



March 1, 2018

To: CWA Executive Board

Subject: PPMWS - Special Convention

Dear Executive Board:

I am writing to alert you that we are beginning preparations for a potential Special Convention, which would be held in conjunction with the Presidents' Meeting in June.

The Printing, Publishing, and Media Workers Sector (PPMWS) has crossed a threshold in terms of its size and geographic dispersion that makes a Sector-based administrative structure no longer efficient or effective in providing locals and members with necessary service and staff assistance. In keeping with the Convention's Ready for the Future program and the goal of right-sizing the Executive Board, the time has come to fully consolidate PPMWS into the districts. The number and geographic dispersal of district staff will ensure improved service to members and locals. While we must continue to honor its identity, history, and traditions, we must adapt the PPMWS structure to properly serve members.

PPMWS was established as an administrative arm of CWA following the merger of the International Typographical Union (ITU) and CWA. Initially, PPMWS serviced 40,000 members and was led by a Vice President. The merger agreement provides ALL elements of the CWA Constitution govern the parties.

Over the ensuing years, membership has shrunk, leading to voluntary local mergers and consolidation, and a re-thinking of the PPMWS structure on successive occasions, with agreements attempting to make the Sector more efficient and effective in 2011 and again in 2015. These structural changes have proved insufficient, and we must make additional changes.

Today, PPMWS administrative offices are located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The staff consists of one elected officer (the PPMWS Executive Director), one New Jersey-based staff representative, and one Pittsburgh-based support staff.

PPMWS services 3,600 active members working under hundreds of contracts across the US from Waterville, Maine, to Honolulu, Hawaii. Headquarters data shows that there are 501 processing units within PPMWS, making the average bargaining unit size less than ten workers. There are 105 locals with PPMWS members: 43 Typographical and Mailer locals; 59 amalgamated CWA locals; and 3 other Media locals. While there have been efforts to merge very small PPMWS locals into larger ones, a significant portion (around 40 percent) of PPMWS locals outside of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, i.e., those farther afield from where PPMWS staff is stationed, have less than 20 members each. The geographic breadth of the locals and members makes effective and efficient service to locals and members by one staff representative for the entire country and an administrative officer impossible.

The lack of PPMWS administrative attention that can be paid to each local has consequences. For example, per data from the Department of Labor, eight of the 40-odd Typographical or Mailer locals filed 2017 LM forms late, while another nine have not filed 2017 LM forms at all yet. In addition, it is CWA policy that locals forward to the Secretary-Treasurer's office a copy of their LM reports, IRS Form 990, and financial report or audit. For 2017, only one Typographical or Mailer local has filed all three required documents with the Secretary-Treasurer, and only three other locals have filed one or two of the required documents with the Secretary-Treasurer. These issues may be red flags to federal auditors looking for a reason to do expansive audits throughout CWA.

The story of Local 14320, located in Atlanta, illustrates the administrative difficulties the Sector has. As of 2017, Local 14320 had not paid its per capita since approximately 2010 and was placed under temporary administration, tying up the sole PPMWS staff representative for extended periods of time and costing the National Union tens of thousands of dollars in travel expenses. This local had 15 active members and 6 retirees.

While the Atlanta local is an extreme example, timely dues payments are a persistent problem within the Sector. Dues are collected by hand in many PPMWS bargaining units, a labor intensive process that necessarily requires greater oversight than can be afforded by current staff levels. Per the CWA Dues Department, 79 percent of PPMWS processing units are delinquent relative to the PPMWS policy on timely payment of dues. And 27 percent of PPMWS processing units are more than 60 days out of compliance with basic CWA financial conditions on dues payments, a basis for charter revocation for the locals responsible.

Dues from other CWA members now subsidize the Sector administrative operations. The 2011 and 2015 agreements provided for an annual \$100,000 transfer from Sector operating funds to CWA general funds to help pay for the Sector. But these transfers, even in combination with Sector per capita dues, are insufficient to make the PPMWS administrative structure self-sustaining, much less contribute to National Union programs. CWA has had to subsidize PPMWS operations over the past two years merely to sustain the current tiny administrative structure.

The costs of continuing a separate PPMWS administrative structure are mounting in multiple ways -- not only in dollars, but also in compliance risks and service availability. As it has changed before, that structure must change again.

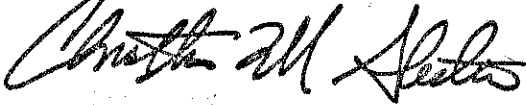
With the goal of efficient, effective, and improved service for locals and members, PPMWS consolidation with the districts may be accomplished as follows:

1. **Consolidation with Districts.** PPMWS locals should be serviced by the CWA districts in which they are located. These locals would have full and regular access to the resources of their respective districts, including grievance/arbitration, mobilization, and bargaining assistance by District Staff Representatives, as needed or requested by the PPMWS locals, like other CWA locals serviced by the districts. PPMWS members would have representation on the Executive Board via their respective District Vice Presidents, rather than via a PPMWS Executive Director.
2. **Minimal Disruption.** At all stages in implementing this new structure, care would be taken to minimize disruption to PPMWS members. Service by local officers would provide continuity, and all parties would strive to make the transition from using existing one PPMWS-dedicated staff to a larger number of district staff as seamless as possible.
3. **Continuity of Membership.** These changes would not add, remove, or transfer any current member to or from any local and would not affect local governance or any local numbers.
4. **Access to Members Relief Fund.** PPMWS members would continue to have access to the CWA Members Relief Fund, in accordance with the CWA Constitution.

In lieu of a Special Convention to accomplish these changes, I initiated discussions with PPMWS and its Laws and Finance Committee in recent months and provided them with a comprehensive proposal on how to transition to an improved structure, inviting them to negotiate a transition process for the full integration of PPMWS into the districts. Unfortunately, those discussions are not bearing fruit quickly enough before it becomes necessary to prepare for a Special Convention. That's why I'm writing.

Barring a voluntary resolution of these issues by the Sector, these structural changes can be accomplished via appropriate amendments to the CWA Constitution. To achieve this full integration, I will be asking the Executive Board to request a Special Convention to consider this sole matter. Such a Special Convention would be called so that it is held in conjunction with the Presidents' Meeting on June 11, 2018.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher M. Shelton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christopher M. Shelton
President