

# How Bargaining Works

## **How does our bargaining team know what to negotiate?**

The information comes from bargaining demands & bargaining surveys submitted by members. Bargaining surveys rank what is most important to you as a member (pensions, wages, working conditions, active and retiree healthcare). Our Bargaining Committee develops a bargaining resolution from these surveys. The resolution is voted on at the Bargaining Council meeting by Local Officers.

Bargaining demands address actual language changes/additions members want to see in the contract. These are reviewed by our Bargaining Committee. In addition, they look at what issues have been the subject of many grievances and if there is language that can be changed to give us a better position with those.

## **What happens at the bargaining table?**

Both the Company and the Union bring issues to table in the form of formal proposals. When either side presents a proposal they also present an argument about the importance of the demand. Our bargainers research the demand in many ways, sometimes talking with the Local or member that submitted it. They also use information that the company legally has to provide from “data requests.”

There are demands the Company **MUST** discuss at the table. Those are called “mandatory subjects of bargaining.” They include wages, hours, working conditions and most benefits. There are issues they do not have to discuss. They are called “permissive subjects.” Retiree issues (levels of pensions and benefits for those already retired) are permissive subjects.

## **Finally and most important**

Just as the Union looks to bargaining as the time to make improvements for our members and fix problems for them, the Company also looks to bargaining as their chance to change things to their advantage. They want to remove policies they believe make it harder for them to do business or cost them too much. Neither side ever gets all they want but the factors determining the final result is **NOT** solely what happens at the bargaining table. It depends on conditions in the industry, the economy and in the political climate **AND** what pressure we as a Union can exert on the Company to force them to take our demands seriously. That is done by the members being united and taking action that affects the Company – both on the job and off. That’s what mobilization is all about. The best bargaining team cannot win our demands if the company doesn’t feel the pressure.

We have Strategic Industry Fund dollars to help us with mobilization. We have a Public Relations Department to help us speak to the public and the press. **But mainly we have you, our members, and the outcome is in your hands.**



**Keep informed. Bargaining reports and mobilization reports will be available from Local 4340 at [www.cwa4340.org](http://www.cwa4340.org) and from [www.district4.cwa-union.org](http://www.district4.cwa-union.org)**