

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

General Membership Meeting Minutes  
May 2, 2009

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at 2554 Burlingame Ave SW; Wyoming, MI 49509 with the Pledge of Allegiance and a Short Invocation.

Numbers of Members in Attendance: 35

**Roll Call of Officers:**

The following officers were present:

<b>President</b> – Richard Page	<b>Clerk Craft Director</b> – Bill Scutt
<b>Vice-President</b> – Amy Puhalski	<b>Maintenance Craft Director</b> – James Smith
<b>Recording Secretary</b> – Michael Long	<b>Associate Office Director</b> – Jack Fryling
<b>Treasurer</b> – Linda Chandler	<b>Sergeant at Arms</b> – Jackie Pike

The following officers were not present: **Motor Vehicle Craft Director** – Mike Hill

**Review of previous meeting's minutes:** April's General Membership Meeting minutes were read and accepted with the following corrections: *Correct spelling of Mike Kalinowski.* Vice President's Report will be corrected as follows: Should have read/stated: *We have a lot of vacancies in the Associate Offices and a lot of the clerks do not understand why they are not being filled. They are not being filled because we are under withholding. A lot of our PTFs who should have been preferenced to full-time regular status haven't been and are in limbo. This is because those full-time vacancies are under withholding. Residuals are jobs that go unbid and then become residual. Once that happens, then unencumbered (those that don't have a bid job) and PTRs can preference them. Unfortunately now, all of our residuals are also under withholding for people being excessed out of Detroit, Indiana, etc.* Motion to accept as corrected. Carried

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

➤ Allen Mrock (Maintenance – Grand Rapids)

**Bills:** None

**Officer's Report**

**Treasurer's Report:** As of April 30, 2009. Report was read. Motion to accept as read. Carried.

**President's Report:** Welcome to your new union home. Hopefully everyone had a little sense of pride when they drove us and saw the new signs on the building. We utilized a local shop, down the street, in the attempt to use local labor and community involvement. The owner assured us that the materials used will last, probably longer than most of us.

If there are any woodworkers in the union who knows how to **build a podium, please let me** know. We would like one that sets on tables. If you know of somewhere to get one, please contact me.

For those who were at the Special Meeting, you will notice that we are slowly getting this building in better shape. We recently had six more inches of insulation blown into the ceiling while the roof was off and being redone. We also had union plumbers come to fix the plumbing (Toilets). We are going to be using union labor whenever and wherever available first and foremost.

Thank you for those of you who have volunteered and given of your time to help at the new union hall.

Vice President Puhalski and I just attended a District Union-Management meeting hosted by District Manager Chuck Howe. These are generally given annually to give us (not only the WMAL but from all over the District) an update from all over the district to hear a report from Mr. Howe and his associates. The report included: Overall Financial Picture, Revenue, National and Local Retail Initiatives, Labor Relations, Compliment, VERA, and Restructuring. They also discussed some plans and strategies dealing with the employees on the window and in the field (AOs) and maintenance. They also went over some overall strategies with the budget and how bad we were hurting.

It was nice to see that we have support from management as well as the unions regarding HR-22. We hope that the pre-funded retirement burden will be soon lifted.

Part of the discussion related to the EAS restructuring. Management put out this report; and it stated it would impact 17 in the district. The actual reduction is only 4 people district-wide.

Step 2 Designee. We have been having a problem with getting the Step 2 designee from management to meet with the union and the stewards. We do not fault him though. He is being required to do so many different jobs/positions, that it does not avail him anytime to meet with us. We were told that management had a meeting the day before to discuss and rectify this.

Update on the building here. We had to come up with a set of by-laws (sort of like a Constitution). We have copies of the By-Laws if you would like to view them. It is also available on the website. The By-Laws stipulate that it is run by a Board of Directors. However, we need the membership to make a decision as to what level the membership would like to have a say to day-to-day activities.

We have already had a Wedding Reception here since we took ownership of the building. We have one other commitment from the VFW, and that is a Birthday party later in the month.

We have drafted a Rental Agreement. We are allowing only Active members and dues-paying Retired members to rent the building at this time. Currently, the rent will be: \$400.00 plus a \$200 Security deposit. This allows the use of the Rest Rooms, the Main Room, Kitchen, and the Walk-In Kitchen for a Six-Hour block. This covers the cleaning, the liability insurance, electricity, heat, etc.

**Vice-President Report:** I wanted to thank the membership to sending me to the Michigan AFL-CIO convention in Madison Heights. It was a Legislative convention. There were 25 different international unions represented there. Of that, there were 147 delegates. Some of the issues which were stressed dealt with: Unemployment benefits for Part-time workers and the Employee Free Choice Act which all the unions support.

I attended the convention since we are a member of the state AFL-CIO. Currently the dues to the state AFL-CIO is .25 cents per member. **A resolution, which passed, has now raised this to 30 cents per member.**

A couple of other resolutions which received support and asked that we support them when they come before us or your legislator as a vote is the opposition to the Do Not Mail and our support to the Vote by Mail campaign.

Lastly another resolution that they asked us to support the ban on Imported Flags. We need to buy American Made Flags.

If you go to UnionLabel.org. There are many products that made in the State of Michigan. On the website, they have a flyer which lets you know which products and where they are made. On that flyer: If every household started spending just spent \$10.00 of their grocery budget on locally grown foods. We would keep \$37 million dollars each week circulating in the Michigan economy.

Buy American. We need to make sure our kids and family know this also.

We are everywhere poem - Union goods and services. *If you can eat it, if you can drink it, wear it or ride it. If you can sit on it, play on it, work on it, stay in it. If you can tell time with it, build it or cook with it, if you watch it, listen to it, or keep things cold with it. If you use it for work or just to have fun, you can find one made by union workers. But did you also know that union members treat you when you are sick and help you stay well. We teach kids and help them stay safe. We make candy and cookies, medicine and machines, rubber tires, bikes and toys. We fight fires, fly airplanes, drive buses and trucks. We build houses, buildings, churches and schools. We make trains, airplanes and boats and the engines that move them. We build auto and trucks and the roads they follow. We run railways and subways and ships big and small. We make glasses to wear and the kind that you drink from. We keep you warm in the winter and cool in the summer. We connect you to your family by phone and mail. We make music and movies and film TV news. We write newspapers and take pictures and tint them. We harvest your food and staff stores where it is sold. We do thousands of things to make your life more secure.*

Whatever we do we need to support our union brothers and sisters.

Shared Services: When you bid on a job, and you are training/pending qual and another job falls to you and you take that job, training submits a Form 1400 to Shared Services saying that you relinquished that job and it locks you out from bidding on another job. If that happens, you need to contact your union steward, Bill, Amy or Dick immediately. Do not wait until the end of the bid cycle.

**Recording Secretary:** As President Page stated HR 22 will be coming up for discussion to the floor in Congress. Once this is done, our work is not done. It then will go to the Senate. Keep up the good work.

If you didn't hear, Arlen Specter from Pennsylvania changed sides on Wednesday to become the 59<sup>th</sup> Democrat in the Senate. With Al Franken from Minnesota becoming the 60<sup>th</sup> Democrat, the Super-Majority will be reached.

A few resolutions currently under consideration that need you to keep watch: HR 1686 would require the Postal Service to bargain with postal union before significant sub-contracting; HR 658 would make it more difficult for the Postal Service to consolidate facilities; HR 235 would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provisions.

Union Label. As Amy stated, we all need to **find and purchase union products, whenever and wherever possible.** At 131 Caledonia Street NE in Grand Rapids, the local Union Label organization is a good place to start. At a recent conference I attended, they informed us that in the future, they will also be selling or have access to the Union Made products.

**Clerk Craft Director:** There is an arbitration scheduled for this month for the Clerk Craft. As of right now, there also might be another one later in the month.

FSM 1000 is gone.

Window Clerks. Improperly entering a transaction into the POS unit is a felony. Do not make improper inputs. Put the right codes in there. Make your inputs correct. No matter what you do, if you do it incorrectly, you could be brought up on a felony. There was an instance in Kentwood that the clerk will have to take a plea bargain, because if this clerk went to court, this person would have to admit to taking a short-cut, not for this person's benefit, but to help expedite the line.

Make sure you do a proper procedure. Follow the procedure. No matter how long it takes for you to do it. Do not put yourself in the possible situation of being brought up on a suspicious transaction. If you are directed by your supervisor or local postmaster to take shortcuts, call the Inspectors and cover your own.

**Maintenance Craft Director:**

We have two new Step 2 Designee, which unfortunately both of them work under our Step 1 Class Action Designee (our maintenance manager)

4-10 workweek. We have all the information pulled how that is going. We have assurances from management that it will continue as long as numbers are good. Sick Leave usage has improved. Overtime dropped dramatically. Holidays have also improved. We should be looking at expanding this program.

The routes haven't been done. Because of this, a Non-Compliance grievance was filed due to management not knowing what they were doing with the routes. We have signed an agreement that states the routes will be done by the end of May.

We just filled two ET positions. In July, the new staffing package

Custodian Staffing Cuts. There was a "secret" memo from upper management that the District Manager wants to cut custodian cleaning down to minimum frequency. However, we have a grievance already to increase them to seven days a week.

Order a Magazine which comes through the USPS. It helps us out when and if everyone did it. When you order off the internet, make sure they ship through the USPS.

We have a whole bunch of cases combined at Step 3 will be coming up soon to be heard.

No-Lunches. We had our first employee issued a Letter of Warning. That was thrown out. We are now pulling clock rings to see if it is happening anywhere else.

Unionism. A week ago Friday, was confronted by a Scab (non-member) that started yelling that the union is ruining the Postal Service. What the problem was, this person was doing another occupational job so they didn't have to give out overtime. He didn't like that we were grieving that. So he proceeded to tell him how we (the union) is ruining the Post Office. We went round and round and I will write more about this in my article.

**Sergeant at Arms Report:** Pick up around you when you are done.

**Associate Office Report:** We had an issue come up that our New POOM that instructed our 493/494 postmasters to inspect the carrier vehicles when they returned. While that is not a concern, it becomes one when the Postmaster directed it to the clerk; even if the clerk is handling a transaction, the clerk will remove him/herself from the transaction, go check the vehicle, and then come back and finish the transaction. The inspectors (upon being contacted) stated that it would be a problem if the clerk left the building unsecured. My advice to the clerks is: If you have to check a vehicle, go to the rest room, etc., make sure you close and lock the door to the service/lobby area and reopen when you come back. Make sure you follow procedures!

**Retiree's Director Report:** We just had a board meeting and audited our financial records. We re-wrote the by-laws and providing a copy to the board.

Buy American While you Still Can! When you buy American, you are buying from someone else and your neighbors.

### **Committee Reports:**

A&E: Picnic is July 19<sup>th</sup>. The Golfing for Hope will be held on August 22, 2009 at The Pines Golf Course in Wyoming, MI.

### **Correspondence:**

1. Thank you card from Jenison Hoops Girl's Basketball
2. Lets Do It For George (a Letter from APWU National Human Relations Director Sue Carney)
3. Cleaning Committee Informative
4. Request for a Building Manager

### **Old/Unfinished Business:**

- Motion by: Bill Scutt, Seconded by: Catherine Beemblossom to: Untable the motion regarding the Educational Convention motion at the March 2009 meeting. Motion to untable carried. Original motion as amended: Defeated.
- Constitution Change: Committee recommends to rule it was improperly posted per Article 13, Section 2 of our constitution therefore rendered invalid. Motion by: Ray Novakoski, Seconded by: Bill Scutt to accept the constitution committee as read. Carried.

### **New Business:**

### **E-Board Recommendations:**

- To donate \$500 to United Labor Day for the First Labor Fest activity. Discussion. Carried
- Motion by: Bill Scutt, Seconded by: Ray to extend the meeting until the end of all business. Carried.
- To authorize the expenditure of up to \$1,000 for an open house of the new Union Hall. Discussion. Carried

### **The floor was opened up for new business:**

- Motion by: Bill Scutt, Seconded by: Roy Bailey. To send 10 additional stewards on top of the Executive Board Stewards to the Michigan Postal Workers Union Educational Convention –June 11 – 13, 2009 with up to 2 nights of Lodging, up to 3 days of Lost Time, Per Diem, Registration, Travel and Applicable Taxes. Discussion. Carried.
- POI from George Hendricks. We have a mail receptacle outside of the building. Are we receiving mail here? President Page stated that we have all mail forwarded to the union's PO Box; however, we want to make sure that in case we do get any mail here, we do want to receive it and not returned due to no mail receptable.

**Labor Management:** See your steward or officers to submit items for discussion.

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

\$250.00 Attending the Meeting Drawing. # 50 – Rick Brown (If he would have been at the meeting, she would have won!)

COPA: 50/50 Drawing: \$120.00 totally collected. \$60 to the winner - #7836747 – Kay Griffin.

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)

- #24 – Bill Scutt
- #33 – George Hendricks
- #7 – Richard Page
- #4 – Tammy Byrnes
- #11 – Catherine Beemblossom
- #15 – Jennifer Gilbert

Meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yours in Solidarity,



Michael A. Long  
Recording Secretary

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE WESTERN MICHIGAN AREA LOCAL WILL BE.....

***NOTE: THE LOCATION IS NOW CHANGED TO OUR UNION HALL!***