

Transcript of APFA Negotiations Update – February 2010 – YouTube Video

- Laura Glading – APFA President
- Anne Loew – Chair of the APFA Negotiating Team

[Laura] Hi, I'm APFA President Laura Glading with an update on our recent negotiations. As you've heard by now, after 11 consecutive days of bargaining last month we were unable to reach an agreement.

We came into these talks determined and optimistic that a deal was possible. Unfortunately, management offered nothing more than concessions. Here's Anne Loew, Chair of our Negotiating Team to discuss in detail some of the key points of what the company proposed during our lockdown negotiations.

[Anne] Hello, I'm Anne Loew, Chair of the APFA Negotiating Team. As you know, last month we participated in 11 consecutive days of intensive bargaining and I would like to give you a brief overview of some of the proposals made by management during that period.

Since we began these negotiations in May of 2008, American has recited a single mantra: any new contract must be "zero sum." We have consistently and firmly told management's team there is zero chance for zero sum. Yet, during our lockdown negotiations last month, the company persisted and expanded on that theme.

Management claims they can't afford pay increases. Yet they find new money to invest in everything but us, their frontline employees: new aircraft, renovation of terminals and Admirals Clubs, and of course we all know about the excessive bonuses our executives reward themselves with year after year.

Still, the company refuses to recognize our sacrifices, and they continue to push for concessions they were unable to achieve in 2003, resulting in a contract that would be concessions upon concessions for us.

In a nutshell, their proposals would put 50 cents in one pocket while taking two dollars out of another. By the year 2014, the company's current proposal would make American Airlines Flight Attendants experience a 41.4% loss of real income over the past 10 years. It is no longer zero sum, but less than zero sum.

Here are just a few of the concessions demanded by AA management:

- No permanent structural pay increases. Our current pay scale would remain the same throughout the duration of the contract.
- Increase permanent structural costs of health benefits by 250%. Premiums would increase an average of \$1600 a year, the equivalent of cutting our salary by 4%.
- Increase our schedule max to 92.5 hours with the ability to build 30% of the lines to 95 hours.
- Eliminate pure bids, which would decimate our bid sheet.
- Cut vacation beyond 33% already given in 2003, and PVDs would be paid at a daily rate, regardless what your sequence is worth.
- Cut sick leave, or keep it the same, for a large majority of Flight Attendants.
- The company has also proposed increasing expenses by a mere 15 cents, still below what the pilots currently make. In addition, they want to eliminate expenses for turn-arounds.

- Establish a four-year contract, with an amendable date sometime in 2014. Any improvements to wages, vacation or any other benefit would not be negotiated until after that date.

These demands are not only unacceptable, they are outrageous. We must have a contract that recognizes our sacrifices. Management cannot be the only one who reaps the rewards of our hard work and professionalism.

It is OUR TURN now.

[Laura] I strongly urge every member to go to the APFA website to see an updated point-counterpoint document outlining the completely unreasonable proposals the company made.

Our intention after the lockdown talks failed was to ask the National Mediation Board for a release into a thirty-day cooling off period, the last step before self help.

However, being in federally mediated talks, the NMB dictates the process and the timeline. They have directed us to continue negotiating for an additional five days beginning Saturday, February 27 at the NMB offices in Washington, DC. We will once again enter this session determined to achieve the contract you rightly deserve.

Our earlier optimism that we can reach a deal has lessened a bit by the reality of the company's actions and their clear intent to stall, and to extract more concessions. But we still believe a deal is possible.

We remain committed to the process. But the process includes the responsibility of both sides to bargain fairly. The company simply has not lived up to their part of the bargain. Unless there is a dramatic change forthcoming, we must demand the process bring us to an impasse, the next step—and our right—under the Railway Labor Act.

If we do not achieve a contract during this round of talks, our plan is to go to the NMB to present our case and ask for a release. There is, however, the possibility that the NMB can direct us to more talks. Again, they control the process.

We understand there's a lot of anger and frustration. After hearing details of the additional concessions that the company is asking for, I am sure you are even more angry and more frustrated. We must channel that anger toward the responsible party: AA management.

Our ranks must remain unified, strong and as determined as your Negotiating Team to getting you the contract you deserve.

We know that it's been a tough year, and we know everyone is flying more and working harder than ever before.

I want to personally thank each and every Flight Attendant for your hard work and your support. Your involvement in this campaign has been inspirational and is the key to our future success. Our one Red Day before the lockdown negotiations was a great accomplishment.

Now we will ask all Flight Attendants to turn their disks to red on February 26th in a show of solidarity for our Negotiating Team as we enter five days of lockdown negotiations at the NMB in Washington, DC.

Remember, stay involved and engaged. Go to the APFA website; read the HotLine.

It's OUR TURN and we will not back down.