

USW International President Leo Gerard

Dear Bro. Gerard,

Unit R55 has been advised that the USW has imposed new Bylaws on Local Union 1944 to bring it in line with the USW Constitution. These new Bylaws have extinguished Unit R55 and any retiree rights regarding the election of TWPP Trustee.

The Executive of Unit R55 is sending this letter to make the following appeal:

- 1) That Unit R55 be seated at this March 2018 LUDM with the ability to participate in the election of Pension Trustee as promised in Bro. Riggs letter of November 2013 to Unit R55 Executive
- 2) That the USW work with Unit R55 to find a resolution that will ensure that the retired members of the TWPP end up with no less than what they had prior to the TWU-USW merger.

The Merger Agreement states that:

Any members of TWPP who are in good standing of the Union will be eligible for election.

Under the existing Constitution, to run, you must be a member of the Pension Plan in good standing of the Union. What is the interpretation of a member of the Pension Plan in good standing of the Union under the new USW Bylaws?

Are retirees eligible to run for the position of trustee? If retirees are eligible to run for the position, they would not be able to vote for themselves, while active members can do so. This is extremely undemocratic and discriminatory.

There has been a retiree pension trustee for the last 12 years, Sister Carol Nagy, and Sister Nagy is prepared to run again at this LUDM.

Since the establishment of Unit R55, retiree delegates have been able to attend the Convention, now LUDM, to participate in the presentation of the Pension Report. The delegates have been able to ask questions of the Pension Trustees, Actuaries, Consultants, and the Pension Administrator. With Unit R55 terminated, there will be no ability for retirees to access the Pension Report, hear the explanations and ask questions in order to report back to retired TWPP members. This is also discriminatory, and a step backward for a progressive union.

Letter of Commitment from the President of the TWU

This is a direct quote in a letter from the President of the TWU to the Executives of Unit R55 and the BCARTW:

The Merger Agreement combines the best of the TWU's democratic process with the best of the USW's. The Merger Agreement was also designed to provide

security for key foundations of the TWU, including preserving the role of Local R55 in pension trustee selection.

The President of the TWU, now President of USW Local 1944, made a commitment to the retired members of the Union who are members of the TWPP. If this commitment is not honored, there is no reason to believe that any commitments, past or future, will be honored in any agreements, and this will reflect on the USW.

The commitment of the President of the TWU to work with Unit R55 to preserve the role of retirees in the selection of pension trustees has never been followed up on by the TWU.

Therefore, upon successful ratification of the merger, I will obtain the approval of the National Executive Council to appoint a committee to consider options that will ensure that the voice and responsibilities of Local R55 in respect of pension trustees are maintained. The committee will be comprised of members of Local R55, the TWU Merger Negotiations Committee, the TWU Constitution Committee, trustees of the TWPP and any other appropriate groups.

The committee's task will be to consider ways to blend the exciting advent of more membership democracy (with our new one-member-one-vote elections for all executive positions) with the traditional role of Convention (with its delegated system of elections for both pension trustees and officers). While the delegates to our 2014 Convention will ultimately decide how to do this based on what makes the best sense for retirees and for continued success of the TWPP, my position as TWU President will be that the input of retirees will in no way be eroded. To be clear, it is my intent to ensure that Local R55 will end up with no less than what they had prior to the TWU-USW Merger.

The Executive of Unit R55 is appealing to the USW to stand behind the commitment made to the retirees and work with Unit R55 to find a way to ensure that retirees do not end up with less than what they had prior to the TWU-USW merger.

Democracy in the USW

The main reason that the USW was the successful candidate for the merger with the TWU was the perceived internal democracy of the organization.

The imposition of Bylaws without a vote of the LUDM delegates and the members is not the democracy that we were led to expect from the USW.

If the USW, by the imposing of new Bylaws, disallows the ability of TWPP retiree representatives to vote for their Pension Trustees or eliminates the ability of a retiree to run for the position of Pension Trustee, this is a disenfranchisement of not only existing retired members of the TWPP, but also future retiree members.

In Conclusion

The Executive of R55 understands that under the existing USW Constitution there is no allowance for a Unit of retirees, and that the USW organization for retirees is SOAR.

The existence of Unit R55 allows for the specific participation by retirees in the election of Telecommunication Workers Pension Plan Trustees, changes to Article XIV of the TWU Constitution, and in the Pension Report at the LUDM. That is not possible in SOAR.

There is a way that the USW and Unit R55 can work together to ensure that TWPP retirees are included.

Please give consideration to our appeal and respond via email to Unit R55 President Rick Fleming (nicole.rick@telus.net) by end of day Monday March 19th, 2018.

In Solidarity,

Rick Fleming

President Unit R55

cc: Letter to Bro. Leo Gerard sent to all R55 members via separate email

Letter to Unit R55 Executive from Bro. Lee Riggs sent to all R55 members via separate email

Attachment: Letter from the Local 1944 President to the retiree members.