

Labor Management Meeting, (USPS and APWU)
Grand Rapids Installation
January 20, 2010
Room 210 - Grand Rapids P&DC
Started at 10:04

Present for the union (APWU): Dick Page (President); Amy Puhalski (Executive Vice President); Bill Scutt (Clerk Craft Director); Tracy Fleming (MVS Craft Director); Michael Long (Recording Secretary)

Present for management (USPS): Vance Devers (Senior MDO), Paul Phillip (MVS), Missy VanderSlik (Transportation Manager); Michelle Hagg (Labor Relations); Rich Howard (Labor Relations), Tom Horgan (Maintenance Supervisor), and Bonnie Balk (Secretary),

General Issues:

1. ~~Basement Parking Problems. USPS vehicles in craft designated areas (tractor lift).~~ Item withdrawn by the union.
2. Inter-office envelope deposit box not being checked on a daily basis. Chances are we are not receiving mail from the inter-office. Dick said that if the item is time-critical, we may not get it because it is not being picked up every day. Vance said he checked into this and it is suppose to be Tour 3 picks up the mail from the box and Tour 1 sorts it. Vance will follow up with Fred.
3. New Items that may arise. APWU is checking on employees being placed into 340 time. Management is placing employees into 340 time even when the employee is working. The APWU will follow up with OIG if need be, but placing management on notice.
4. Dick reiterated that we would like to keep things out of the grievances procedure when we can. Management will train their supervisors how to properly handle grievances and steward release (Articles 15, 17 & 3).
5. Dick asked for clarification regarding the union had any issues with time cards usage for all employees. Management states that there is no problem.

Clerk Craft Issues

1. ~~Priority box and window supplies moved out of tunnel. Is there going to be a permanent spot?~~ Item removed from LMM by union.
2. Voice Recognition machines. Any plans to try them again for scheme mail? Management asked if it is going to be in Customer Service or in the Plant.

Union asked either position. Missy said that it may be going into Customer Service (Vance said he will follow up for Chris (Postmaster)).

Maintenance Issues

1. Tunnel has new work area/office. Custodians need time allotted to clean the area properly. Tom stated this was to be used for the FMO. It is not an office.
2. What is the office in the tunnel for? Which has now been secured? Why is that office there? Who has a key there? Tom stated that it is FMO office. There used to be a small shop on the second floor and that has been moved downstairs. There is a key maker, etc. Tom stated that it is not an office.

APWU states that the union doesn't care what management does with their work areas. Since there is a desk. When it looks like an office, and smells like an office, it generally is an office.

MVS Issues

1. Seniority and assignments at VMF need to be addressed. There are four individuals who are on the seniority list who are improperly placed. They should be treated separately in regards to bids, etc. Installations used to be separate and the VMF is a separate installation.

Phil stated that he is in agreement that the two installations are separate and would like to get this in writing. Phil related that two installations are VMF in Muskegon and VMF in Grand Rapids. Phil stated back in 95 that the Muskegon VMF did away with their supervisor and became an auxiliary of Grand Rapids and was placed under the same finance number as Grand Rapids VMF.

Muskegon and Grand Rapids VMFs are separate, with regards to Seniority, Overtime, etc.

APWU stated that there has never been an official consolidation and could not find any paperwork; it has only been administratively done. There was no excessing. On the APWU site, while the members there are actually part of our local; it is a separate installation.

Dick asked that we want to clarify that it was a separate section. Richard felt that it is not a point for Labor Management since it is not.

Dick stated that it was never properly "transferred" into the Grand Rapids.

Management is in agreement with the principles that it should be a separate section (while it will remain administratively that the manager of VMF is over them).

Dick wanted to make sure management understand that the VMF is a separate installation and not part of the Grand Rapids installation.

Phil stated that the employees at the Muskegon VMF may still show up under the Grand Rapids. Richard and Missy stated that they can fix this and separate it.

2. ~~High cleaning at VMF needed. (Maintenance issue also).~~ Removed from agenda, just ask that someone be assigned and have it cleaned and no longer be a safety issue.

Management Issues:

1. Labor Management Meeting Minutes. Due to management and union not being able to coordinate previous meeting minutes, we will hold off with signing off on the minutes until the next meeting. Vance handed out the meeting minutes for December 2009 from management.
2. Management stated that they will be enforcing Article 17 and supervisors will be asking stewards the nature and reason for Stewards time.
3. Full-time Union Stewards. Management stated this mostly deals with union officials who are not handling issues at Step 1 and Step 2. Vance stated that he believe it to be past practice with the President who is generally on union time for 40 hours per week. Vance stated that if it is not done in connection Step 1 and Step 2, that the union steward would punch out and be on union LWOP.

Dick states that management brings in selective articles of the National agreement only, but does not bring in Article 15 for employees to see a union representative in a timely fashion or other articles. The union does not have any full-time stewards. We have a need for stewards that seem to be on full time. Dick asked management to explain how they plan to reduce steward's time.

Management states the union based on their integrity for processing, adjudication, and investigating Step 1s and Step 2s and Step 3s otherwise is on Union LWOP.

Dick stated: Management is raising the union's integrity. Is there is an issue of our integrity that the union officials that seem to be on 40 hours are not processing, adjudicating, and investigating grievances?

Vance stated that he would like to "bring this to light". He says he is not questioning their integrity. He states that this is his plan.

Dick states that to the best of our integrity, when a stewards travels between offices, they will ask and use LWOP in accordance with the contract.

Dick asked for all that have been around for a while has the President been on clock. Rich Howard has stated that since his beginning back in 1995, and Bonnie stated that it has been that way back since 1986. Dick asked why there is a change to this past policy. Rich Howard brought up that for payment of union stewards that Article 17 of the contract is specific and if it is not grievance related that it is off the clock. Rich further stated that in Article 5, there are ways to change a past practice and Labor management will advise Vance if management chooses to do this.

Rich stated that it would be a change in the current policy. Dick stated that Vance stated in their meeting yesterday that Vance's intention is the Union Presidents (from all crafts). Dick stated the President is the Chief Steward in Grand Rapids and he is being paid properly and is performing the duties of a steward in relation to Article 17. Vance also alluded that we are going back to 7020s. Dick stated that the union welcomes 7020; however, the front-line stewards are the ones that can't handle them.

Dick stated that when we go to even Labor Management meetings; this is meeting time.

Vance stated that he was not questioning the union's integrity. But he stated that he has seen some things that were going on in the plant that we need to look at and should be changed. He states that there are approximately seven union officials on full time for all the crafts which equates 14,000. Vance stated that we are currently 40,000 man hours over budget.

Dick stated that the union is not concerning itself with budgetary constraints when it comes to Articles 15 & 17.

Dick stated that the union saves the USPS money. While we save money, why is management looking at just the union to "save" money.

Dick would like to address specifically what we could do. Rich stated that he didn't hear that there is a problem with full-time union officers. Rich stated that Article 15 & 17, that if it requires a union representative to be on union time, then okay.

Dick asked if that is the process we are going to have? Every time a union representative asks for union time they will ask management and tell them what the representative is working on?

Rich related that according to the JCIM that the union does not have to be specific but provide enough detail/information to make a reasonable request (e.g. Article 8 for Amy, Article 8 for Bill, etc.)

Dick stated that what is currently happening is that management states that we can't release you because we don't have enough people to run the machine.

Dick related the current process is two hours, and can see this snowballing because if the management does not release employee within the proper timeframe (2 hours) this would result in additional grievances.

Dick stated that the union may have to go back to Union Time Request form, as well as employees' release. Will ask management to initial these requests.

Dick stated that management doesn't handle Article 17 and 15 grievances very well and the union and management has cooperated in the past.

Dick wanted management to know where and what we are doing. E.g. L/M meetings, Overtime, Holiday. If the labor/management environment starts to wane, the union will no longer help management in these and other areas and will just enter everything into the grievance process. It seems to the union that management is trying to justify union time, not the union.

Vance provided the example of employees were being rotated on the machines (running the automation machines). Then the union asks to see everyone that has a grievance in the union office to fill out a statement. That is counter productive to what management is trying to do with getting the mail out. Vance asked if there was just a way to have a form that the employee can just sign that says something like..."on this day and time, so and so worked the machine alone." instead of going into the office.

Dick related that the union does not tell management how to run their operations, and they (management) are in no position how to file grievances for individuals. The union does not cause grievances, management does.

Rich Howard wanted to know when was the last time we ran the machines alone. Vance stated that management required single breaks on Friday/Saturday. We had eight call-ins on this day. Spirit of cooperation. Vance said that we have a lack of cooperation right now in this meeting. Dick stated that the union says that management is lacking when someone comes into the office and changes past practice and past agreements. The union is only reacting to what management does. The craft employees only do one thing, they follow instructions

Dick related that attitudes need to improve. The union knows how to adhere to the contract.

Management needs to know how to adhere to the contract, Article 3, 17, 15, etc. Dick reiterated to management that the president's time (40 hours per week) will stay as is currently.

4. Time card usage for ALL Employees. Bill was asked if he received his card yet. Bill answered yes.

5. Automation Relations. What happened on Friday/Saturday and bring attention to machine 18. Vance stated that on Saturday, he had to leave this machine idle from 3:30 – 5:25. Vance would ask for the union’s cooperation. He stated that on this day we had 8 call ins. Dick stated that we will not cooperate with management where it affects the safety of members. Management states they will not risk the safety of the employees and refer back to the National Agreements and utilize personnel in that fashion (e.g. short runs that don’t require sweeping).
6. Spot Awards. Position of giving out recognition and Spot awards to employees to encourage good work behaviors. Dick related management can do what they want, they are in charge.
7. Information Requests – Contract Issues. If management is unaware of what the information request is for, management will ask what the reason is for. Bonnie stated that we generally get some that just says: “Contract”. Will need Article, etc.
8. Update on Pan and Oasis. Michelle Hagg reported that PEDC and local services is working on a SOP on who does what. Michelle reiterated how the employees will be notified. Michelle stated that employees who are awarded a position will fill out a sheet that will ask them for contact information. Michelle states that the employee has 10 days to contact PEDC. Local services will contact the employee via e-Mail. Michelle said they will be contacted via e-Mail or proxy e-Mail. Employees are having an issue since they don’t have ACE or Blue access or some don’t even have e-Mail.

Amy stated that per the contract the employee is only required to contact PEDC within 10 days or longer if they are on leave. And how are they suppose to obtain this if they don’t have e-Mail and/or a computer? Michelle stated that PEDC will help the employee. It is still a new procedure and PEDC is working with Shared Services.

Amy asked Michelle if they are going to inform the employees. Michelle asked if there has been an issue. Bill and Amy both responded: “Yes”

Michelle stated that Local Shared Services (Petri) is/will work with Oasis.

Missy asked when we will have an SOP to give the employees. We will need to know when the SOP will be available. Vance suggested that we should wait until the SOP comes out.

Bill stated that the SOP needs to be in accordance with contract. Training used to be on a no-loss and no-gain when it used to be in your own facility. Michelle said that employees can schedule this now in their own schedule. They will be offered five different times and the employee will be allowed to choose.

Rich said he spoke with an employee yesterday and this employee was offered three choices. When the employee put in their request, it came back not available, so the employee then had to go Lansing. This employee is now travelling to Lansing. Rich said that he is aware of the union's position regarding no-loss or no-gain, but we can only follow the National guidelines.

Bill asked if management will provide a Staff car for travel to and from since it is no-loss or gain. Management stated – No.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Michael A. Long". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "L".

Michael A. Long
Recording Secretary (WMAL/APWU)