

United States of America

BEFORE THE FEDERAL SERVICE IMPASSES PANEL

In the Matter of

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE
TREASURY, BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND
PRINTING

And

WASHINGTON PLATE PRINTERS, LOCAL NO. 2,
INTERNATIONAL PLATE PRINTERS, DIE
STAMPERS AND ENGRAVERS UNION OF NORTH
AMERICA, AFL-CIO

Case No. 18 FSIP 091

GRAPHIC ARTS UNION, LOCAL NO. 4B,
INTERNATIONAL UNION, AFL-CIO

GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS UNION, LOCAL NO.
1C, INTERNATIONAL UNION, AFL-CIO

DECISION AND ORDER

This case was filed by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP or Agency) concerning the implementation of a web-based time and attendance program, "WebTA." The BEP is the Nation's sole producer of U.S. paper currency. As its primary function, the BEP prints billions of dollars - referred to as Federal Reserve notes - each year for delivery to the Federal Reserve System. There are only two facilities within the U.S. where the BEP manufactures paper currency: Washington, D.C. and Fort Worth, Texas.

The Washington Plate Printers, Local No. 2, International Plate Printers, Die Stampers and Engravers Union of North America, AFL-CIO (Local No. 2), the Graphic Arts Union, Local No. 4B, International Union, AFL-CIO (Local No. 4B), and the Graphic Communications Union, Local No. 1C, International Union, AFL-CIO (Local No. 1C) (collectively "Unions") represent approximately 343 bargaining-unit employees that work at the two BEP facilities. The bargaining-unit employees occupy the

positions of Pressman, Plate Printer, and Bookbinder. The employees operate printing presses to ensure that paper currency is produced properly.

The parties are covered by three separate Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) that have been in effect since the 1970s. This past year, the Agency reopened all three CBAs. The parties are bound by the current CBAs until they reach agreement over successor CBAs.

BACKGROUND

In 2004, the Agency began using WebTA to track employees' work time, sick time, and vacation hours. The intent was to make the recording of time and attendance more timely and efficient by employees electronically entering their time and attendance on a daily, weekly, or biweekly basis. To utilize WebTA, an employee must log into a computer, input the amount of hours worked or leave requested, and then validate the time for supervisory review and certification.

For the last 14 years, non-bargaining unit administrative employees have been required to utilize WebTA. However, the bargaining-unit employees have not been required to submit their time and attendance using WebTA. Instead, supervisors have entered the employees' time and attendance in WebTA. Near the end of the pay period, the supervisors will print out a WebTA summary for the employee to review. Once the employee has confirmed or made corrections, the supervisor certifies the time and attendance for the employee.

In March or April 2018, the Agency provided the Unions notice of its intent to start requiring bargaining-unit employees to manually enter their time and attendance in WebTA. The parties then initiated face-to-face and video teleconference negotiations and mediation with the Federal Mediation Conciliation Service (FMCS). Because a resolution was not reached, on September 4, 2018, FMCS released the parties from mediation.

During negotiations and mediation, the Agency asserted its justification for the employees' inputting their own time and attendance in WebTA: to encourage greater employee engagement with their e-mail and the BEP computer system; to conform to other departments and federal agencies that already require their employees to input their time and attendance in WebTA; to decrease the responsibilities of supervisors; and to increase

Agency efficiently. In turn, the Unions expressed objection to the change, namely that employees do not have sufficient time in their schedules to do the timekeeping, given the production-related demands on their time and the slow and unreliable computer system. Thus, the Unions proposed that the Agency provide the employees additional non-productive time in each biweekly pay period to allow the employees to input and validate their time and attendance in WebTA, as well as provide the employees training on the system. However, the Agency refused to provide the employees' non-productive time to input their time in WebTA. Therefore, on September 26, 2018, the Agency filed the instant request for Panel assistance over the employees inputting their time and attendance in WebTA.

The Panel voted to assert jurisdiction over the one issue in dispute and determined that it should be resolved through a Written Submissions procedure with an opportunity to submit rebuttal statements to the Panel and each other. The parties were informed that, after considering the entire record, the Panel would take whatever action it deemed appropriate to resolve the dispute, which could include the issuance of a binding decision. The Panel granted the Unions' request to submit additional pages in their rebuttal statements; therefore, all the parties were permitted to submit eight double-spaced pages. The Panel has now considered the entire record, including the parties' written submissions, final offers, and rebuttal statements.¹

ISSUE

Whether the employees will be required to enter their own time and attendance in the WebTA system.

a. Local No. 2., Local No. 1C, and Local No. 4B Final Offer

1. Continuation of the status quo wherein Supervisors input the production employee's time and attendance into the webTA system.

¹ Local No. 1C argued that the Agency committed an unfair labor practice (ULP) by implementing the WebTA system during the pendency of the Panel's proceedings by requiring employees to attend a WebTA training class; however, the Agency claimed that the class was voluntary to attend. The Panel considered the Union's allegation; however, it will not prevent the Panel from issuing a Decision and Order in this case.

b. Local No. 2

2. In the alternative, the Union proposes the following:

- a. Employees are guaranteed that a 10 minute time period, each biweekly pay period, in a nonproduction capacity, be allocated for production employees to accurately and properly input their time and attendance into the webTA system;
- b. Employees be allowed to determine the most productive and efficient 10 minute time period in a biweekly pay period to input their webTA;
- c. Employees will receive adequate training of the webTA system in a computer lab during official agency time;
- d. Computer desktop icons (shortcuts) will be loaded on available computers in the production areas to allow for easy access to the webTA page;
- e. No disciplinary action will be taken against production employees for honest or unintentional mistakes while inputting their webTA;
- f. Should any production employees have difficulty inputting their time and attendance into the webTA system, that they be given reasonable additional training; and
- g. Privacy screens will be installed on computer monitors where feasible.

c. Local No. 1C Alternative Final Offer

3. In the alternative, Local No. 1C proposes the following:

- a. 15 minutes every two weeks of down time, presses not running to complete the tasks; and
- b. Grandfather current employees (not responsible for Web-TA) and to make Web-TA part of new employee orientation and have new employees do their own time.

d. Local No. 4B Alternative Final Offer

4. In the alternative, Local No. 4B proposes the following:

- a. Employees be given reasonable time to complete the process;

- b. Privacy screen protections on the computers;
- c. Adequate training;
- d. Shortcut icons on the computers; and
- e. Protections from discipline surrounding inaccurate entries into the WebTA system.

The Unions argue that the status quo should be maintained and that supervisors should continue to enter employees' time and attendance. However, the Unions provided an alternate proposal. The Unions propose that the employees will be granted, every biweekly pay period, either 10 minutes, 20 minutes, or a reasonable amount of time for employees to input their time and attendance in the WebTA system. Local No. 2 and 4B's alternative proposal contains accommodations for employees, including, for example, computer desktop access to WebTA, protections against inappropriate disciplinary actions, adequate training, and privacy screens for the computer monitors. Local No. 1C's proposal allows current employees to be "grandfathered" in, so that supervisors will continue to input employees' time and attendance.

In support of its position, the Agency asserts that 1) inputting information into the WebTA system is simple and can be done "one-minute" per day; 2) the current system is "grossly" inefficient; and 3) production employees have "abundant" time during their workday to complete this new task. The Unions disagree with the assertions that the inputting of time and attendance in WebTA takes a mere one-minute. The Unions assert that the computer login process at the BEP is slow and can take as long as 12 minutes. Although entering time one-minute a day may be a theoretical possibility for someone who works at a desk, who is familiar with the software, and whose user profile is already loaded on the computer, there is no evidence that this is possible, let alone realistic for the bargaining-unit employees. Further, most employees have only basic typing and computer skills because computer operation and typing is not a required skill of the trade.

The Unions argue that the Agency provides no support for its assertion that requiring production employees to enter their own time and attendance in WebTA is more efficient than the current system. Since 2004, the Unions state that supervisors have kept track of time and attendance in WebTA, reviewed the data with each employee, and then certified the data. Under the Agency's proposal, supervisors would track time and attendance, but not record it, employees would enter their time and attendance in the system, and then supervisors would review the

entered data and certify it if appropriate, or send it back to the employee if incorrect for recertification. The supervisors would also need to spend additional time verifying the employees' timekeeping with their own records. Given this, the Unions assert that it is not clear that the Agency's proposal is more efficient.

The Unions argue the Agency's assertion that the employees have an abundant amount of time during their duty-day to input time and attendance in WebTA is incorrect. The Unions state the bargaining-unit employees' workday has been previously bargained down to the minute. For example, an employee working the day shift would be on production working the printing press from 6:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., with a break from 10:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. From 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., the employees' wind down the press (wash-up time). After returning from lunch at 1:00 p.m., the press warms up for 15 minutes, then production starts at 1:15 p.m., until the employee takes a break at 2:15 p.m. Production continues until 2:30 p.m., at which point the employee passes the press off to the incoming shift from 2:30 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. Finally, the employee is permitted 15 minutes from 2:45 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. to clean-up. The Unions state that the employees are required to operate their presses at all times when they are not on their breaks, lunch, or during the necessary wash-up and clean-up times. If an employee has "chair time,"² that time is minimal and directly linked to the employee's ability to set-up and operate their equipment in an efficient and productive manner.

The Unions provided an affidavit from a former Plate Printing Supervisor who stated the machines the employees' operate are sophisticated and require precise attention to detail. The Unions assert that the speed of the presses and required duties are inconsistent with logging into a computer and entering time. The Unions claim that constant monitoring of the printing press is necessary to ensure a productive operation. To ask that the employees stop production to focus on inputting time into WebTA would detrimentally impact production. If the quality standards are not met, employees are held accountable.

The Agency argues that employees have 15 minutes at the end of their shifts to enter time and attendance in WebTA; however, the Unions assert that time has been designated for

² Chair time occurs when the equipment is running and the employees are able to sit in their chairs next to the press free from any manual work.

communicating production and craft related issues to the incoming work crew. Lastly, as to the suggestion by the Agency that employees have time to enter their time in WebTA when the printing presses are out of operation for repairs, the Unions assert there is no guarantee that the printing presses break down so often that an employee is guaranteed to have time to enter their time and attendance. Second, the Agency is wrong that when press repairs are necessary, production personnel sit idle. Production employees assist in the repairs, or are reassigned to another piece of production equipment.

e. Agency's Final Offer

- 1) 30 days after the issuance of FSIP's order, the Employer will implement the requirement that the Unions' employees must enter their own time and attendance into the WebTA system;
- 2) During the 30 day grace period prior to implementation, the Employer will provide training to the Unions' employees on the WebTA system during duty hours.

The Agency asserts that several years ago it deployed WebTA for employees to enter and record their own time and attendance. When the Agency expended the resources to install the system, the intent was to make the recording of time and attendance much more timely and efficient through employees' electronically entering their time and attendance on a daily, weekly, or biweekly basis. Essentially, employees are free to enter their time and attendance whenever they have time and then validate their entry for review and certification by their supervisor. The Agency describes the process for employees entering their own time as "simple" and takes a mere one-minute or less per day to complete. It consists of: 1) entering a User ID and password into the WebTA program; 2) entering the time they begin and end work each day; and 3) clicking a validation button at the conclusion of the two-week pay period. Affording the employees' access to WebTA offers the added benefit of employees being able to check their own leave balances and streamline the process for requesting annual and sick leave.

The Agency states that non-bargaining unit administrative employees and even some of the bargaining-unit employees in the instant case immediately began using the WebTA system. All bargaining-unit employees did not begin using the WebTA system when it was implemented and the Agency did not press the issue.

At present, the WebTA system is utilized by the bargaining unit employees as follows: 1) the supervisor electronically enters what s/he believes to be the employees' time into the WebTA program; 2) the supervisor prints out a copy of the employee's WebTA; 3) the supervisor goes back into the WebTA program to correct any mistakes identified by the employee; 5) the supervisor again prints out a copy of the employee's WebTA; 6) the supervisor again has the employee review the WebTA printout for accuracy; 7) this task is repeated until the supervisor is confident that they finally have the employee's correct time and attendance information; and 8) finally, the supervisor then enters each one of his or her employee's time into the WebTA program and validates and certifies the time and attendance. The Agency argues that this process is inefficient, places an unnecessary administrative burden on supervisors, and consumes a lot of employee and supervisor time that could be used in much more productive ways.

The Agency asserts that the employees have ample time and means to complete the data entry task of entering their own time into the WebTA program during regular duty hours. There are at least two employees working on a printing press at all times, which allows the employees time to take breaks, or attend to personal matters. Thus, the Agency asserts that there is no need to provide the employees non-productive time by shutting down the printing presses in order for the employees to enter their time and attendance. Shutting down the presses simply for the bargaining-unit employees to enter their time and attendance would lead to waste of United States currency sheets due to the fact that it takes a period of time to calibrate the presses once they are restarted.

A Pressman Manager, Plate Printer Manager, and Bookbinder Manager assert that it takes only minimal intervention by one or more employees to keep the equipment operating. They state that whether the press is running or not, employees can freely leave the area for personal reasons, e.g., bathroom breaks, make a telephone call, go to the breakroom and access a computer to check e-mail, etc. There are numerous computers conveniently located throughout both BEP facilities for employees to utilize - either located on the printing presses, or in a nearby location for employees to access WebTA. Throughout the workday, while the presses are running, the managers assert that there is a significant amount of time for employees to input their time and attendance for the pay period. Employees routinely have "chair time" during their duty-day, which would afford the employees time to enter their time and attendance. The Managers

also assert that the presses will have mechanical issues on a daily basis, which render the machines not operational; the employees can use this time to enter their time and attendance. Finally, the Agency asserts that the employees have 15 minutes of time at the end of each shift for personal clean-up and to pass information to the next shift. The employees can use some of this time for inputting data into WebTA.

f. Conclusion

Having carefully considered the evidence and arguments presented in support of the parties' positions, we find that the Agency's proposal is the best alternative to resolve the impasse. The parties disagree over the amount of time that the employees have during their duty-day to input time and attendance in WebTA. The Unions contend that the employees' "chair time" is minimal and that they must constantly monitor the printing press to ensure that the currency is printed properly. Conversely, the Agency argues that the employees have ample time and means throughout their duty-day to enter time and attendance in WebTA. While the parties disagree over the amount of time that the employees have during their duty-day, once the employees receive the training on WebTA that the Agency is offering, the task of entering time in WebTA should not take more than a few minutes. Further, the Agency has offered the employees a 30-day grace period to transition the employees to using WebTA. This will assist the employees in adjusting to this task, working out any issue that might present itself while the employees become familiar with the system. As such, the Agency's proposal best accommodates the employees and management. Accordingly, the Panel directs the parties to adopt the Agency's proposal.

ORDER

Pursuant to the authority vested in it by the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute, 5 U.S.C. § 7119, and because of the failure of the parties to resolve their dispute during the course of proceedings instituted under the Panel's regulations, 5 C.F.R. § 2471.6(a)(2), the Federal Service Impasses Panel, under § 2471.11(a) of its regulations, hereby orders the adoption of the following to resolve the impasse:

- 1) 30 days after the issuance of FSIP's order, the Employer will implement the requirement that the Unions' employees must enter their own time and attendance into the WebTA system;

2) During the 30 day grace period prior to implementation, the Employer will provide training to the Unions' employees on the WebTA system during duty hours.

By direction of the Panel.



Mark A. Carter
Chairman, FSIP

March 29, 2019
Washington, D.C.