



July 2015

The RLA Section 6 Ratification Process

As Negotiating Chairman Mark Lockwood indicated previously, we were incredibly close to getting a Tentative Agreement during our last mediated negotiation, which took place during the week of June 22 in Chicago. There was frenetic activity, but more interestingly, a sense of urgency from the company to get a deal completed. Your Negotiating team wasn't nonplussed, but we were very, very surprised as a sense of urgency has not existed at the bargaining table since time immemorial. On Thursday the 25th, and nearing the end of the week, we worked feverishly throughout the day from about 8:30am till 2:00am, rarely leaving the conference room save for more coffee or a quick meal. Unfortunately, there were a few key provisions that the Negotiating Committee reckoned to be unacceptable and that the company ostensibly could not live without.

With all of that being said, we did come really close to a Tentative Agreement back in June and the company did make some moves in our direction. It is equally likely that we could have a TA soon, or that these boggy negotiations will continue to slog slowly forward into the foreseeable future. With a TA a possibility and a lot of new pilots among our ranks, it is important to understand the ratification process.

Ratifying a TA is simple. The process to ratification has what I would call the "3 filters." It begins with your negotiations team, who work at the general direction of the Master Executive Council. The MEC, through various methods such as pilot surveys, determine what is important to bargain for during contract negotiations. The MEC then provides these bargaining priorities to the negotiators. Armed with this information, the negotiators work tirelessly to achieve as many of the objectives as possible. If a Tentative Agreement is reached between the negotiators and the company, the negotiating team sends the new TA to the MEC, where the MEC determines if it is acceptable. With a yes vote from the MEC, the TA goes to the pilots, who have the final say about ratification.

A quick word about pilot surveys: the MEC and the negotiators use these as a tool to get a "sense of the body" and to determine what the negotiations objectives will be. That makes participation in pilot surveys an excellent means for the MEC to hear all opinions, so that they can make informed decisions and present a TA to the pilots that meets your needs. We urge all pilots to participate in future surveys and to take every opportunity to have your voices heard.

Those are the three filters to ratification, in a nutshell: the negotiating team, the MEC, and, finally, the pilot group. The three filters are in place to ensure the most efficient, transparent, and effective process, so that the union achieves the best outcome. Below is a

flow chart, showing the entire section 6 bargaining process. The ratification process is delineated on the left side of the flow chart.

The RLA Negotiations Process

