



**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO, Council 100
Transportation Security Administration
LMR Call Week of 11/30/2020. Call began at 3:06 AM and ended at 4:09 PM
Kim Walton leading call**

NB: While these notes closely track the conversation from the LMR call, often including specific phrasing used, it is not a transcript and should not be relied on or quoted as such. This is particularly important this week, given Administrator Pekoske's attendance on the call.

Administrator Pekoske not on the beginning of the call, but Walton says that he intends to join us during the call. Aggregate COVID-19 results as of 11/27/2020 are 3,261. 3,013 are uniformed officers. 2,650 recovered. 10 have died. This Thanksgiving travel period was very busy...1,176,000 passengers yesterday, which was the busiest travel day since the onset of the pandemic. Continue to urge travelers to wear a facemask, and Walton thanked the workforce for their continued work as essential employees.

Among others in attendance are AA Bradshaw, Dr. Czarnecki, head of OSHE Jill Segraves, Deputy AA Cliff McCoy, several attorneys from Chief Counsel, and Paul Ross and Lisa Baker-Amos from Human Capital.

- 1. For employees at Dallas Love Field who had to take their own sick leave while the Department of Aviation's temperature check program was being applied to TSOs, will the agency be restoring the sick leave that the employees were required to use?**

Paul Leyh : Our understanding is that no employees had to use their own sick leave as a result of this temperature check program. If anyone has been made aware of an employee who was required to use sick leave as a result of this program, please provide that specific information to Lisa and we will look into it.

- 2. Where in the process is TSA in determining whether, and to what extent, bargaining unit employees may reduce their scheduled hours by more than what is currently permitted? What are the remaining considerations?**

Paul Leyh: As background, we've carefully considered this issue and determined that as an action necessary to carry out TSA's mission during a national

emergency, TSA will temporarily increase the number of hours a BUE may reduce as a result of one-way shift trades. Labor Relations will reach out with AFGE later this week for additional information.

3. Will the agency agree with the requests made in the Union's letter, sent on November 17, that asked the agency to allow for additional leave flexibilities given rising instances of COVID-19 and increasing school closures?

Walton: We're still reviewing the letter and we appreciate you raising these issues. We'll get a response to you as quickly as we can. As always, we're making sure we're doing everything we can to ensure the workforce can work in a safe environment and take care of their family. So that's forthcoming.

4. Given the Administrator's expected attendance on this call, the Union would like to budget the remainder of time for open discussion.

Open Discussion

Mac: Leyh said the agency is willing to let BUEs reduce their schedule as a result of one-way shift trades. Do we know how much they can reduce?

Leyh: I expect in the next couple days we'll have more details for you. For now, we're able to confirm that we're allowing it.

Mac: Administrator sent out a broadcast on November 24 about performance awards. There is mass confusion with regard to the service pay. Those in the first third pay band will receive 2%, middle third 1.5%, and top third 1%...please clarify, is the 2%...is that referring to those with seniority? So, if I've been here for 10 years, am I part of the 2% or 1%?

Pat Bradshaw: The service pay is intended to tackle the pay at the bottom of the scale. So it's based on years of service but more specifically where you sit on the pay scale. So the bulk of the TSOs are in the lower third of the pay scale, so the goal is to get their pay up based on years of service. So if you are in the lower third, you will get 2%...and again it turns out longevity comes into play because if you have higher pay you've probably been here longer. So if you're at the lower end of the pay scale, we're going to start recognizing you based on where you are in the scale, and move you up, and each year after there will be a predictable pay range.

Pat: We're going to be putting out more information shortly. We'll also put it out in a graphic so it's easier to understand.

Mac: Final question. HCAM rev. 7 expires December 31, 2020.

Pat: -- We're working on it! We have a revision 8 that we're currently working on. So yes, it will be extended beyond December 31, 2020.

Administrator Pecoske (ADM) joins

ADM: Thanks everyone for having me and good to be with you. I'm glad you had the discussion on service pay and other initiatives. The model officer program begins first of January, and the pay follows four quarters.

ADM: It's possible in a given year that an officer get a 10% pay raise. So it's a fairly substantial improvement in compensation. I'm glad we got support from both the House and Senate, so we're just waiting for them to wrap up details on the FY2021 budget. So we're hoping they get an appropriation in place.

ADM: Also I'm very glad we have a ratified CBA that will go into effect on the 10th of December, and one of the things we should talk about is messaging with BUEs. And we want to work on that with you so we have consistent messaging.

ADM: What's most important to me right now is the health and wellbeing of our workforce. I think we as an agency have done a good job protecting employees with all of the PPE, with the HCAM policies we've been able to put out there—I heard Mac's question to Pat about HCAM 8 and that's very much in the works—so we're looking at what things we can extend for a quarter or two while we keep having this high rate of infections. Hopefully we're at the top of the crest and the number of infections starts to go down. Let me open it up to questions.

John Hubert: Good afternoon everyone happy holidays, hello Mr. Pecoske thanks for joining us on the call today. Recently we had a tropical storm at Fort Lauderdale, and I wanted to know what kind of leave the officers would use if they're prevented from coming to work because of flooding. Officers were being told they needed to use their own personal time, and these are officers who were ready and willing to come to work, but were prevented because of the flooding.

ADM giving it to Pat Bradshaw: I'm not familiar with the situation so I hesitate to give an answer if there are circumstances that I'm not familiar with, so I'll have to take that off the line to be able to give an answer.

John Hubert: Absolutely, sure. This has been going on and the officers aren't getting any other kind of leave. So I'll get that information to you so you can take care of it.

Pat: Yeah get it to Lisa, thanks.

ADM: And this is one of those things that if you can get us the info as quickly as possible, that's best so we're able to address it right away and not have to catch up

Chris: I was going to ask about when we could expect HCAM rev. 8 but Mac already hit on that, so I just want to add that I hope you consider additional leave flexibilities going forward when that comes out. More and more officers are reaching the bottom of the barrel of their leave balances, and so that policy of rescinding high-risk weather and safety leave is going to hurt more and more going forward.

ADM: One of the things we've been saying for the past many months now is to protect yourself, not just in the workplace, but also in your personal life. When you're going back and forth to work, and when you're in the community. Because in many cases we're finding that officers are getting infected elsewhere, so be safe everywhere.

Hydrick: I wanted to talk about the 5%. You know, if there are 10% of employees working at a certain level, how do you reduce that down to 5%? I'm a little confused by that.

ADM: we picked 5% because, generally, it's not in much dispute who the top 5% are in any given group. It's probably easier than the top 10%, because the top 5% really stand out. And to the question of "is it applied nationally or at each airport?" the answer is yes. So each airport will get 5% to make the determination, which would end up being 5% nationally. (So, it's 5% at each airport).

Hydrick: The reason I'm asking is because say I've got a supervisor who evaluates me and gives me a good score that would put me at 5%, and then a manager says "no change that, drop them down," that's a problem, and a lot of the time a supervisor won't challenge the manager, so in a lot of cases we have managers dictating the score. So how do we make this a fair process?

ADM: So one of the things we're thinking about is a panel of individuals making recommendations to the FSDs, so it wouldn't just be a linear – your supervisor, then your supervisor's supervisor, on up – it would be a panel of people to figure out who would fall within that 5% allocation. Also, before we publish this, we'd like to run it by you and have a dialogue so the union can have a process in its development.

Shabay: Back to Mac's point, the TSO service pay. Employees have asked if something can be put out, how we reached the 1% or the 2%. How was the specific number reached? Also, I would like to know if the pay bands are going to be restructured. For D E and F, which covers the BUEs – Mac brought up the bottom middle and top thirds of the pay bands – there's little transparency or clarity on where people fall. We're hopeful that that type of information could be put out.

ADM: First, yes. Absolutely on transparency. You run a little bit of a risk when you announce a program—because we knew things would get a little better in 2021 when the budget got passed—but we wanted to put the info out as quickly

as possible. But we'll absolutely show the exact ranges in terms of pay that would make up the bottom, middle, and top third. We also looked at the General Schedule for some guidance. In some service levels you don't get an annual increase. Here we decided to make it an annual increase, as opposed to the GS where at the upper levels it trails off to every two or three years. So this is much more generous than what's in the GS. So I think people will find that's a pretty good news story. Most E bands are probably in the lower third, most TSOs even are in the lower third, so this will cover a lot of people. And remember that service pay is a guarantee separate and apart from other kinds of raises that are available each year.

Pat: So, in the GS, it's typically a 3% increase as you start, but you slow down as you get to the top. Those within grade increases slow down, til you're waiting three years for the next one. So it's also a retention incentive for us, by giving out an increase that you can count of each year.

Shabay: My concern is this. A senior employee who has been here 10, 15, 18 years, they get a 1% raise. 1%, that's a complaint automatically. And it's left to us to try to explain. So if I have an employee who's making 40,000, the 1% raise, that's 400 a year. Spread that over 26 pay periods, tax it, and it's not a lot. For the model officer program, there are prerequisites the employee would have to meet to be considered for that bonus, so of course yes our concern is that there is a disclaimer that says if there is no funding, and the employee is deemed a model officer, they will not get that raise. So again, we need to start finding ways to communicate all these processes and procedures, because the union takes pride in doing that, but it would help if we had that communication with the agency on the administration side so we understand how it's worked out, so that we can help explain that to the employees because there are many who are upset with the limited pay raises.

ADM: We're certainly not through COVID yet. We're hopeful the vaccine will be out soon. We'll put out a broadcast this week that will update everybody on the vaccine and what we know about how it will be administered. To the pay raises, I don't know of a soul who would be disappointed in a pay raise. These pay raises are new, they were not in place before, so my hope is that people will look at the pay raise opportunity we just put out there – and we will explain it, fully – as just that, as something brand new that they weren't getting before, and that it's substantial. So overall I think it's a very positive thing. And I don't know anybody in the federal government who can earn a 10% pay raise in a year, and this program allows for that.

Mac: I and BUEs at those 9 airports where American Airlines is the only airport operator (CAT III and IV), a lot of those employees' schedules were adjusted where instead of 4 hours a day on a 20-hour workweek, they're instead being scheduled for 7 hours, which is messing with their daycare, other part time jobs, etc. Is this the final plan, transferring them from their home airport to another spoke within their hub, or are there other options being explored nationwide?

ADM: We have now about 18 airports where, to your point are CAT III or IV, that have not opened back up for commercial service. Some don't even have an opening date established yet, and candidly some may never open back up. So what we decided to do was to handle those closures in the way we do each year, because remember we have closures happen even without COVID. And then it's really up to the officers on whether or not to take us up on the offers we make under that process.

Johnny Jones: Thanks for being on the call Administrator Pecoske. My question was with regard to the 7500 employees being converted to the E3 pay. You guys have 7500 earmarked. Is that a one-time adjustment that eventually would impact all TSOs...?

ADM: The idea is, within the E-band, and the E-band has the most employees within TSA of any band, we wanted to provide additional pay for that band. Because that's most of the TSOs, the ones who have graduated from D-band but aren't yet leads. So yeah 7500 of the E-band employees will get this additional pay. Unlike the service pay, and unlike model officer, it's a one-time pay increase. So if you get E-3 pay you get that 5% raise, you don't get an additional 5% every year after that.

Johnny: And have you guys ever considered...making a pay adjustment for the people who were here earlier? Prior to that sliding scale, the people here before that didn't see any big increases. So I'm just trying to figure out how longevity figures into that, because I've been here for a while and I'll be getting the same 2% as some guy who's been here for two years.

ADM: Since we can't go back in time, we decided to pick a starting point, that'll be calendar year 2021, and Pat correct me if I'm wrong, but to get your first service increase you'll need to have been here for three years. But yes, if you're at the same point as that person, you will move up with them in lockstep.

Pat: It's actually less than three years. It would end up being something like thirty months.

ADM: yeah, and that's no different than the general schedule, where you don't get your first longevity raise in your first or second year.

Pat: You get your first within grade after your first 12 months, but remember you're getting other kinds of raises. All these different initiatives fit together to help move you through the band, and that's what we haven't communicated well so far. After you've been here 6 months, you move up, then you get the 5% in-band raise, then you get the E3, and so those are all in combination. So the service pay is intended to acknowledge that, but it comes after you have completed the mandatory training to then be able to move to the service pay.

Johnny: I've been looking at other agencies within DHS, to throw it out there, why hasn't TSA looked into a journeyman designation?

Pat: So the expectation is, by the time you reach the top, you've moved from D to E, that you are a journeyman, and if you're that at another agency and you reach step ten, you've capped out. So this is better than that. As a band, when you have a pay band structure, there are pay band systems in other parts of the government, you move through the band based on your increased level of responsibility and/or education/training/other criteria, so I think our band is rather wide, so it gives you a longer time to move through it.

Johnny: Have you all done an analysis of how long it would take for a TSO to get to the top of the band?

Pat: When my staff looked at how you move through the band in a way that is deliberate and thoughtful...that's how we've come up with these programs. Just like a CBP officer...ours are deliberate. To move up in the band, you can be a model officer, you can take certain kinds of training that makes you more experienced and puts you in a more valuable category. So each band, the way we've crafted it, recognizes what has been articulated by the leadership as important considerations. And that's the way most pay bands are constructed. It doesn't work so much in Title 5 because you just have to be there.

Johnny: So I'd just suggest that you put out more guidance and show TSOs how long it would take to move up the band

Kim Walton: I wanted to note that we're at the top of the hour, and we've spent a lot of time on pay issues. We will do our best to communicate that information well. I think we mentioned putting it in a graphic so that it's easier to understand for our employees. But what I'm getting from this is that we as an agency have some work to do on communicating this. ADM, do you have any closing guidance?

ADM: So we know full well that not all the details are worked out just yet, so I would ask you to stay tuned and look at the drafts that we send to you for comment, and get it back to us as quickly as you can, because we do need to communicate this. With respect to journeyman status, yeah we'll take a look at that. That's essentially a ladder program, but I think it would be good to show an entry-level TSO what they could expect in terms of pay going through all the bands. But there are other opportunities throughout the agency, perhaps broader than you would see in others, you'd have to compete for them, but they're available. Like canine handler, inspector, things like that which generally have higher levels of pay attached to them. And I agree with all the comments on transparency. I've been all about transparency since I was in this position, so we'll put all that information out there. But what I'd like to emphasize is that "let's not turn a good into a bad." More money is good, not bad. And this is the first

time we've been able to put longevity pay in place for the agency, in 19 years. So let's please keep it in that context and have the workforce see it in that lens. And Hydrick I look forward to seeing you on Thursday.

Walton: This concludes our call. Of course, we will continue at our regularly scheduled time in two weeks to continue discussing COVID-related matters. I do want to stress that we are working on HCAM rev. 8. We are encouraging our workforce to not only use PPE at work but to do everything they can outside of work to stay safe.