

**Special Hotline  
31MAY07**

**AFA Northwest Contract Ratification Ballot  
By Kevin P. Creighan, AFA-CWA Int'l Secretary-Treasurer  
May 31, 2007**

On May 29, 2007, the official vote count was conducted for the new Tentative Agreement ratification ballot. The information below is provided to explain some of the process used during the ratification ballot, and to dispel any rumors or misinformation that may be circulating.

QUESTION: What was the final breakout by Local Council?

Answer:

Below is the breakdown

	Eligible	For	Against	Percent For	Percent Against	Void
NWA TOTAL	6442					
NWA-C91-NYC TOTAL	220	73	101	41.95	58.05	12
NWA-C92-BOS TOTAL	195	69	108	38.98	61.02	25
NWA-C93-MEM TOTAL	377	206	119	63.38	36.62	17
NWA-C94-DTW TOTAL	2467	981	1256	43.85	56.15	162
NWA-C95-MSP TOTAL	1913	1230	551	69.06	30.94	199
NWA-C96-SEA TOTAL	352	155	181	46.13	53.87	26
NWA-C97-SFO TOTAL	224	26	170	13.27	86.73	13
NWA-C98-LAX TOTAL	363	139	187	42.64	57.36	24

NWA-C99-HNL						
TOTAL	330	87	189	31.52	68.48	6
Grand Totals	6441	2966	2862	51.89	49.11	484

QUESTION: What are the reasons for so many void ballots ?

Answer:

This Ratification Ballot was conducted according to the rules within our Constitution and Bylaws, and there are three pertinent Articles that caused these ballots to be voided.

Of the 484 void ballots, 242 ballots were deemed to be void because the respective Members failed to pay their dues. Article XI.F.1 requires timely payment of dues or the member is placed in Bad Standing. While in Bad Standing, the member cannot exercise the right to vote.

Another 18 members were in non-dues paying status while on extended leaves in excess of 90 days. Article II.C.1.b.(2) stipulates that Active Status and a dues obligation only continues for 90 days, after which a member cannot exercise the right to vote (and the dues obligation is suspended).

Finally, there were 224 ballots that were deemed void because individuals did not have a membership application on file with the Union. Article II.D.1 requires that an application must be submitted for membership.

In all cases, the existing constitutional guidelines were used in determining if any ballot would be deemed void.

QUESTION: Was anything done to inform and help people complete membership applications ?

Answer:

Most flight attendants had already signed a membership application, either immediately after AFA was elected last July, or in the 11 months since then. This month on May 4, in order to facilitate completion of membership applications by those who had not yet joined the Union, we sent a letter to every Northwest flight attendant who did not have an application on file. This letter identified the fact that we did not have an application on file; explained that there was a constitutional requirement that we receive one; provided a blank application for these individuals to complete; instructions with contact information; and advised that failure to provide the completed application would result in their ballot being deemed void. There were also several email reminders that these had to be completed, or the ballots cast would be void due to non-membership status.

QUESTION: Were phone calls returned over the holiday weekend ?

Answer:

We were very aware that 29 May was the Tuesday following the Memorial Day weekend. We decided to staff the Membership Department over the weekend as an extraordinary measure to keep pace with phone calls from Northwest flight attendants. There were two members of staff at the office each day, and by Monday evening all phone messages had been returned.

QUESTION: What was done to ensure a smooth count on 29 May ?

Answer:

From the previous Answer you can see that we were operating on schedule and up to speed for the entire holiday weekend. We planned on a high level of work on Monday so we staffed our AFA-CWA Membership Services Department with five members of staff, all dedicated for the day to this ratification ballot. We also were assisted by others working in the CWA Membership Department. These extra steps were taken to facilitate the process.

QUESTION: Why was the balloting period extended ?

Answer:

When Monday morning arrived, the day began quietly with the staff caught up on all incoming calls. But by 12:00 noon we noticed that we were being inundated with an unprecedented wave of last-minute callers. After discussing this with our Membership Services Department, it became very clear that the volume of calls during this last two hours of the voting period was so great that all calls would not be returned by 1.30 pm (EDT).

By 12:45 p.m., we had conducted a discussion with our three International Officers, our General Counsel, and our Associate General Counsel. We discussed the fact that the vast majority of these callers were contacting us with less than two hours remaining in the pre-scheduled balloting window. We discussed the two primary options: (1) close the polls at the pre-scheduled time, which would have the effect of denying an opportunity to vote to all of the individuals who were requesting voting information before the deadline and waiting for a response; or, (2) extend the polling period until these messages which were received before 1:30 pm could be returned so those flight attendants would not lose the opportunity to vote.

From a legal perspective, it was concluded that either option was legally permissible. If there was a legal "preference," it was to extend the opening of the polls as this would permit more members to vote and would be deemed a more democratic option.

From the perspective of the International Officers, this was seen very much as a "rock-and-a-hard-place" situation. We were faced with an unforeseen situation during the final 90 minutes of the polling in that unprecedented numbers had waited until the last minute to call seeking assistance in casting a ballot. Should we close the polls and expect a backlash from those who would claim that they were denied the right to vote; or should we err on the side of allowing those who made a good

faith (albeit, last-minute) effort to vote even if some people would inevitably question the extension of the deadline ?

While a very difficult decision, we opted to take the more democratic option.

QUESTION: Are extended polling times allowed elsewhere ?

Answer:

We viewed this extension very much the same as the "extension" one is allowed if they arrive at their local polling station to cast their ballot in a national election. If you arrive at the polling station before the closing time, you are allowed to stay and vote, even though you will be casting your ballot after the official closing time. The polls are kept open after the scheduled closing time to accommodate those who made the effort to get there before the deadline.

QUESTION: Since the ballot was electronic, shouldn't we know the result as soon as the polls close ?

Answer:

Normally, the first step in the process after closing the polls is to provide BallotPoint (our vendor for electronic voting) with our membership database file so they can tally the votes.

For this ratification ballot, because of all the last minute membership applications and status updates, it was essential before sending this file that we ensure our database was completely up to date. Because we mailed about 1,500 membership applications to those who had not yet joined prior to the vote, we knew and expected that we would be receiving last-minute applications. Because the MEC had done a very good job of educating members about the requirement to be current in their dues we also expected many last minute dues payments. Although this took somewhat longer than a "normal" election, we ensured that all of this was complete before sending the file to BallotPoint.

After sending the file, the last pre-planned activity we had to complete before counting the actual valid votes was to review the roster of ineligible flight attendants – those whose votes would be void if they had in fact cast a vote. We double checked the list of ineligibles before sending it to BallotPoint, ensuring that even those who filed their membership applications or paid their dues at the last minute would all be moved from the "ineligible" list to the list of eligible flight attendants whose votes would count. We reviewed the file of each individual on the ineligible list to ensure that no ballot would be considered void unless there was a constitutional reason to do so. In total, we were estimating that it would take between 1-2 hours to officiate the ballot after closing the polls.

QUESTION: How many people voted after the scheduled close at 1.30 pm (EDT)?

Answer:

Only 45 people voted after the original closing time. While it is impossible to determine how these individuals voted, this small number would not change the result no matter how they voted.

QUESTION: Is a recount possible, and will one be performed ?

Answer:

Yes. Our Constitution and Bylaws provides a procedure in Section IX.D, which permits any member to request a recount. Because the actual count was so close, we actually welcomed the request to conduct a recount.

To perform this recount, we conducted a thorough review of the voting and eligibility records, including an audit of the documentation provided by our vendor, Ballot Point. This documentation included all of the files that determine if one is a Member and if one is current in their dues and thus eligible to vote.

We also used documentation provided by BallotPoint as well as their expertise in conducting recounts of electronic ballots.

The result of the recount is that no discrepancies were found in the original count. The recount determined the vote to be 2966 "FOR" and 2862 "AGAINST." Total eligible voters remained 6442 in the recount, with 5829 votes cast, representing 90.5% of the eligible voters. Once again there was one ballot in which the voter did not make a selection. The recount confirmed 484 ballots declared void, with the same breakdown as in the original count for the number which were due to non-payment of dues (242), leave status (18), and ineligible due to non-member status (224). All of the numbers concur with the original count.

While the margin was quite narrow there is no evidence of any discrepancy in the tally and the results stand as originally certified by the AFA Ballot Certification Committee on May 29, 2007.

QUESTION: Will additional Q&A be provided ?

Answer:

Yes, if desired. Please let your Local Officers know if there is any further information you wish to know. We are very cognizant of the perceptions that may circulate so we want to remain as open as possible by providing as much explanation as anyone would desire.