

Podcast Transcription

Fly by Night: First Officer Anita Shew Council 7 Vice Chair, Block 4 Representative (Nov 2021)

Captain Chris Lee My guest today is Council 7 Vice Chair and Block 4 Representative First Officer Anita Shew. Thanks for coming.

First Officer Anita Shew Thanks for having me here, Chris.

Captain Chris Lee Talk a little bit about your background before FedEx and what you've been doing since you've been here at FedEx.

First Officer Anita Shew Well, before FedEx, I went to Embry-Riddle and I went straight into a Part 135 cargo company, flew metroliners, and upgraded to Captain as soon as possible. I got my thousand hours in 10 months and four days. And lo and behold, I got hired at FedEx at age 24. Since I've been at FedEx, I got hired in the backseat of the 727. I decided it was a marathon in my career, so I ended up becoming a flex instructor in the back of the 727. I was an instructor for five years, flew the right seat of the 727 and then went to the Airbus back in 2007.

Captain Chris Lee Talk some about your previous union experience.

First Officer Anita Shew Actually, I didn't have any other union experience. The experience I had before was having no union. And flying for a company with no union and no contract, I realized the difficulties that you experience when you don't have the best support at your company, from your maintenance, from your superiors, from your managers. Since I've been at FedEx, I was a bystander for quite a while. I did some work with Family Awareness back in the 2006 contract, and then I ended up flying with a huge ALPA proponent that we all know Mike Arcamuzi. It was at the endgame of the 2015 contract. It was the fall of 2014. I was angry. I was angry with where negotiations were going. I thought it was stalled and I flew with him and he lit a fire under me. And next thing I know Mike and I both ran for Council 26, and in 2015, I became the Block 6 Rep with Mike Arcamuzi and Derek Martin, and I learned a lot under his mentorship.

Captain Chris Lee How do you see your role as a MEC Representative?

First Officer Anita Shew Well, back then, I really thought I just wanted to make a difference in my future and my pilots' futures. And having that tenure over with and then getting the chance to have a second tenure as the Block 4 Rep, I've learned so much more and I see my representative position a lot differently now. Before, it was more, I knew I needed to make decisions and I needed to try to help direct the MEC in the correct direction. At that time, our MEC was fairly split and building consensus was rather difficult. I've now got a huge respect for building consensus, and that was something I didn't understand when I first became a block rep. The current MEC, the current 15 of us, we don't all agree. In fact, we disagree quite often. Although we do disagree, we're not disagreeable. We're able to make an agreement and then come to a consensus and we walk out of the room feeling like we are together and feeling like a team.

Captain Chris Lee Well, talk some about the challenge of MEC turnover.

First Officer Anita Shew It's very challenging. We are currently going through multiple elections, so we're going to have brand new reps coming in. Each year, we see new faces at the table. So you've got history and you've got background, you've got knowledge that all needs to be turned down and it's quite difficult to pass on the information. We'll sit through briefings and I've seen the same committee chair for years in a row give us almost the same briefing but each year we've got a new rep that needs to listen to all the information and then needs to find out who the committee chair is and what the position and what their work is and what the work is being done. It's eye-opening to see the turnover at the table.

Captain Chris Lee How do you see the pilots' role now that we're in Section 6 negotiations?

First Officer Anita Shew Well, first off, the pilots need to understand that we are in Section 6 negotiations. I just heard recently that there's a pilot that didn't know we were even negotiating. The pilots need to be involved. Contact your rep. Make your voice heard. Wear your contract pin. The big amendable date rally on the 7th was a huge turnout. We had hundreds of pilots and families there. It was really well put together, had good information, and I appreciate everyone that was able to come. Make sure you read all your emails. I know you get inundated with emails. Listen to the podcast and watch all of our videos. And again, contact your reps, fill out [DARTs](#). Let us know what your opinions are. We need to hear from you.

Captain Chris Lee You just mentioned the amendable date event. Let's talk about the amendable date of the contract and the significance of that date.

First Officer Anita Shew As of November 1st, our contract is now amendable, which means we're working off of a contract that was signed in 2015, which means we didn't get a raise this year. We don't get any increases in our retirement. We don't get anything until we have a new contract. Each day that passes without an agreement is a day without improvements that we have earned and we deserve. The Company is really seeking productivity gains and efficiencies off our pilots. These are the same pilots who have been working under lockdowns, same pilots who have flown all over the world. They've had quarantines. They've had hospital quarantines. I heard of a pilot who walked for four days in his hotel room and walked a 26.1-mile marathon in his room. This is a problem. We have worked our tails off throughout this entire event of COVID, and we deserve a lot. We did begin negotiations back in May when we signed a protocol agreement with the Company, which is kind of unheard of. We signed a 13-month protocol starting in May of 2021. We were going to negotiate for 13 months to May of 2022. That doesn't mean we have to wait until the end of May of 2022. We can get a contract before then, but we do have a lot of work to do between now and then. The biggest and most important thing to remember is as of November 1st, we are in an old contract and it is time to get a new one.

Captain Chris Lee Can you talk some about how negotiations are going?

First Officer Anita Shew It was pretty clear in the beginning, the Company wanted to get efficiencies from us. They have been coming to our side slowly. November 15th is actually a huge date for us. We are expecting to get our Section 28 retirement section back from the Company. It's going to be clear on that day if the Company is ready to play or not. One thing you can expect is there's going to be rumors around and we know the Company is going to try to divide us. Expect rumors to come out. Your MEC does not put out rumors. Your MEC does not leak information. We hold things confidential. If you get any

information, that means it's been leaked from somewhere, expect leaked information and expect division. Expect the Company to try to divide us and then conquer us.

Captain Chris Lee Well, Anita, your term ends February 28th of 2022 and this has been your second opportunity to represent the pilots as a block rep. Any lessons learned?

First Officer Anita Shew Back when I ran in 2014 and my tenure was 2015 to 2018, I was angry with the negotiations and I felt like I got involved too late to make any real difference in the negotiation outcome. This time I ran again with the intent of being able to steer the MEC and the Negotiating Committee in the right direction, in the beginning of negotiations knowing that I wouldn't be there towards the end, knowing that I could help keep our Negotiating Committee and our pilots and our MEC going in the right direction. With this tenure, I've actually been involved from the very beginning. A couple of years ago, we flew out to D.C. and we worked with ALPA national staff, which, oh, by the way, the staff that we have at ALPA National and our local office is amazing. The support we get from our staff is worth every dollar that we give to ALPA. While we were up at D.C., we created our path to negotiations, and I hope every pilot has had a chance to see the [path to negotiations](#). The interesting part is that document is way deeper than what the pilots are able to see because we can't negotiate in public. We have a lot of confidential information behind it. It is a very thorough document and it's quite impressive walking out of that room. I believe the 14 reps at the time were all very proud of that document and very excited about our future with the MEC that we had and the current MEC that we have now. Again, I want to go back with this current tenure, that consensus-building has been huge in the MEC and we've gotten really good at that. We've had excellent officers. I hate to see Dave Chase and Bill Hubbell go, but we have great leadership coming in behind them. With a fully functioning MEC and great officers and Negotiating Committee, we are definitely on the path to success.

Captain Chris Lee Well, Anita, thanks so much for coming. Any final thoughts?

First Officer Anita Shew Something completely off-topic of negotiations, which could be on-topic because we always deal with distractions and distractions are what helps to divide and conquer us, it's important to make the distinction right now concerning a COVID vaccine mandate. There's a difference between a Company mandate and a government mandate. So far, there's been no word from FedEx of a Company mandate. However, FedEx does have to comply with a federal mandate. So now we are going to have to sit and wait until FedEx figures out how they're going to comply with the government mandate. With that, we do know that through the EEOC, there are accommodations. This is out of the purview of ALPA. However, your MEC has made it very clear that we want to support our pilots all the way through the process as much as we can, even though we are in a limited position. It appears now that both federal mandates have an effective date of January 4th, 2022. The legal department is updating its analysis and please keep an eye out for information on it for any of this in the *Positive Rate* and other messages. What I want to stress, though, is ALPA is here to support you and we do plan on helping you throughout the process and our main goal is to keep you safe and to keep you employed here at FedEx. And finally, I just want to emphasize the importance of unity. We're in negotiations. There are two teams: the Company and ALPA. And every day that you get on the crew bus or you jump on jetflyers and you use social media and other outlets and you speak disparagingly against either team take a step back, look in the mirror. Figure out which team you're on before you actually start speaking. We need to make sure you're on the right team and we need you on our team. We need all the pilots on our team and that's the only way we're going to succeed. To keep you on our team, make sure that you stay

informed and stay engaged. If you need to find any information don't forget to go to fdx.alpa.org. Also, all the contract information that we have is at fdxcontract2021.com, and if you've got any questions or concerns, please send us a DART at dart.alpa.org. I really enjoyed being a block rep. I've seen so many different people from all over the world sit around the table, and I found out that the most effective reps are the reps at the table who have integrity and good decision-making skills. You have to be able to make a decision and then stand up in front of your pilots and tell them why you made that decision. We are elected to be your reps. So please hold us accountable. Make sure you do reach out to us and let us know what your thoughts are. Also, keep in mind that your reps have had hours and hours of briefings on a lot of subjects that unfortunately we're not able to tell all the information because we're once again bound by the fact that we cannot negotiate in public. Call us, text us, give us your number and let us call you back. You will get much more information straight forward from us over the phone than any other form of communication. As a very vocal no voter in 2015, I just hope that when the next TA comes out, you open the TA, you research it, you study it, you look yourself in the mirror, look at your family, look at your peers. Does that TA represent the hard work that we've put forth? If the numbers are there and the quality of life is there and the retirement improvement is there, make your decisions based upon that. Always remember there's two teams. Decide which team you want to be on. Our careers depend on your engagement and the MEC's direction. It's our union and our future.

Captain Chris Lee Thanks for coming, Anita and thanks for listening. If you have any questions, please go to our website fdx.alpa.org and utilize the [DART link](#), and as always, be safe out there and we'll see you next time.