

Podcast Transcription

Fly by Night: Captain Bill Hubbell, MEC Vice Chairman

Captain Chris Lee My guest today is Captain Bill Hubbell, MEC Vice Chairman. Bill, thanks for coming.

Captain Bill Hubbell Hey Chris, good to see you again.

Captain Chris Lee Bill, you started your new position as the MEC Vice Chairman on June 1st. How's it going so far?

Captain Bill Hubbell It's been quite busy, as you can imagine, jumping right in here in the office this week and diving in with some of the committees here, mainly still on the phone and working with the other officers. But, it's been great. Busy, but good. I had a really nice transition there with Dave. He did a great handover and he's also still right next door. So that's been nice to have him there for the continuity. So yeah, he did a great handoff and now I'm working with what I feel like is a really good offer team Don Loepke and Dave Chase and myself and we're getting right down to it.

Captain Chris Lee Have you had an opportunity to work much with the MEC reps?

Captain Bill Hubbell Yeah, Chris, we've actually already had a couple of calls with the MEC. So, it's a little different being on this side of it. You know, I was in front of them as a committee chair before, but we have a great group of reps that are really well engaged and well informed. I'm looking forward to continuing to work closely with them as they continue to advocate for their constituents.

Captain Chris Lee Well remind everyone a little of your experience here at FedEx and your previous union experience.

Captain Bill Hubbell Sure. Currently I'm a MD11 Captain based here in Memphis, came back from Anchorage here it's been almost four years ago, I guess. I live outside Austin with my wife and two kids. Prior to that, I was in Anchorage for 10 years as an MD11 First Officer. And when I was hired, I did two years in the backseat of the 727. So that's my pilot experience here. And as far as union experience, most recently, I was the SPSC Chairman. Prior to that, I was the Retirement and Insurance Vice Chairman and then back before our last contract in 2013 I organized the picketing event in Anchorage and also helped out with the one there in New York. Before that, I was the Anchorage LEC 79 Secretary-Treasurer and before FedEx I was a pilot-to-pilot member at my previous carrier.

Captain Chris Lee The previous MEC Chairman, Captain Pete Harmon, appointed you as one of the leads for the Coronavirus internal team. Talk to the pilots a little bit about that.

Captain Bill Hubbell That's correct. Captain Harmon had created this Coronavirus Response Team. It included people from negotiations, communications, representation. We had safety and security on there as well. One of the things that we also did was create the Coronavirus PDR dropdown. The team answered hundreds and hundreds of PDRs related to the Coronavirus. Through that, we were able to create with the Company, the Coronavirus Safety Working Group, which consisted of myself and some other ALPA members working really directly with the duty officers on the Company side. And what that

did, it created a conduit to share information much quicker. So, when we had pilots out in the field that had issues we were able to reach over directly through that working group to the duty officers and get what I think is a better resolution and certainly a quicker resolution for our pilots. Through that work and through the PDRs, it became very apparent very quickly the amount of personal sacrifice that our pilots were making. And to watch them continue to adapt and overcome and press forward, no matter how bad the situations seem to get or even just the fluidity of it. Things changed literally sometimes multiple times in a day and certainly every day. But it just seemed like no matter what our guys continue to put their nose to the grindstone and go out there and do their job. And it's just very humbling and very inspiring to see that happen. The pilots' overall day to day commitment to this corporation and the success of the corporation it's humbling and inspiring.

Captain Chris Lee Seeing that you've come from a committee chairman background. How do you see your role now as the MEC Vice Chairman?

Captain Bill Hubbell The primary role of the MEC Vice Chairman is working with the committees. And we've got over 30 standing committees here at FedEx. So, I think it's helpful to come from a committee background to see how that fits into the larger picture. So that's essentially my main role here, is to step in and help those committees, help assist them get their resources, get their work done as they need. So, I think it's a nice natural transition, actually. Additionally, I've been asked to lead that coronavirus team. And so that's another nice natural transition, I guess, from being a part of that team to now leading it. And again, another great group of people from spanning all different committees and representation. So, I'm anxious to now be in charge of that team.

Captain Chris Lee A big focus coming up is obviously preparations for contract 2021. How do you envision that going?

Captain Bill Hubbell So far it's going well. We have an internal timeline that we've prepared to get ready for openers. We're working on surveys. This time around it'll be the traditional phone type survey. And we're going to combine that at a later date with the online web-based survey. So, we're absolutely looking for and hope for good pilot input and participation. So, when you see those come out, please make sure you're participating there. Additionally, the focus and workload will really increase for certain groups during the preparations phase and going into negotiations. Certain groups like obviously the Negotiating Committee, SPSC, Communications, Family Awareness and P2P, their workload is going to get quite a bit greater. So, I'll be spending quite a bit more time with those groups as they prepare for bargaining. And as I've gotten to work with these groups more and more, I'm just really, really impressed and humbled by the amount of work they do and the depth of their knowledge and the experience they have for all these committees and all the volunteers on there. That's a really great group to be a part of.

Captain Chris Lee Any final thoughts?

Captain Bill Hubbell Yes. The bottom line here is negotiations are coming and we want your input. There are all kinds of different ways you can do that. You know, you can obviously contact your rep. There's the PDR system. There's pilot-to-pilot. We've got different surveys that are coming out that you can answer both through the phone and on the web. If you see me in the crew room, you can certainly talk to me there. Call or email me anytime. If you have specific issues, if you had a R&I or Scheduling question, there's the subject matter experts there on the committees. Really, what I'm trying to say is that

whatever your method and you can see there several, we just really want to make sure that you're heard. So please, please be engaged. Please let us know what you want. And that's going to help us going forward here for 2021. Next, is I always encourage people to volunteer. It's hard work, but it's rewarding. The organization is only really as good as the volunteers and the people involved in it. So, if you're interested, there's also a PDR drop down for that. If you go to the [PDR](#) system, the drop-down menu is it says Volunteer for Union. Those will actually come to me. And we can work internally here to find a spot for you. I mean, it's great if you already have an expertise or an area of interest, but if you don't, please don't let that dissuade you. Just fill out the [PDR](#) and we'll find a place to plug you in. Last, at the end of the day, it really comes down to us as a pilot group and how we participate and our level of involvement. I'm very confident that we have a great team in place and great staff and great committees. And also, the pilots, I think, are up to the job for 2021. So, I look forward to continuing to be part of this. Reach out. Let us hear your voice and get involved. And I think we're going to in really great shape next year.

Captain Chris Lee Thanks, Bill. Thanks for coming. If you have any questions, please send me an email to fdxpodcast@alpa.org and as always, be safe out there and we'll see you next time.