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Tom Tucker

## Candidate for Council 20 Captain Representative

For the past three years, it has been my privilege to serve as your Council 20 Secretary/Treasurer. The issues have often been difficult, but I have always done what I thought was right. Now, as a new term approaches, I sincerely appreciate your confidence in my ability and assessment of my past performance as shown by selecting me as one of the two final candidates for the position of Council 20 Captain Representative. I request your support to be the next Council 20 Captain Representative.

We are all too familiar with the dramatic changes we have experienced in recent months and years: our pay, our contract, our uniforms, our bid system, our manuals, retirement, sick leave, our union and our MEC itself, and now in the method in which we fly our aircraft. As we move forward to address many of these still-outstanding issues, and continue our unceasing effort to repair and enhance our contract, our Delta pilot group—North and South united—as well as the MEC must be focused on the future, not on the past, and surely least of all on our differences.

If he is to be a successful MEC member, as well as an outspoken advocate of his constituency in DTW, the next Council 20 Captain Representative must work to create consensus within the MEC. This is necessary to address and advance the frequently-unique concerns we have as DTW pilots. Since my first meeting with the DAL-S representatives before the merger, I have been working diligently to help influence the direction of the newly-combined MEC through personal contact with the other LEC

representatives. Time and again, a well-thought-out position—which is to say, one supported by the facts, demonstrably logical and fair, and without the hint of a hidden agenda or political subterfuge—has always proven successful in creating consensus within this MEC. That, coincidentally, has always been my approach. Case in point: At the most recent MEC meeting, the Council 20 representatives successfully gathered unanimous support for the Council 20 resolution on Scope even though the leadership did not favor the document. Though the revised final resolution is brief, I am confident it addresses the concerns of our members and stays true to my own convictions. Once again, clear evidence that successful leadership requires imagination, dedication, commitment to principle, and the ability to appreciate the position of others while remaining true to your own goals and beliefs.

*“BE IT RESOLVED the Delta Master Executive Council affirms its commitment to enforcing and improving all sections of the Pilot Working Agreement, and*

*BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED the Delta Master Executive Council affirms Section 1 (scope) of the Pilot Working Agreement is an integral part of a comprehensive strategy to protect the careers of all Delta pilots.”*

Many of you have noticed that I did not jump into the fray of criticizing other candidates during the run-up to the nomination process. I deliberately chose to pass on the opportunity. Chest-beating, name-calling, and character assassination have never been my style. Such behavior is demeaning to our profession, our union, and to the office of Council 20 Captain Representative. It diminishes us in our own eyes and in the eyes of those around us—especially the other employee groups and yes, even management, who all look to ALPA to help lead our airline in the right direction for the future. The days of NWA MEC power-politics and internal bickering should be behind us, and needs to be left behind. Yet, the tone and content of recent letters and statements from some candidates and their supporters has proven that there are still some among us who would turn back the clock to the days of misrepresentation and back-room deal making.

On the other hand, by its very nature the political process demands that a candidate for office clearly delineate the differences in his positions from that of his opponent. Where necessary, inaccurate and misleading statements and allegations must be addressed and put to rest. Sometimes these off-base statements and allegations are merely another element of political gamesmanship. Sometimes, however, more sinister and less honorable motivations are at work.

I am disturbed by recent reports, both verbal and via email, that a particular Council 20 candidate for office (and to be clear, NOT my opponent) has commented that if, Captain Ken Watts, “does not win the election, Lee Moak will take away your pension,” or words to that effect. This kind of group-splintering, conspiracy-theorist rhetoric has no place in our election, and of course no foundation in fact. The Delta MEC Chairman, Captain Lee Moak, has responded privately to at least one pilot who approached him on this issue. Not surprisingly, Captain Moak clearly and emphatically denied that such action would occur. In fact, anyone who knows even the rudimentary facts about our frozen pension and the way the U.S. federal law works would see the baseless and ridiculous nature of making such statements. There is also not a basis for terminating the excess pension plan. The cost of the excess plan is minimal and an earned benefit that would not be negotiated away.

The facts concerning our frozen pension are as follows:

- Involuntarily terminating the frozen pension can only be accomplished in bankruptcy
- The PBGC would have to accept the pension responsibility. On \$30 billion in Delta revenue, a pilot pension expense of \$25-40 million per year is a negligible responsibility for Delta to meet. The PBGC would have claims against Delta. During the United Airlines bankruptcy, the PBGC ended up with \$11-12B in claims out of a total of \$30B in claims. Thus, 30% of the airline.
- Per the Pilot Protection Act (PPA) of 2006, Delta would have to pay a penalty for terminating the frozen pension plan. The cost is \$2,500 per pilot, active and retired, covered by a pension (estimate of 9,000 pilots). The cost would be \$18-20M.
- The 2009 pilot pension expense is expected to be less than \$65 million even following a dramatic downturn in the stock market
- The pilot pension fund is one of seven pension funds that Delta is required to fund
- Delta pilots would have to agree to terminate the pension. This could occur in a standard termination when the pension fund is fully funded. If not in bankruptcy and we agreed to the termination, we would negotiate for significant claims against Delta. These claims, which are estimated at \$550-600M, would have to be paid out of stock or cash.
- Required pension fund contributions have been made by NWA over the past several troubled years
- Delta is full meeting its pension fund obligations

We have witnessed this political tactic during the bankruptcy restructuring contract: “If you do not vote for the contract, your pension will be terminated.” This fear tactic was wrong then, and it is wrong now. We have also witnessed the campaign endorsements from two SEA pilots in regards to a ticket of candidates. When did the pilots of another base have our best interests in mind? This campaign “approach” is not worthy of your vote. I always have and I always will represent all pilots equally. In the interest of full disclosure, my NWA frozen pension is \$6,200 per month, and I do not receive ANY targeting contributions other than residual funding. My final word on the subject: When casting your ballot, please consider that the best predictor of future conduct is past behavior.

During the last three years, my role as the Council 20 Secretary/Treasurer (a non-voting member of the MEC) was to support the Captain and First Officer representatives of Council 20 and to help them understand and meet the needs of you, the DTW line pilot. My duties included representing both NWA/DAL and CPZ pilots in dealings with management, answering emails and telephone calls, speaking on issues before the MEC, occasionally holding the proxy votes of the DTW representatives, creating and publishing the Council 20 Newsletter, and composing the initial draft of Council 20 Updates. My current support position is similar to those positions I held as Executive Officer of Naval Reserve Units and later the transition to a Commanding Officer. The last three years have been a formative learning experience and I now seek to put that hard-won experience to greater use and ask for your vote to become your Council 20 Captain Representative.

My many published articles and Council 20 Updates, my behind-the-scenes advocacy on your behalf, and the hundreds of conversations I have had with many of you over these last few years all help make clear my commitment to clear, concise, and transparent communication with you, the line pilot. I have no hidden agenda. My personal ambition is modest and straightforward. I want to represent the pilots of Council 20 as best I can. As veteran line pilots based at what will continue to be a major, vibrant hub, your interests are my interests. I believe in open, honest, constructive communication, and I will continue to make sure you are kept informed on those issues affecting your family, your career, our company and our profession. If, in my judgment, the MEC leadership falls short in providing you with what you need to know, I will step in and do my best to fill in the blanks, as I have done so often in the past.

In closing, it has been an honor and a privilege, as a long-time DTW line pilot, to be able to serve all of you, my fellow DTW line-pilots, in a leadership capacity over these last few very difficult years. If anything, the struggles of recent years have strengthened my commitment and dedication to our union and our profession. I appreciate your patience with this lengthy letter, but the severity of the issues before us deserves more than a sound bite and bullet points.

With that in mind, I respectfully request your support—your vote—for Captain Representative, Council 20, in the upcoming election. Together, we have weathered the storm and survived. Together, we can work to ensure a safe and secure haven for our families, our jobs and our profession.

Fraternally,

Tom

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