



Upcoming Union Events in "The Month Ahead"

PAGE 8



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THE WORKER



PRESIDENT
RANDY MARLER

President's Message

Sisters and Brothers,

I am taking this month to highlight a few items we discussed at the Union Meeting and some we did not.

We have had an outstanding grievance with the city for about four years, which began with an agreement in the last 2016-2020 CBA that did away with 24-hour light duty. The city thinks we just gave that away for nothing, which is ludicrous. We agreed in the CBA that you could turn down light duty, and only the L&I supplemental portion would be taken out of your sick leave. In a nutshell, when you are off IOD, you get paid 100% of your wages. L&I has a rate you get paid, which becomes your worker's comp payment and generally about 70% of your wages. The other 30% is what we identify as the supplemental portion that we got in bargaining so that you are made whole. That 30% ish, as determined by the worker's comp payment formula, is all your sick leave that should be deducted if you refuse light duty and choose to stay home and maximize recovery from your duty-related injury. Unfortunately, the City decided that if you refuse light duty, 100% of your sick leave is used for missed shifts, which is exactly what the law says. So we gave away 24-hour light duty in exchange for following what Labor and Industries set as the floor for benefits. Well, we did not do that. In an extremely benevolent settlement offer that Local 29 offered the city to avoid arbitration, we had agreed to let it go if the city removed the arbitrary three-person cap for off duty light duty availability. This is something we do regularly, and we have a past practice of doing, so really what we wanted as a change was to simply dispose of the 72-hour wait period for workers comp payments.

Continued on next page...

Right now, any work missed in the first 72 hours of injury is covered by your sick leave, and after 72 hours, workers comp payments kick in. However, if you are off for 14 days or more, any sick leave used in the first 72 gets converted to workers comp payment, and your sick leave bank gets reimbursed. This happens so rarely with us that working together was a gift and a show of good faith. The City spit in our faces, and after a year of considering if they could do this; pretending they weren't sure if they could; and me spending all my time helping them understand that they could, they finally decided the answer is just NO. So we are getting ready for arbitration over that issue.

Another item is that you may have heard we were pushing not to mow lawns and clean up the lines between what our membership is allowed to do and what 270 does. The issue has come up several times when members asked to plow snow, paint stations, and do minor maintenance in our firehouses and we have been told it's 270's work. Well, we challenged that, and the bottom line is none of that is 270 exclusive bargaining unit work, so please carry on mowing lawns and taking care of your firehouses. Attached is the Letter from the Fire Chief that you can reference next time you hear anyone say you can't do that because it's 270's work.

In an unrelated decision, the Fall inspection is not going to happen. We have too much time that needs to be spent on items that matter, like training new members, training new crews, and training in general, because it never ends for your entire career. In addition, our current demands for required compliance issues, tech teams, EMS certs, WAC compliances, etc. keep us busy. We don't have time to push pause for another three weeks and inspection level clean. The Fire Chief has given that directive and we appreciate his advocacy.

Finally, we are making a very concerted effort to emphasize station reps and deliver information up and down the chain of our union to ensure every concern, issue, and opinion is heard. We are taking the time to make sure we listen and respond. The days of trying to stop at the fire stations and talk to everyone individually is not a reality anymore. Crews are busy running calls, trying to do their own training, and taking time to stop and talk to me during the day is not the best use of your time on shift. I wish it were as easy as taking one day to go to all the stations but ask anyone who has run for an election lately. It takes weeks just to hit one complete shift because of waiting for crews to be around and not getting interrupted for calls. Obviously, we have our Union meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7 pm for everyone. Still, we also acknowledge that not everyone can do that, so we implemented this new format and emphasis on the station rep and eboard member relationship to ensure we are still making communication and participation a priority.

Thank you for your membership and support of our Union.

In Solidarity,

Randy Marler

From The VP's Desk:



VICE PRESIDENT
LEE MCNAMEE

Brothers and sisters,

Last year I wrote that we had formed an SOG committee to address the current state of our SOGs. That committee has yet to begin their work, but I am hopeful that we can start very soon. Anyone who has done any studying in the last few years or helped one our probationary members prepare for their testing realizes that we have multiple SOGs that could use some updating. Over the last 25 plus years the department has tried several versions of the documents that are designed to define how we do business. We previously had Administrative Orders and SOPs. We then switched to a Policies and Procedures manual and then back to SOP's. Our most recent change was around 2017 when we converted the SOPs into SOGs.

Chief O'Berg has been tasked with the assignment of updating these documents. In my conversations with her, we agree on both the need for updating and some changes that might be helpful for the future. We have discussed creating separate categories in which each of these documents live. For example, we would have separate sections for Fire Prevention, Operations, Training, Safety etc. etc. This would make referencing the policies much easier than the current alphabetical arrangement. We currently have several SOGs that are outdated, redundant, or just no longer needed.

The department has recently contracted with Lexipol, a company that specializes in public safety policy and procedure manuals. The bulk of their clients are on the law enforcement side, but they also serve a large contingent of fire agencies. SPD has been using them for at least a couple of years now. I have just had a cursory introduction into their process and will be meeting with their consultant and Chief O'Berg in the next week or so. I will be pushing to involve our SOG committee and the subject matter experts in the review process, so that we get the best product possible. And due to language we have secured in our CBA, all policies and procedures must be agreed to by labor and management prior to implementation.

Lexipol uses a Policy and Procedures format as opposed to our current SOG model. We have had several internal discussions over the last couple of years when we are trying to develop new SOGs or update existing documents that maybe there is a better way to do things. Lexipol defines policies as "guiding principals intended to influence decisions and actions" as opposed to procedures that are a "particular and specific way of doing things". Like strategy vs. tactics, the policy is what we want to happen, and the procedures are how we make that happen. I am hopeful that this process will be good and get us back on track.

In Solidarity,

Lee McNamee (509)280-7489
vicepresiaffl29@gmail.com



From The Treasurer:

TREASURER
KIRK GRIFFITH

Hello Brothers and Sisters,

I'd like to keep you apprised of all things financial regarding Local 29. Our spending is right on budget through the first four months of 2023. Our travel budget is significantly under budget due to a canceled event (WSLC COPE), an event we chose not to attend (Fire Ops), and one of our most expensive events (Spring Ed Seminar) came in \$5k under budget. We are still working hard to sell the old hall and recently reduced our asking price to \$650k.

Lightning Round:

- It would be awesome to see more of you at events and union meetings. I for one don't know most of you that have been hired in the past few years, so it'd be great have some beers and make connections at/after a union meeting.
- Are you responding to a nursing home or doctor's office for a non-emergent issue? Was the staff on scene unhappy to see you because they ordered an ambulance for a 31T and not a firetruck? Per Chief Schaeffer this shouldn't be happening and if it does forward the incident through your chain of command so that Chief Schaeffer can get the appropriate paperwork done so that it doesn't happen again.
- So far we are having good results with our revamped station rep program. Have an idea or a question? Send it to your station rep so that your Executive Board can hear it directly at our next meeting.

-Kirk-



From The Secretary:

SECRETARY
BILL GRUMMONS

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you in this role. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Bill
SecretaryIAFFL29@gmail.com
509-939-5275

Wellness

By SFFBUVP Sean Golladay

Brother and Sisters of the Grind,

It's been a couple of months since my last article. The Wellness committee hasn't met in a couple of months because there hasn't been much to report on. The principal officers and I are attending the IAFF Redmond symposium in August so there will be lots of material to bring back. I focused on classes which I thought would be helpful soon like Incumbent Fitness Test Considerations and Firefighter Health and Wellness Standards. There were classes on FDNY truck operations and elevator operations, but a quick YouTube search will keep you busy for months. Lots of Billy Bob's volunteer truck scenarios to filter through. I want to be well educated when the city wants to bring a fitness standard to the table. Your fitness is your responsibility.

I read a quote from a boxing coach that went something like, "The greatest gift a fighter can give themselves is supreme fitness". I probably didn't get that correct, but you get the point. Figure out where you are deficient within your team and start grinding. We shouldn't expect to be all things, but we should all try to bring out the healthiest version of ourselves. We individually owe that to our families, teammates and citizens.

Speaking of bringing the healthiest version of ourselves, I have been recovering from biceps repair and shoulder surgery for the last couple of months. Don't worry my biceps repair was successful and now it has a glorious peak. I will be working intensely to bring it to the form you all expect. I've learned a great deal about the workman's comp (WC) process recently. I've had WC covered surgeries before and thought I was well prepared but my most recent experience caught me under prepared. I cannot go into specifics, but I will forever treat every WC healthcare visit as if I were going into a Loudermill. That may be extreme to you, but we live in a reality where if someone writes something down it is considered a fact that you must disprove. I will take notes immediately following my WC healthcare visit and carefully examine caregiver statements. Doing so will help prevent one side being presented as fact. If any of you need some guidance navigating the workman's comp minefield, please get in touch with me. I am eager to help. I need to clarify that the city's Workman comp office has been excellent to work with. Mandy Turner and Sandra Parker are the city's WC claim managers and they are both timely and professional. They have been the opposite of a husband-and-wife team who were the previous claims managers. We are fortunate they are gone and replaced by Mandy and Sandra. Sometimes things change for the better and our efforts are not wasted.

Til next time, keep grinding.

Sean Golladay BUVP

509-991-5909

Voya Committee

By Dave Kovac



Your VOYA Deferred Compensation Plan Oversight

Committee met for our quarterly meeting on Tuesday, May 16th. It's been a busy and exciting year for the plan as we switched over to a new fund suite, added a Roth Option and a Brokerage Account to the plan; all while lowering fees and improving performance. Your Deferred Comp plan is normally something you sign up for and forget about for the next 25 years, but there is a wealth of information on the VOYA website that can help you fine tune your options as well as plan for your retirement. In addition, the Local puts a very in depth quarterly analysis that we receive from our investment consultant on the Local's website each quarter if you want to dig deeper into your plan and see how our fund options compare to what else is out there. We have worked hard over the last 3 or 4 years to really bring the VOYA plan up to speed and the changes are really starting to bear fruit.

All that being said, none of it is worth anything if you don't sign up for it. This is aimed more at our newer members but there are a number of folks out there that haven't signed up for the Deferred Comp benefit yet. The city matches us \$221.44 each and every paycheck. If you are not getting the match, you are giving the city money that you have earned and that the Local has bargained for you to receive. There's no other investment that I know if that gives you a 100% return guaranteed. I know it seems like a lot right when you are starting out, but it's worth it and the earlier you start saving, the bigger your account is at retirement. If you haven't signed up yet, please get ahold of Steve or Peyton Gray at Purpose Financial, our local VOYA reps, at 509-455-4010. Get started today.

For those who are in the program, or looking to adjust your fund options, new as of last year is the Roth Option I mentioned that grows tax deferred over the life of the account. That is only for money over the match, and it will be taxable on the front end, but is an excellent opportunity to grow tax free savings.

- For 2023 the match is \$221.44
- The maximum is \$22,500.00
- The over 50 catch up is an addition \$7,500.00

If you have any questions, Steve and Peyton Gray are available to answer them or to get you into the Roth option. Your VOYA Committee Members are:

- Dave Kovac
- Bill Grummons
- Brett Johnson
- Jeremy Heimbigner

A newly retired Jeff Webb is on the committee as a retiree representative.

Thanks and have a great summer

Dave Kovac

Bloomsday

By Corey Newman

Brothers and Sisters,

Local 29 ran another successful Bloomsday water station this year. We did this with only 6 Local 29 members in attendance. It's been a few years since we've had a "normal" Bloomsday but attendance was very low and it made it difficult to pull this event off.

I'm about to go on what seems like a pretty big tangent, but please stick with me. We have an outstanding job. Recently, I've been reminded how outstanding it is every day. For those of you who don't know, my wife was recently diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Her prognosis is good and we will weather this storm, but that was never guaranteed. She is getting some of the best health care, and I owe that to the collective action of brothers and sisters who came before me to organize our benefits trust. I have over 1000 hours of sick time that I can use to take care of her, because members before me stood together and fought for it. I have a job where I work 46 hours a week. Before the IAFF was organized firefighters in Spokane worked 6 - 24 hour days a week, that's a 144 hour work week.

It is only because of their collective action, and the action of those that came after them that we enjoy the outstanding job we have today. Collective action does not mean that you have to give money to politicians (but I think you should.) Collective action does not mean you have to knock on doors or call people on behalf of politicians (but it can be.) Collective action means all of us coming together, and giving our time to a cause greater than ourselves. It can be as simple as handing out water on Bloomsday or filling the boot for MDA.

Here's the deal: everything we have, we owe to collective action. My wife volunteered 6 hours of her time to promote the wellbeing of this union, and if that is more than you have given this year, you are in luck. We have 7 months left this year. All you need to do is an hour per month. We can continue to make this job better than our forebears could have ever imagined. All it will take is all of us acting, collectively.

Solidarity forever,

Corey Newman

If you'd like to volunteer but don't know how, here is a list of upcoming events that are fun and easy. If you're on probation or in recruit school, we'd especially love to see you taking an interest.

Coats for Kids - Contact Ryan Davis

Fill the Boot - Contact Mike DelaMatter

Santa Float - Contact Mike Walker

Christmas Carousel - Brendan Craig

Cliff-Cannon Block Party - The guy currently yelling at you about volunteerism

THE MONTH AHEAD

Labor Management	05/25
SAFO Negotiations	05/26
SAFO Negotiations	06/02
Next Union Meeting	06/13
WSCFF Convention	06/19 - 06/21

Local 29 Executive Board

President: Randy Marler - L4D - PresidentIAFFL29@gmail.com (509)220-8926
 Vice President: Lee McNamee - L4A - VicePresIAFFL29@gmail.com (509)280-7489
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 E-Board: Eric Staggs - E15B - (503)559-9826
 E-Board: Mike Walker - E1B - (509)432-1497
 E-Board: Mike DeLaMatter - L4C - (509)844-8713
 E-Board: Ryan Davis - Q11C - (509)710-1793
 E-Board: Corey Newman - E1D - (509)808-1556
 WSCFF 9th District Rep.: Jeff Wainwright - 9thdist@wscff.org



BRIAN SCHAEFFER
Fire Chief

March 15, 2023

International Association of Firefighters, Local 29
Randy Marler, President
804 S Monroe Street
Spokane, WA 99204

Dear President Marler,

I have reviewed the information you provided and considered our initial discussion regarding the performance of HVAC work, painting, lawn care (including sprinkler maintenance, lawn mowing, and snow removal), among other maintenance tasks performed at fire stations and facilities. As a threshold issue, Local 29 has no authority to cease performance of duties as assigned or to grieve on behalf of Local 270 alleged performance of bargaining unit work. The grievance is therefore without merit procedurally.

Even so, I will address the merits of the claim. Local 29 has long performed the work you describe over the course of decades. For bargaining unit work to be exclusive, it must be performed by only the bargaining unit. Should two or more bargaining units contemporaneously perform work over a significant period of time, that work is no longer exclusive and bargaining unit lines would not apply. Similarly, if one unit ceases to perform work in all or many cases, that unit can effectively cede bargaining unit work to another unit who is performing the work. I am deeply committed to maintaining fair and historical bargaining unit lines.

In some of the instances you describe, both Local 29 and Local 270 have long performed the work, for example snow removal. The mutual performance of that work means that the work is not exclusive to either group and can be appropriately performed by either group. In other cases, Local 29 has exclusively performed the work over a number of years, for example lawn care. The exclusive performance of that work likely means that Local 270 long ago acquiesced that work to Local 29.

I am not aware of any work performed by Local 29 that would be the exclusive jurisdiction of Local 270. Should any exclusive Local 270 work be performed by Local 29 and brought to my attention I am happy to review and consider that information or a meritorious grievance brought by Local 270 to that effect. Given the above considerations, I deny this grievance as lacking merit both procedurally and substantively.

Sincerely,

Brian Schaeffer
Fire Chief