

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

General Membership Meeting Minutes
November 7, 2009

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

Numbers of Members in Attendance: 27

Roll Call of Officers:

The following officers were present:

President – Richard Page
Vice-President – Amy Puhalski
Recording Secretary – Michael Long
Treasurer – Linda Chandler

Clerk Craft Director – Bill Scutt
Associate Office Director – Jack Fryling
Sergeant at Arms – Jackie Pike

The following officer(s) were not present: **Maintenance Craft Director** – James Smith; **Motor Vehicle Craft Director** – Tracy Fleming

With the membership (who was in attendance) indulgence, Sue Brown from the Blue/Green Alliance has been asked to speak regarding the Blue/Green Alliance. The Blue/Green alliance is a strategic alliance between labor and the environment. If you have any question, check out their website at: <http://www.bluegreenalliance.com>

Review of previous meeting's minutes: October's General Membership Meeting minutes read and accepted with the following corrections: Motor Vehicle Craft Director is Tracy Fleming (Not Mike Hill). Carried.

Applications for Membership:

Thomas Rockhill (Clerk – Grand Rapids)
Lisa Miller (Clerk – Big Rapids)

Bills: None

Officer's Report

Treasurer's Report: Report ending October 31, 2009 was read to the membership. Motion to accept. Carried.

President's Report: Thank you all for coming, especially to our newest members from Rockford who are present. This has been a very busy month; we had 52 members retire with a couple more retiring at the end of November due to their status (PTRs).

The budget committee will be meeting soon to discuss this reduction in revenue and in keeping with the constitution to have a report for next year at the December's meeting.

Thank you for sending me to the President's conference. One of the main issues at this conference was Consolidations/Closings of branches and offices and training on what we can do as a union to help stop it. Many tips were given on how to use our members and the media.

When I returned from the President's conference, I asked the Postmaster about what is happening with the Kentwood and Wyoming branches (which is still on the list for being under review for consolidation/closure). The Postmaster stated that after discussing this with the District Manager that they are not going to act for the next two years. What they are looking at is consolidating the carriers into one facility. The Postmaster reiterated that there will be a retail presence in Wyoming and in Kentwood, manned by Postal clerk/employees.

Vandalism at the Hall. We have a compressor which keeps the walk-in refrigerator cool. The copper tubing from the compressor to the cooler was taken. An insurance claim was filed and we will be receiving a new compressor soon.

Public Rentals of the Hall. We will be soon starting to rent out the hall to the general public. While there has been some interest from the membership; we need to open it public rental to help with the costs associated in running the building.

Maintenance craft in Grand Rapids is going through some turmoil with abolishment's and repostings. Please be advised that management has totally screwed things up; and we believe that we have a very strong case to fight it.

FTR positions in the Associate Offices. We have for years tried to get Full-time positions in the AOs. We have been notified that management will be placing up to 50 full-time positions in various offices within the District (not necessarily in our local area). Since PTFs can not bid on these positions; they will be held for those being excessed from other offices/areas. We recommend that if a FTR position is posted in your office; fill out a letter and state a preference for that job/position. Make sure to get it Date Stamped by your postmaster to show when you gave it to them and provide a copy to your union representative.

Holiday Arbitration decision. We received an arbitration award regarding the holiday staffing. The decision was ruled in our behalf. Craft Director Scutt will have more info on this.

Stamp Distribution Office. We have been informed that this office will cease to exist in March 2010. All stamp distribution will come from Kansas City. This will affect a couple of our employees in Stamp Distribution.

By being a union member, you are entitled to a \$2000 Life Insurance policy for free; along with a Michigan Will kit. If you would like more information, please let me know and I will provide you the information.

Vice-President Report: Two bid cycles ago, a couple of mirror positions were posted for those who were retiring. Some of these were legit, others were not. We are looking at this, and the appropriate stewards are filing the necessary grievances for those positions that they are attempting to revert that were not mirror positions.

Last month I spoke about the rumors of PARS mail. We found out that it was not a rumor. We have lost the PARS mail and it has been sent to Lansing. We have six full-time positions that were abolished.

Last week we were really busy with Retirements. We had 52 members retire. I would like to congratulate those who retired.

Speaking of PTFs in Associate Offices. I have been in contact with a couple of different Postmasters who are doing craft work. If there are any PTFs looking for hours; please contact Jack or myself, there are hours out there for them.

Recording Secretary: Congress passed and the President signed into law the Defense Authorization bill. While it might not sound relevant to us; it definitely is. In this legislation: Those of us in FERS will now receive credit for unused Sick Leave. Starting in January, it will be 50%; however, as of January 2014, we will receive 100% credit for unused Sick Leave. Also, those FERS employees who left and returned to government service will be allowed to redeposit savings to earn credit for years they had previously worked; also those employees who choose to work part-time toward the end of their careers will not be allowed to use a higher salary figure in the calculations to factor their retirement.

While the information has yet to be released to state how it will work, this legislation has also provided and makes it easier for federal agencies to rehire retirees (for a limited time) without forcing them to take a cut in their annuity checks.

There are also a few piece of legislation that you need to be aware of and to keep your voice heard on Capitol Hill. These are: HR-1686 (formerly HR 4236) which would require the Postal Service to bargain with postal unions before it engages in significant contracting out of mail processing, hail handling, or surface transportation of mail.

HR 658 – To modify the procedures governing the closure or consolidation of postal facilities.

HR-2161 – A bill to “nullify certain regulations promulgated under the FMLA at the end of the Bush era and restore prior regulations.

Clerk Craft Report: Thank you for sending me to the Multi-craft. It is nice to keep the lines of communication open with our National Officers. It makes it nice when you are able to call someone to get your questions answered

President’s Conference. It was a great conference, but it felt as though it was in a haunted hotel. The hotel was very old; however, the training was very good. Consolidations – We need to get the community and public involved. We have a few good strategies as to what we need to do.

As Amy stated, the stewards will be filing on the reverted jobs

We are currently formulating some strategies to protect the PTFs and Associate Offices. We have some good ideas to protect jobs and are brain storming on more. Good ideas come from all different area.

There is a rumor that the APPS machine might be lost at the P1. While it is a bad thing for the Mail Handlers, it is a plus for the clerks because the mail would revert back to the clerks.

Holiday staffing and the use of casuals. Starting on President's Day in 2008, the union has filed grievances each holiday since then through Labor Day 2009. The award has cumulated to \$54,360. The pay adjustments for those affected will be done by the next week, and those who are awarded should see the monies in two pay periods.

Sergeant at Arms Report: None.

Associate Office Report:

Half of the postmasters have no ideas what their jobs are; and the other half think they do, but they are wrong. Please, do not help your postmaster do their job. If they fail to post a job or post it improperly, let them. Let them make mistakes. If you notice something going on that you know is not right, make sure to let your union steward know.

There are some areas that might affect the Distribution clerks in the AOs by management moving Rural carriers to other stations.

Clerks being moved from one office to another and sharing cash drawers. Please do not do that. If you are sent to a new office; make sure you ask for a new drawer. Do not work out of another person's drawer (even the Postmaster's drawer). If you are only there for an hour, make sure to have a drawer issued to you, and then before you leave, you close it out. Make sure you don't allow anyone to work out of your drawer as well.

Retiree Chapter President's Report:

Operation WIND. (Walker Indigents Needing Distribution). Tim Burke is working with this group. If you would like to have more information or help, please let me know and I will put you in contact with him.

The Retiree Chapter is doing really well. We are averaging about 130 members. Attendances at our meetings have doubled. We used to have around 8 – 10; and now are averaging about 20.

We passed two by-laws which allow spouses to join the Retiree's chapter. They can become members of our local retiree chapter only for paying 40% of the amount of dues that is normally sent in.

Bob Park was made an honorary member of the Retiree's chapter.

APWU Retiree's Department does a poor job of record keeping. It has been over 2 ½ years since we received an updated and correct membership list of the retirees.

Committee Reports:

A&E: Upcoming Casino and Shopping Trip tomorrow. We are going to Blue Chip and to the Michigan City Outlet mall.

Christmas Party. We are having two parties this year. One for the children (December 6th) and one for adults (December 12th). Make sure to RSVP.

POWER: *Jennifer Gilbert presented.* Wish-Upon-A-Star beneficiary will be the Veterans Home in Grand Rapids. We will be asking the Veterans Home for a list of items that they or the residents need.

Correspondence:

1. Union Label Coalition – Thank you for the use of the Hall

Old/Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

E-Board Recommendations: None

The floor was opened up for new business:

Motion by: Sandy Page, Seconded by: Jennifer Gilbert to donate \$200 towards the postage for the packages to the Veterans through the Casino Club. Carried.

Motion by: Michael Long, Seconded by: Jack Fryling: re: Scholarship Rules changes:

1. “Immediately preceding application deadline; provided the sponsor is not a postal manager.” Carried.
2. “Children of retired members of the bargaining unit are eligible provided the retiree is a full-dues paying retiree.” Defeated.
3. “To ensure an equal opportunity to obtain a scholarship, the applicant’s name can only be submitted once per annum.” Carried.
4. “...provided the winner notifies the union at least one month prior to the start of the academic year (to ensure that if an alternate needs to be chosen, it can be done so in a timely manner).” Carried

POI – on November 17th – the Health Fair will be held at P3 from 3:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

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. # 161 – Joyce Haney (If she would have been at the meeting, she would have won!)

COPA: 50/50 Drawing: \$72.00 totally collected. \$36.00 to the winner - #972202 – Beverly Jarrett

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

#25 – Carol Grysen
#7 – Richard Page
#19 – Ray Novakoski
#1 – Candy Roesly
#9 – John Niswonger
#27 – George Hendricks
#23 – Michael Long
#8 – Roy Bailey
#12 – Amy Puhalski
#15 – Tammy Byrnes

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)

20 – Steve Austin
4 – Jessi Dewit
#14 – Linda Chandler
#18 – Beverly Jarrett
#2 – Donna O'Brien

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yours in Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael A. Long". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail on the "g".

Michael A. Long
Recording Secretary