

thechiefleader.com

Acrimony Yields To Accord: HA Repair Staff Paid to 'Flex'

DAN ROSENBLUM

After weeks of tensions regarding the issue, the Housing Authority April 28 announced an agreement with Teamsters Local 237 to test a staggered-scheduling policy that will award bonuses for employees who work early-morning and evening shifts.

4-Month Trial Program

The Flexible Operations program, dubbed "FlexOps," will begin June 13 at a dozen developments over a four-month trial period and allows current staffers to volunteer for the work hours while letting the HA assign new hires to the non-standard shifts.

When it announced the policy in March, the authority argued that it needed flexibility outside the standard 8 a.m.-to-4:30 p.m. shifts to help address necessary repairs in public housing and aid tenants who aren't at home during normal agency business hours.

Local 237 strongly opposed the policy and obtained an injunction

against its implementation from a Manhattan State Supreme Court Justice. It argued that the unilateral changes violated an already-settled contract, put its employees in potentially dangerous situations by themselves and would affect members' personal lives, particularly those who needed to plan child-care options.

"We ended where we started," Teamsters Local 237 President Greg Floyd said in a statement. "This agreement is consistent with our contract and is what we suggested from the beginning. Our members working alternative shifts will now be compensated in accordance with the standard practice afforded other city employees, but which was previously denied them. Also critically important, the safety and security issues we raised that were suffered by both residents and our members will now be addressed."

Bharara Cited Dangers

He pointed to recent comments by U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara, who, when announcing the arrests of 120 gang members at HA developments last week, said that residents aren't "getting the statutorily-required level of housing that is decent, safe, sanitary and in good repair."

"I am pleased to work together with Teamsters Local 237 as we lay the groundwork to begin expanding services at a dozen sites," said HA Chair Shola Olatoye. "Thanks to all parties who worked together

to make this four-month trial period a reality, and to ultimately improve our residents' quality of life and overall safety of these NYCHA communities.”

The HA will offer a one-time \$250 bonus for janitorial and maintenance workers who volunteer to work the 6 a.m.-to-2:30-p.m. or 10:30-a.m.-to-7-p.m. shifts; award Caretakers a 10-percent shift differential for hours worked outside the standard schedule; and give maintenance personnel who work from 11:30 to 8 p.m. an additional \$3.94 per shift. Property managers will also receive a 10-percent differential for all hours worked after 4:30 p.m.

But No Weekend Hours

Instead of opening on weekends, property-management offices will stay open until 8 p.m. one day each week.



- ✓ Digital Replica of Print Edition

“We demanded that the authority not act on its own and move you and our other members around like chess pieces,” Mr. Floyd wrote

in a letter to his members. “We proved that if we work together, our collective strength will prevail!”

The local canceled a protest that was scheduled for this week in front of the HA’s lower Manhattan offices.

The deal also requires various safety measures such as scheduling Caretakers to work in pairs; giving workers radios, flashlights and reflective vests; and ensuring that locks, lights and security cameras are working correctly. Mr. Floyd asked members to notify the union if “threats or intimidations” by supervisors occur or if any safety equipment needs repairs.

Where It Will Start

The program will begin at five sites in The Bronx, three in Manhattan and two each in Brooklyn and Queens. Union and management representatives will work to resolve safety, scheduling and other issues and will evaluate the program after the four-month pilot ends.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the HA, Office of Labor Relations and Local 237 also includes a “joint initiative” to improve customer service and address employee concerns through volunteers, incentives and enhanced safety measures.

News Tips

We cover everything that affects civil servants. If you have labor-related news to share, we want to hear from you!



**DALLAS AREA RAPID TRANSIT
POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Competitive Salary
\$46,435 in academy
\$50,720 academy graduate
plus generous benefits package

Hiring Process
Application - no fee required
Takes approximately 14-18 weeks

Minimum Qualifications
Minimum age: 20 1/2
Maximum age: none
No college required with high school diploma

Dallas / Texas Advantages
No State Income Tax
Low cost of living
Affordable quality housing
Free college tuition for Texas police officers

Recruiting in New York
April 18-22
see schedule & locations at
www.DART.org/DARTPolice/NewYork



Reporter Dan Rosenblum on those disappearing voter rolls