to bring pot luck style food and drink to share. It will be a casual atmosphere where hanging out and having a good time while donating to MDA.

This may be one of the last events of the year and Branch 111 would love to be a top contributor this year.

Branch leadership will be there, come hang out, make some friends and build some relationships.

Branch 111 is filled with amazing folks! Let's get to know each other better!

Everyone is invited, bring friends and family. We will attempt to group players to maximize fun and play with similar skill levels.

Everyone has a chance to win a prize. We will run the give-aways as a lottery, the more chips you win, the more chances you get!

Mark Your Calendar

November

Thursday 7th
Monday 11th - 14th
Monday 11th
Thursday 14th
Wednesday 20th
Saturday 23rd

E-Board
RAP Session (Sunriver OR)
Open Season Health Benefits Begins
Branch Meeting
Steward's Training
MDA Poker Night

December

Thursday 5rd
Monday 9th
Thursday 12th
Wednesday 18th

E-Board
Health Benefits Open Season Deadline
Branch Meeting
Steward Training

January

Thursday 2nd
Thursday 9th
Saturday 11th
Wednesday 15th

E-Board
Branch Meeting
AL Credited for 2025
Steward Training

Follow Branch111 on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on events, meetings and branch news.

Visit Branch111.com for news, donations and resources.

Use this QR code to easily access branch111.com



Branch 111 needs uniforms for new hires! The uniform bank is completely empty. Donations are needed. Bring any uniforms to the Union Hall, or call (801)973-6705 for other arrangements.

National Association of Letter Carriers
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Branch111.com!



The Pavement Pounder

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For up-to-date information on events, meetings and branch news,

Follow Branch 111 on Facebook @NALCbranch111

The financial records of Branch 111 are available to anyone by appointment and a monthly record is always available at Branch 111 monthly meeting.

The Pavement Pounder would like to hear from you! If you would like to submit an article, write it and send to Natechester8@gmail.com. It will be reviewed and edited for publication if accepted.