

***Western Michigan Area Local #281
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO***

General Membership Meeting Minutes
November 1, 2008

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at 918 Benjamin NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 with the Pledge of Allegiance and a Short Invocation along with a moment of silence for Brian Hoogeveen.

Number of Members in Attendance: 35

Roll Call of Officers:

The following officers were present:

President – Richard Page	Clerk Craft Director – Bill Scutt
Vice-President – Amy Puhalski	Maintenance Craft Director – James Smith;
Recording Secretary – Michael Long	Motor Vehicle Craft Director – Mike Hill
Associate Office Director – Jack Fryling	Sergeant at Arms – Jackie Pike

The following officers were not present: **Treasurer** – Linda Chandler

Review of previous meeting's minutes: October's General Membership Meeting minutes were accepted with the following corrections: Under Motor Vehicle report – should read “others” not “other”. Carried as amended.

Applications for Membership: (All accepted by voice vote of the membership)

Paul Martin – Clerk (Grand Rapids)
Amy Roeters – Clerk (Grand Rapids)
Dale Scramlin – Clerk (Grand Rapids)
Tammy Longtine – Clerk (Grand Rapids)
Jason Longtine – Clerk (Grand Rapids)
Lisa Stockdale – Clerk (Byron Center)

Bills: None

Officer's Report

Treasurer's Report was held off until next month due to the Treasurer being ill.

President's Report: We had a member who was a clerk on Tour 3 Automation (Brian Hoogeveen) who passed away recently. Cremation has already taken place; however, we are still awaiting to hear from their family when the memorial will take place.

Make sure you get out to vote this Tuesday. This is what democracy is all about. We ask that you support Labor friendly candidates. The new President will appoint a new Labor Relations Board which is critical to our needs. Keep this in mind when you vote.

Vice-President's Report: We had training for stewards last month (October 17); We also completed training of our two new stewards (Rick Veleasquez (Clerk Steward) and Tracy Fleming (MVS Steward))

Bill and I are still meeting with management at Job Summits. There is still some issues with the postings. We are still addresses the issue with time-frame of reposting jobs once they have been relinquished. We are having some difficulty in maintaining weekend off jobs along with management trying to revert jobs.

We recently had four mail handlers transfer to the clerk craft; and from what we have been told there are four or five more who have asked to transfer as well.

Because of the excessing of Tour 3 manual sections, the residual positions have been reduced down to two. However, with the hiring freeze and many employees retiring, we expect this to increase over time.

Management has reduced the casual compliment in Grand Rapids. They have kept 20 casuals (ten on Tour 3 and ten on Tour 1 in the Automation sections downtown).

There are many, many issues in the Associated Offices. One of the main issues is Reduced Hours of Bargaining Unit work and the increase of Postmaster/OIC hours. The POOM has issued a directive that Level 16 offices, that clerks only receive two (2) hours per day, even if the mail isn't done, the clerks have to go. I can't express enough, you only have fourteen (14) days to file a grievance from when your hours have been reduced for us to file a grievance. We have one office (Nunica) where the Postmaster is taking over all the work and the clerk is being sent out of the office. I have also noticed that many of the clerks are scared of retaliation. Many of the Postmasters are mad at the clerks, and the clerks don't even know that the grievance was filed.

Deborah Anne Treamer and Theresa Smith are handling Attendance issues in Grand Rapids. Their interpretation of the attendance issue is in total violation/conflict with the contract. Pay attention to your 3971. When you call in and you are given a 3971, make sure you look at what is on that slip (Look at the Date, the hours, the comments, the leave that you asked for, etc.). If it is incorrect, DON'T SIGN IT. You have the right to fill out your own 3971. Make sure you ask for a copy of the 3971 that you sign.

Deems Desirable. Management is going in and flagging a group of people for Deems Desirable for a time period. There are provisions when management can ask you for documentation; (e.g. Going outside your FMLA parameters); however, three days or less is not one of them. If you are being ask for documentation, make sure to see a Steward.

Recording Secretary: Tuesday is November 4th and is Election Day. Get out and vote.

Clerk Craft Director: I will be placing results from the Labor Management meetings in the next edition of the paper, so you know what has happened with the items that you have brought to us.

In the last Labor Management, we agreed to have a meeting with management and the union regarding Limited Duty Job Offers, to allow us some input as to what the offers are being made, work being added to it, etc. I have met with Beth Eliopoulos about this, and more meetings will take place. .

Red Polo Shirts. I am still working to allow our window clerks to wear Red Polo shirts to show solidarity with the troops.

Info Requests need to go through Plant Manager first and then will be dispenses to the appropriate sections (including Customer Service).

Job Summits/Shared Services. The Turn Around time from Shared Services is terrible. If you see a job that should fall to someone else, due to knowing that someone either failed or was awarded another

job, and don't see this happening, please let us know. Or if you see a job that should have been posted due to someone bidding off, retiring, etc, and don't see it, please let us know.

Acceptable documentation when you call in is too ambiguous. We have had an agreement from before that when and if management wants Medical documentation that is what needs to be asked.

Maintenance Craft Director:

Big clash about Budget and staffing, we are filing the appropriate grievances. We have received grievance settlements regarding building maintenance being sent to other buildings. We won this issue. the only time you should be sent to another building is on overtime.

A lot of grievances being filed regarding 7.2 hours of work. If you are being scheduled for more than 7.2 hours, see your stewards. We need to account for our hours.

We are also grieving the Mechanized staffing (579 grievances). We had some sustained Friday. There are issues with management that when we win grievances, management is then trying to circumvent the award by trying to cut down hours. Subsequently, we have asked for National office to assist us with staffing, and this has been approved.

We have been filing grievances regarding seven days of cleaning around the city. When these are sustained, we should see more hours and positions in the city.

We have new MOS and BEM positions posted.

Employees would like to have a policy regarding no lunches. I went and asked management (Art) about it and stated that he would not do a blanket policy regarding No Lunches;

Two of the MOS clerks received about \$2,000 each due to people moving between buildings.

Motor Vehicle Craft Director:

49546 transporting mail has been given to a contract carrier. We have filed the appropriate grievances and awaiting to hear the outcome. The VMF is doing a great job of keeping our tractors on the road. Our Trailers are coming back looking better (cleaner, crisp, etc.).

Others hauling / transporting mail. If you see someone transporting mail to other offices, please let the MVS Craft Steward or Director know so the appropriate grievances can be filed.

Sergeant at Arms Report: None

Associate Office Director:

The POOM (Silvia) is riding and yelling at Postmasters, along with the clerks. Some of the clerks at some of the Associate offices, when they answer the phone and the POOM is on the other end, they are being yelled at and being belittled

Work Hours. The Associate Offices are the front lines for the Post offices in regards to the reductions of hours. PTF hours are being reduced, and if there are any full-time clerks in the office, these individuals are being placed on Standby hours, so show a reduced need. If you see anyone doing our work, please let your steward work.

Security and Closing down for lunch. Now that many offices are closing down for lunch, many offices are leaving their doors open to the box sections to give our customers the ability to come and check their boxes. However, the problem lies that many of the insides doors do not meet the proper security (e.g. Easier to open, etc.) If you feel that you do not have or are not receiving the proper security, please let your steward know.

Retiree Chapter Report:

Thank you for sending me to the Convention. I would like compliment President Page for going out of his way to address an issue with President Burrus (as stated in the prior meeting minutes).

Only two of the ten retiree issues passed, and they dealt with dues increasing. One that dealt with a 50% dues increase for the retirees. (from \$2.00 per month to \$3.00). The other eight dealt with more recognition for the retirees. These eight failed to reach the necessary vote from the delegates to pass.

Start planning on your retirement now.

The Retirees Chapter is doing quite well, but we are becoming older.

Take the time to vote Tuesday on November 4th.

Committee Reports:

A&E: Christmas Party on December 14th, 12:30 – 3:30 p.m. at the Casino Club. RSVP are very important and are needed by December 10th. We are doing a craft table for Christmas gifts, Cookies and cupcakes, etc. We are focusing on a family theme this year.

Veterans (presented by Don Kramer): All the years before I retired, I used to set up a Veterans Display in the lobby of the Grand Rapids Main of the employees who were veterans. This Veterans Holiday there will once again be a display. If you know of anyone receiving a pension from the military, they will be receiving a 5.8 percent raise, the largest in the last 15 years, to become effective December 1st.

On the north-end of the Veterans Home property lies Gratto Park. Because of support of the local public and business, by generating \$430,000, this park has been revitalized for use of the Veterans at the home. This was originally planned to take three years. But because of all this support, it was done in less than one year.

Over a year again, the Purple Heart Monument at Veterans Park downtown was dedicated; however, many of the Purple Heart Veterans at the Veterans Home were/are unable to travel down there to view it. With the generosity of the local public once again, another monument, which is ¾ in size, but exact in all other areas, will be placed at the Veterans Home.

Health Plan. Open Season is November 10 – December 8th. Compare your plan and review what they offer in comparison to the APWU plans. The USPS pays 95% of the Consumer Driver plan. If you are interested in possibly saving money in your Health Plan, compare what is offered. Go to APWU.org to view the information available. Contact Sally Lesiewicz at the union office.

COPA.: As of October 10th, the local has donated \$3,100 to COPA. We had a goal from National of \$6,200. As stated in the last meeting, Don Kramer was the winner of \$1,000 Travel Voucher.

Building Committee: In January there was a motion to re-establish a Building Committee to locate our own building. The member of this committee included: Catherine Beembloosm, Richard Page (Co-Chairs); Jamie Arranguren, Karen Hodges, Shawn Rabidoux, and Art Eggerding. We met in June and

we decided to wait for another meeting until we receive information from the membership as to what we want in a building. Now is a great time to buy. Pros to Owning a Building: Investment Purposes, Tax Breaks, Additional Space, Membership uses, etc.; Cons: Responsibility of owning a building. taxes, insurance, etc.,

Correspondence: None

Old/Unfinished Business: Constitution Change. President Page (as the maker of the motion) has withdrawn this motion.

New Business:

E-Board Recommendations:

Go on record as endorsing: Christopher Yates (Kent County Circuit Court); Bruce Hawley (State Representative – 73rd District), Roy Schmidt (Kent County Commissioner); Brian McKay (Kent County Drain Commissioner), Carl Levin (US Senator), Mark Schauer (State Senator), Diane Hathaway (Michigan Supreme Court - Non-Partisan Ticket). Carried

To change the policy: To give WMAL Stewards and Officers a \$50.00 Gift card in lieu of an Officers/Stewards appreciation dinner for those stewards who have attended at least two local training sessions a year. Carried

To change the policy: To get cell phones and service for the President, Vice-President, Clerk Craft Director, AO Director, MVS Director, and Maintenance Director from Verizon Wireless; by striking “from Verizon Wireless”. Carried.

To change the policy “To pay \$80.00 per year for the domain name WMAL.org.” To amend to: To pay the current rate for the domain name WMAL.org. Carried.

To change the policy “The Local will pay dues to the state organization (MPWU) based on full membership of this Local.” To amend to: (Delete in entirety). Discussion. (Division: 12 for, 16 against). Defeated

To change the policy “Not to pay mileage for local training or committee meetings.” To amend to: To pay mileage for local training or committee meetings. Motion by: Catherine Beemblossom, 2nd by Cindy Delafunetes: for 15 miles or more to get to a meeting. Call for the Question (Carried). Amendment defeated. Original Motion – Carried as originally motioned.

To expend up to \$125 each for three backpacks (stuffed with the items listed on the website) for the Winter Haven Stand Down to be distributed locally for homeless veterans. (Information is available on the APWU Website). Motion to amend by Jennifer Gilbert, Seconded by: Catherine Beemblossom to increase to five backpacks. Discussion Amendment carried. Motion as Amended. Carried

The floor was opened up for new business:

Motion by: Catherine Beemblossom, Seconded by: Jamie Arranguren that: the local prepare to spend up to \$250,000 out of the Contingency Fund for the purchase of a building that will serve as our union hall/office. The building committee will have the authorization to search for and buy the appropriate real estate property with direction from the membership and in accordance with any motions made at a general membership meeting pertaining to such purchase. Discussion. Carried

Motion by: George Hendricks, Seconded by Jim Smith to: Extended the Meeting until the end of all business.

Labor Management:

See your steward or officers.

Drawings: (The # preceding the name is either the ticket number or raffle number)

\$250.00 Attending the Meeting Drawing. #395 – Sandra Rich (If she would have been at the meeting, she would have won)

Ten (10) - \$25.00 Gift Cards for Thanksgiving

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|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. #11 – Richard Fletcher | 2. #13 – Don Kramer |
| 3. #7 – Dick Page | 4. #24 – Bill Scutt |
| 5. #34 – Tim Thomas | 6. #17 – Jackie Pike |
| 7. #3 – Lisa Burchardt | 8. #2 – Doug Warren |
| 9. #19 – Jamie Arranguren | 10. #4 – Dessa Long |

COPA: 50/50 Drawing: \$78.00 totally collected. \$39.00 to the winner - #670586 – Bill Scutt.

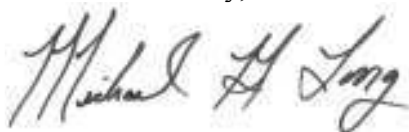
Four (4) - Ten (\$10.00) Dollar Door Prizes: (NOTE: According to local policies. When an Executive Board member receives one of the door prizes, another drawing is done. If more than 40 members are present, there is one additional drawing per ten members)

- #30 – Richard Velasquez
- #14 – Lou Kintigh
- #26 – George Folk
- #9 – Rose Jerrials

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yours in Solidarity,



Michael A. Long
Recording Secretary



WESTERN MICHIGAN AREA LOCAL #281
AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO
DECEMBER 2008 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

SATURDAY
DECEMBER 6, 2008
7:00 P.M.

UNION HALL AT 918 BENJAMIN NE; GRAND RAPIDS MI 49503

Refreshments to follow the meeting
\$250 .00 Special Drawing (Need to be present to win)
10 - \$25 Dollar Special Drawing (Need to be signed in and Present to win)
4 - \$10 Dollar Drawings (Need to be signed in at meeting to win)

