

# AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION



## LOCAL 758~~~ January 2019 Newsletter

### President's Report - Isaac O. Tate

January 2019

Well 2018 seemed to be a good year for Pierce Transit. The agency seems to have fulfilled a lot of what “they” wanted to do to help them make “themselves and their numbers” look good in the eyes of the Board of Commissioners. For a majority of the represented members/employees the old foot on the neck continues due to the influx of “number counters” and exodus of transit oriented, people friendly, management styles. I have watched the agency go from a Pierce Transit family to a “numbers” oriented organization. Many of our more senior Operators that would have stuck around after their retirement dates have bailed. Why, because the evolution of “*number based*” management has arrived. Even members contacting me by phone first give me their badge number. I don’t want your badge number, I want your name. I still believe you are more than a number. When I am asked why someone is treated a certain way my response is; because you’re a number. You see if you’re a number and you’re eliminated you were only known as a number.

There is no need for compassion or individual decision making on the part of management in regards to you as an individual or person, nor is there a need for a manager to think about you as a provider for your family or even as a human being. You are just a “*number*”. One of the biggest departments in the agency Service Delivery (Operations) and LEAN Workforce Development have combined to both hasten the departure of skilled Operators and continues to make the Relief Operator’s life as miserable as possible to include compiling a record for the “number” of Transit Operator Trainees who’s hopes and dreams are dashed due to mistakes on their parts while in training. *Get that, in training.* Where do/should you make mistakes, correct them and learn from them? In training, I would imagine. It’s an old concept, but it works. However LEAN proponents say the elimination of the Trainees is “proportionate” and acceptable based on industry standards (numbers), which of course means that as a number you were never a human - thus “untrainable”.

Let me tell you about one case. A trainee was assigned a tripper every morning to Seattle for approximately two (2) months due to the Relief Operator shortage and upon his return resumed training. Standing loads, heavy traffic, delays, he managed it all. He provided excellent customer service, no complaints, nothing. Well he had been told that there was an area he needed improvement in his training however he did not feel he was receiving the feedback he needed to achieve it. So one morning after “helping the agency out” as a trainee by doing his Seattle tripper, he returned for another trainee evaluation. Guess what? He was terminated.....washed out like they like to say. He was told he had not improved in that particular area. Used and thrown away. The agency is still short Relief Operators and has been for months and months and will still be until LEAN Workforce Development does what it does best, manipulate “numbers” to make it “appear” that the numbers (Operators) are there.

In another “glaring” example of the evolution of “numbers” as opposed to human lives, last year there was talk of “*new*” lighting on the base precipitated by the “*loss of the life*” of a human. Prior to that incident another human was seriously injured in another poorly lit area of the base. Both were Union members.

Due to inaction on the part of the agency the installation of the lighting has yet to happen. *However*, transit centers have been revitalized and the system “refreshed”.

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**President's Report continues.....**

One can only assume in this day and time of “numbers” that the serious injury and fatality of our members falls into the “acceptable” category of the “number” of serious accidents and fatalities occurring at a worksite of this size. As I have heard management state; it is not outside the norm, the agency is well within the acceptable “numbers” for the event.

The agency has purchased real estate that sits empty after a glowing presentation to the Board of Commissioners (that's alright it's only wasted taxpayer dollars).

The transit centers have been updated to serve the “elite” (passengers who are at home by 9:00pm) and supplemental service to their homes if they so desire and you're a Sound Transit customer. If you're not a Sound Transit customer shame on you, the agency doesn't serve customers they deem “low budget” that need *swing/graveyard shift* service or two (2) jobs to better their lives. At the end of 2017 when I brought this fact to the Board of Commissioners attention, a departing Board member stated that the agency shouldn't forget for lack of a better term, the “little guy”. Well you can tell how much impact that statement/comment had on the Pierce Transit Executive staff and CEO.....none! Maybe the “numbers” don't support it.

It appears to be a time of excitement for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) push. Millions (\$100,000,000,000.00) *‘may be short some zeroes’* will be spent on the acquisition of property from landowners who do not want to sell their property, and at the completion of the project eight (8) minutes may be shaved off the run. I know you're probably thinking why is my Union harping on this? Why, because 15 years ago or more, we used to have an inbound 46A or 47 “Limited Stop” route that left the Roy Y, stopped at the then Parkland Transit Center – departed - next stop S. 38<sup>th</sup> & Pacific - next stop – 24<sup>th</sup> & Pacific – next stop 10<sup>th</sup> and Commerce (3 Stops!) Amazing! With signal activation that we didn't have at that time it was a (BRT) precursor. *But my how times have changed* “it would cost so much less to run multiple busses on the same routing”, but there is probably not a federal grant for that, nor funding to increase running times and have Operator breaks.

Remember the Lidar, MobilEye, Automated Braking System coach set-ups? The same ones the Chief Executive Officer told the Board that due to safety concerns I had addressed with PT management and forwarded to the Board of Commissioners would be “tested” on (drumroll....please) one-hundred (100) non-revenue service vehicles for six (6) months. *These vehicles don't exist, never existed.* MobilEye has dropped out due to unreliability and failure rate issues some Operators had/have experienced firsthand. And oh yeah, the Lidar and Braking systems only work on the “oldest” busses in the fleet. My understanding is by the time the agency receives the systems, the manufacturers will have already installed these features on their newer equipment. But the agency did get a grant.

Our Facilities Maintenance members are lifting bus shelters and installing them by hand (pretty much common to Pierce Transit and third world countries). Apparently with three (3) Managers for twenty-one (21) members/employees at a cost of over \$300,000.00 per year, there is an inability to order the proper equipment, certify and train our members. Why? These members have also cleaned up a homeless encampment complete with waste items and syringes. It seems like the agency could have used a little money for a contracted service to clean-up hazardous sites.

Our Journey Level Mechanics and Vehicle Maintenance members just signed the yearly shake-up with the elimination of all four-ten (4/10) work assignments. Never mind that this was a “selling point” for the recruitment and hire of some of our members. But it was another untruth, not unheard of in this agency. I have been contacted by some of those members and quite frankly I felt that I would have had to tell them the truth in the hiring process. I've never been comfortable lying to people I represent. Maybe it's a character flaw that has kept me from running a big or maybe medium size corporation.

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President's Report continues.....

Service Delivery & Support (Operations) has rolled out the LytxDrive Cam system. When this was negotiated it was to be for safety, training and coaching. However after putting a less than qualified individual who had no more experience than any of our other Safety and Training Instructors, an individual of dubious character (believe me I know) and record of both pedestrian (one if not the highest cost accident at this agency and the Union (I) saved his job) and a bicycle accident (wherein it was alleged that the bicycle was wedged under the coach), into the position of Service Quality & Safety Administrator, is turning it into a monster. He is reportedly reporting Operators for other violations which to a degree is what he is supposed to do, but what is more troubling is the *outright lies and bogus claims to management in regards to individuals he doesn't get along with*. I have personally confirmed this. He's a real winner, but that's what they want. Remember in my previous examples regarding integrity or the lack of, it really doesn't matter. My question is; why is the agency wasting taxpayer money having two managers to the tune of over \$200,000.00 a year doing the same job. You can get a transitional duty employee to do that.

**Operators**, do not drive to the paddle. Drive at the posted speed limit and in a safe professional manner. This includes making reliefs in relief vehicles. You are paid by the hour and if you don't make it to a point as identified by that paddle by that time.....too bad. Don't exceed the speed limit because you have to use the restroom or comfort station and think you don't have time to do so by not speeding. Not so ..... *You always have time to use the restroom or comfort station*. Your ability to use a restroom or comfort station is no less than individuals who have the luxury of pushing back from his/her desk and going whenever they want. We (Operators) have been having trouble with the running times on the paddles "for years" and in some cases you are still with very little adjustment to running times, driving those same running times.

The employer has in a very public way both in documentation and verbal presentations espoused the need to increase running times. The Employer does not have to and will not take into consideration the increased accessible boardings, increased traffic etc. because they don't have to (unless you're on a Sound Transit "elitist" route). They're not going to spend money on increased running times because they feel you as an Operator must be working every minute you are getting paid. What you must understand is that the "employer doesn't care" whether you have enough running time to make a relief or connection. They don't have to. They have the ability to discipline you and that keeps them in a job. You have probably heard of the bogus "running time" committees. They do not exist. What they have amounted to lately is what I have written in previous newsletters. We had another of our own members of dubious character go out and document runs that to her had "too much" running time. Well they've straightened that out now and made sure it was eliminated. Of course the result of her efforts was being promoted to another position. Remember in my previous examples regarding integrity or the lack of, it really doesn't matter.

**One other issue**, your Union has been addressing; working with ATU Local 587 Metro-Seattle in regards to "break times". It appears that an agreement was reached resulting in back pay and "real" released from duty breaks for their Operators.

I forwarded this information to Labor Relations Officer Anh Hoang, being that it cost Metro millions and as I told her ATU Local 758 has never ever waived break periods, because by law neither the employer nor Union can do so. It is also a matter of "safety" a word that gets slung around a lot. Next stop: Labor and Industries.

There is an increased emphasis on getting long-term injured and ill workers back to work especially in the Service Delivery (Operations) area. They have hired an individual who upon the expiration of your contractually negotiated accrued sick leave, to include state and or federal sick leave will be all over you like a "cheap suit". *Compassion and empathy is gone* and the person is obviously hooked up to a network of medical specialist whom you can get in to see within a couple of weeks if she requires medical documentation from an individual. However this has not been the experience of the dis-enfranchised like me, who may have to wait almost 90 days for a specialist because I do not frequent or know the same specialists she does.

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If you have to tangle with this individual and her way of doing things.... maybe you need to put a little money aside for legal counsel because she'll run you right up to the edge. If I was a long term injured worker, that's certainly what I would do.

Did you hear the one about one of our *Public Safety Officers* pointing a shotgun at one of our members in the employee parking lot of building 5? Our member immediately contacted the Communication Center. No worries according to the then Chief it (gun) wasn't loaded. Let me pull a shotgun out of a vehicle and point it at someone. There would be enough lead in me and lying in the parking lot to make an armored vehicle after they stopped firing at me.

So for the employer to close out the year 2018 on a "high", one of the Operations Managers dutifully and *with a total lack of compassion summoned an Operator to the base on December 24<sup>th</sup> Christmas eve 11:30 AM*, called a shop steward who was off duty and *summarily terminated her*. Could it have been done "after" Christmas? Why of course. Could it have been done "before" Christmas yes again. But it probably would not have had the same amount of *"punch to the gut" this is what we really think of you as an employee explosiveness, and maximum amount of hurt to the individual*. I wonder if the manager told her to have a Merry Christmas .....probably.

There are a lot of things you are not aware of that occur in the workplace, the reason being we strive to make it better for you as members because we don't want you to carry around the things that happen in your heads "that we have to". We want to minimize the effect of some of the actions that occur that could adversely affect you as members because you "all" have jobs to do in a professional manner. You have to be conscientious and professional.

In closing I want to thank the Executive Officers, Executive Board Officers and Shop Stewards at our Pierce Transit property, Sound Transit (LRV-Operators) property, River Cities – Longview/Kelso Fixed Route Transit Operators, and our River Cities Lift – Longview/Kelso Paratransit Operators for all they have done on behalf of ATU Local 758 and the membership.

I hope everyone enjoys the upcoming year of 2019.

We as your Union will continue to do what we do.

Advocate– Educate– Take care of you as members.

**Be Safe, Isaac.**



**Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 758**

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*It was by one Union that we achieved our independence and liberties, and by it alone can they be maintained.*

*-James Monroe*

### **UPCOMING UNION MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE**

**Thursday, January 10, 2019 at (CANCELLED)**

Union Office 6923 Lakewood Dr W Suite B-1

**Friday, January 11, 2019 at (CANCELLED)**

Union Office 6923 Lakewood Dr W Suite B-1

**Longview, Wednesday, January 16, 2019, at 7:15 PM**

254 Oregon Way Longview, WA 98632

**Executive Board**—(Executive Board Only)

**Thursday, February 7, 2019, at 3:30 PM**

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