

Newspaper Guild of Rochester Contract Summary



After 28 months of bargaining and a historic 19-day strike, the Newspaper Guild of Rochester Bargaining Committee is pleased to announce the terms of our tentative agreement with Gannett. Quick highlights of what we've won:

Wages

- Guild members will see an average 15% raise over the life of the two-year contract and every member of the bargaining unit will get a raise under the contract.
- We've corrected some glaring wage inequities and several unit members will see raises of between \$10,000 and \$20,000 over the two-year agreement.
- A new experience-based wage scale for workers as follows:
 - \$49,500 upon hire
 - \$55,200 after completing 5 years
 - \$64,000 after completing 10 years
 - This scale includes reporters, columnists, producers, photographers, library assistants and editorial assistants, news assistants, and lead archivist/news assistant (There are currently no assistant positions in the unit).
- In addition to the new salary minimums, members will also receive approximately \$2,730 added to their base salary over the life of the contract through annual raises.
- Members will also receive a \$1,000 ratification bonus.

Other economic gains

- Mileage reimbursement at the IRS rate as a contractual benefit.
- 2 additional holidays (Juneteenth and an extra float holiday) for a total of 11
- An additional 2 days of bereavement leave for a total of 5 (plus 2 for out of state travel)
- An additional day of bereavement leave for loved ones outside of immediate family (a total of 3)
- Paid parental leave increased from 2 weeks to 10 weeks
- Severance in the event of a layoff increases to 3 weeks minimum and 28 weeks maximum plus a \$1,500 transition bonus (The previous contract had no severance provision).
- Expands the list of economic terms that apply to part-timers.
- Removal of language that allowed Company to unilaterally implement furloughs and other cost-saving initiatives

Non-economic Gains

- Recognition that Canandaigua Daily Messenger employees are part of the union and are covered by the contract.
- New articles on:
 - **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion** - Protections against discrimination and provisions promoting equity and inclusion
 - **Editorial Integrity and Protection of Journalists and Sources** - Language to protect news integrity as well as confidentiality protections for journalists and their sources
 - **Training and Mentoring** - Requires the company to conduct proper onboarding of new hires and establishes a mentoring program

- **Visas and Immigration** - Establishes the process for dealing with visas and immigration issues, including time away from work to address immigration issues
 - **Union security and Dues Deduction** - Provides for a union shop and requires management to deduct dues from payroll and remit dues to our union. The previous contract had no dues deduction or union security provision.
 - **Transfers, Promotions and Assignments** - Prohibits transfer outside the unit or to another geographic location without the employee's consent, places guardrails around changes to jobs and allows workers who are transferred or promoted outside the unit to return to their prior unit position within 4 weeks of the promotion or transfer.
 - **Union Rights** - Provides for union staff access to the newsroom to ascertain compliance with the contract and grants paid union orientation for new hires
 - **Labor-Management Standing Committee** - Provides a quarterly forum for our union and management to discuss issues of concern including workplace safety and health, diversity, hiring & retention, training & mentoring
 - **Artificial Intelligence** - Provides a contractual commitment that AI is "supplementary to local news reporting and is not a replacement for it"
 - **Health & Safety** - Basic provision for the Employer to furnish a clean, healthful, sufficiently ventilated, properly heated, cooled and lighted place for the performance of all work.
 - **In-office/Remote work** - Stipulates that employees must work from the office or physically in the market for portions of at least three (3) business days per week when not out on assignment and codifies remote worker designation for members who are designated to work in a remote capacity.
 - **Non-Disclosure Agreements** – Commitment from the Company to follow NYS law regarding NDAs
 - **Severability** - If one part of the contract is deemed illegal or unenforceable the rest of the contract still applies.
- We also made significant improvements on the following
 - **Discipline and Discharge** - We eliminated the "editorial exception" to the just cause standard which had previously allowed for management to terminate anyone for performance issues without the right to arbitration. We finally have "just cause, no exceptions."
 - **Layoff and Severance** - We won protections for reductions in force including a notice period, a process for volunteers first, recall rights for a full year and guaranteed severance packages. The prior contract had no notice, no seniority, no recall and no severance. We also won a provision that states "There shall be no dismissals as a result of putting this agreement into effect."
 - **Information to the Guild** - We expanded the list of information the company is required to provide and set a regular schedule for info to be sent to the Guild.
 - **Grievance and Arbitration** - Expands the time limits for our union to file grievances and lines up our language with other NY Guild units.
 - **Part-time Employees** – Includes part-timers under the non-economic terms of the contract and expands the economic benefits part-timers are entitled to.

