

Contract Arbitration to Begin Feb. 17 *Goldberg Selected as ‘Neutral Arbitrator’*

Arbitration hearings for a new APWU Collective Bargaining Agreement with the U.S. Postal Service will begin on Feb. 17, President Mark Dimondstein has announced.

The case will be presented to a three-member panel comprised of a union-appointed advocate, a management-appointed advocate, and a neutral arbitrator, who determines the outcome. Under federal law, the APWU and USPS must mutually agree on the neutral arbitrator.

Stephen B. Goldberg has been selected as the neutral arbitrator and will preside over the case. Goldberg served as the neutral arbitrator for the 2000-2003 Collective Bargaining Agreement, the last time an APWU contract was decided in arbitration. Since then he has amassed extensive experience as a national-level postal arbitrator. Goldberg will convene a preliminary meeting on Jan. 20 to discuss “ground rules” for the hearing.

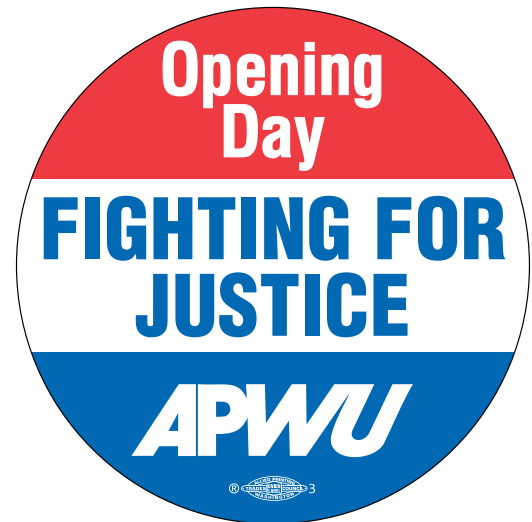
Arbitration hearings on the Collective Bargaining Agreement, known as “interest arbitration,” are similar to court cases, with opening and closing statements, witness testimony, cross-examination, presentation of supporting documents, and legal briefs.

Complex Material

Because of the complex nature of the material, the hearings are expected to stretch over numerous sessions, which will be scheduled based on Goldberg’s availability.

The APWU seeks to win fair wage increases; protect cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs); defend the no-layoff clause; win improvements for Postal Support Employees (PSEs) and Part-Time Flexibles; secure more career jobs; redefine “full-time” so that it again guarantees a 40-hour work week; limit subcontracting, and win better service for our customers.

Management wants to gut the COLA for current workers and is seeking a new tier in the career workforce that would earn no COLAs; have virtually no protection against layoffs, and face a reduction in annual leave and sick leave. (The APWU currently has a three-tier workforce, consisting of pre-2010 career employees; post-2010 career employees – who earn lower pay than their pre-2010 counterparts – and post-2010 PSEs, who earn even lower pay and fewer benefits.)



To show solidarity, union members will wear stickers on the opening day of arbitration. Stickers are being mailed to members’ homes.

APWU’s attorneys will present the union’s case, with testimony from officers, economists, workers and other experts.

Phil Tabbita, APWU manager of Negotiations Support, will serve as the union-appointed advocate on the panel.

Negotiations began almost a year ago, on Feb. 19, 2015. The 90-day negotiation period ended on May 26, following a one-week extension. The parties engaged in mediation throughout the summer and began identifying possible neutral arbitrators in the fall. Informal talks continued.

‘We’re Ready’

“We began preparing for the possibility of arbitration even before negotiations began,” Dimondstein said. “Our negotiating team, attorneys, and other advocates are ready.”

“We’re fighting for justice – for a strong Postal Service for generations to come and economic justice for postal workers and retirees, today and in the future,” he said.

To show solidarity as APWU members embark on the final step of our contract battle, union members will wear stickers on the opening day of the hearing with the message, “Fighting for Justice.”