

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

General Membership Meeting Minutes  
October 7, 2009

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 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: 45 & 1 Guest

Swearing in of new Board Member – MVS Craft Director Tracy Fleming by President Page.

**Roll Call of Officers:**

The following officers were present:

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

**Sergeant at Arms** – Jackie Pike  
**Maintenance Craft Director** – James Smith  
**Motor Vehicle Craft Director** – Mike Hill  
**Associate Office Director** – Jack Fryling

The following officer(s) were not present: **Clerk Craft Director** – Bill Scutt

**Review of previous meeting's minutes:** June's (No quorum in September) General Membership Meeting minutes read and accepted. Motion to accept by voice vote. Carried.

**Applications for Membership:**

Deb Andrews (Clerk - Ada Post Office)  
Harold (Jake) Brewer (Clerk – Grand Rapids)  
Angela Jones (Clerk – Grand Rapids)

**Bills:** None

**Officer's Report**

**Treasurer's Report:** Report ending September 30, 2009 was read to the membership. Motion to accept. Carried.

**President's Report:** Thank you for coming we have a great turnout tonight.

The local has purchased a new podium for use. It was purchased locally and built specifically for the local; this podium will be in use for many years.

Thank you to the membership for sending me out to the Multi-craft conference in Nevada. The timing couldn't have been more perfect with the classes being offered, especially with the issues currently taking place in the local, specifically the Article 12 class that was offered (especially with the proposed excessing in the Maintenance craft.)

We have not had a General Membership meeting since June, and wanted to give you an update. The local participated in the Labor Fest, and had a booth that highlighted our local. Our local received good press on this. Thanks to Karen Hodges and Catherine Beemblossom for their hard work at the booth.

We will have a lot of issues coming up tonight. One of the issues will be the voting of three offices to become part of the local.

I will be soon going to the National President Conference, which is also timed perfectly; because of the issues happening regarding the Maintenance issues, the proposed consolidation/closing of the Kentwood and Wyoming stations, and the move of the mail from the Kalamazoo to Grand Rapids. I have asked the NPC President to invite National Maintenance Director Steve Raymer to talk about what is happening in Maintenance specifically and also intend to invite Steve to our local to show management that we have national support. I want to assure you that we have a plan to combat management's change/plan.

Questions? Are we one of the first locals to go through this with the custodians? A – when I asked National, they have not been informed of any other locals; but I have heard rumblings from other locals. Currently, very few locals around the country is doing this, but we have every attempt to squash it right here in Grand Rapids.

**Vice-President Report:** Thank you for sending me, along with the Executive Board to the Multi-craft conference. We split up and attended as many classes as possible.

4-10 in Automation Section. In the beginning of the summer, we were approached by management to go to a 4-10 in the Automation section on Tour 1 and 3. However, looking at the numbers, it is not in the best interests of the local to pursue this at this time.

PARS mail being sent to Lansing? Management has told employees that the PARS mail will be going to Lansing. Management has told the union that they are looking at mail volume and cost and that it is a possibility, but as of right now, it is just a rumor.

Level 16 offices and below. Management is drastically reducing the hours of PTFs in Associate Offices. When a PTF leaves an office, management is replacing clerks with PMRs. This is in direct violation of the National Agreement. If you have casuals, PMRs, Rural Carriers, etc doing your work, you need to contact your union representative immediately. (Barb Martin, is currently on extended leave; Greg Chanski is filling in for her.)

Some offices where clerks were doing the distribution in the morning. Management has eliminated this work and they are now doing that work; however, when the Postmaster goes on leave or days off, they are scheduling the PTFs to fill in for them. This does not allow them the ability to get hours from other offices. If you have an issue, please contact the union.

Job Submits. We got a little better cooperation this time. We told management that no more splits until we get more weekends off. This time, we received some weekends off, thus there are some splits on the board.

At the Multi-craft, National President Burrus announced that he will not be seeking re-election next year. The field has been set for new comers. More information will be forthcoming.

Dick and I have requested a list of all retirees from management; we are having an issue obtaining this list. We need this information to look at the jobs that will be affected. Some of the people

leaving, management has posted mirror jobs for some of these positions. Regional Coordinator Sharyn Stone has offered her assistance in obtaining this list.

Organizing. The local still has our organizing drive going. We have 109 non-members in our local. Those who organize these non-members receive a \$50 incentive; the new member will receive a jacket, and shirt.

Retail Station attacked. 3,600 job were initially on the list for those to be closed and/or consolidated. This number has been reduced; as of right now, 413 are still being considered (with 2 of them in Grand Rapids). At the Presidents Conference there will be a class regarding Consolidations. National Asst Clerk Craft Director Mike Morris will be teaching this. We need to be united and on-board on how to fight it.

Badges. Last 4#. The EID is on badges. There is discussion about taking this number off the badges and time cards.

Retirement Counseling. Everyone who is retiring is allowed to have retirement counseling on the clock. There has been an agreement at the National level that you are allowed to receive retirement counseling on the clock for you, your spouse and/or advisor. If you are not receiving this, make sure to contact the union.

**Recording Secretary:** Congress recently passed HR-22; and the Senate included this legislation in the Appropriations bill, which passed the Senate and was signed into law by President Obama last week. While it did not give us everything we needed, it did give the USPS a 1-year reprieve on 4 Billion dollars to pre-fund the Retiree's health fund. Keep informed. The maker of the S-1507 amendment, which would directly limit and bind our hands during negotiations regarding wage comparison, is still looking to enact this piece of legislation. During the Senate vote, only four votes were voted in the negative. One of these was Senator Colburn (the 1507 amendment sponsor) and the other was Senator McCain. If you don't think your vote matters; just look at what would have happened if he had been at the other end of the Pennsylvania Ave.

The 2010 Health Plan Open Season is fast approaching. The union has compiled the new rates and has it here for your review. I will be sending out with the minutes as well.

**Maintenance Craft Director:** Tomorrow I am meeting with Labor to handle Pre-Arb Shakeouts. We are going to go through a lot of them tomorrow. I will keep you informed through your stewards. A couple of them deal with restoring overtime to custodians. One of them also deals with a position in Jenison. Labor has stated in the beginning that she would invite Maintenance management into the meeting. The union has stated that if the manager is allowed, the union will no longer meet.

4-10 programs. Art wanted to terminate it on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October. We could not stop them. Management had the right to withdrawal. Art stated that he would revisit this, and if it happens, it probably will be in the New Year.

Excessing. First of all, I want to apologize if I was coarse with anyone, it has been stressful regarding this issue lately. Management has been looking at this for a few months now and we just got broadsided by it.

People were wondering why the union did not go to Art's "fireside chats". I felt this was foolish and unwise. We already knew what he was going to say. The union wasn't going to tell management how we will argue and fight this. Management makes enough mistakes with every action; and we were not going to give them any information or help with this. If I would have attended, I felt that our

position and arguments would have been stated and thus giving management the chance to use this information.

I also did not like that fact that non-members would have also received the information prior to the members. I hope you understand why I have been quiet.

When I went into our 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting. I have preached about this for years. Maintenance management does a staffing package for each facility/building. Some people feel it is like their living rooms. We go by Staffing Package. I have told people that if you are given more than 8 hours of work in a day, do not mark these as completed and sign off. In this meeting, Art Hotchkiss (Management) brought up papers that show custodians signed off that they did 17 hours of work in 8 hours. I hope everyone understand this; and spread the word.

One of the things, management says that we have new staffing packages, but we asked if management has new 4776, not EMRS sheet? Management stated that it would take months for that to be done. Arbitrators have repeatedly ruled that management can not prove that work was done. We will be tracking this and following to make sure that 4776 is done. Otherwise appropriate grievances will be filed.

We also have grievances at regional regarding reinstating staffing packages, eg. New positions. When and if these are won, which I think they will be, will be a real mess for management.

What management is doing is wrong! The corrective action will be to restore everyone to their current positions and made whole. (e.g. Lost Overtime, Night Differential, Sunday Premium, etc.)

Eight (8) Jobs that have been identified as possible overages. The people currently filling them: Mike Thomas; John Collison; Michele Leach; Brian Bongard; Sue Green; Deb Burke, Thu Nguyet Ngo, and Adrinne VanDremuel.

Eight (8) jobs are targeted for reposting: Currently filling them: Richard Fletcher; Chris Smith, Steve Schroeder, Ronald Kotowski, Elaine Schipper, Greg Carlson, Shirley Ingersoll, and Jim Kristan.

There are a lot of flaws with and in the new program. Management has eliminated square footage by not counting machines, and operations (e.g. If there is no operation working at this location, management doesn't count it). According to Management's figures, the buildings have shrunk.

I strongly believe that we will win this; and one thing that needs to be stressed: We Do NOT agree with any of these/this! All we can do is fight it!

Q- Are you asking custodians to lie about their hours? No, this is what the supervisor's are telling them. The problem is that management is scheduling 15 or more hours per day of work. We are scheduled for 7.2 hours (National standard). What is happening is people are signing off that they are doing at 15 hours. We need to ensure that what the custodian does is what is actually reflected. Don't sign off that you did 15 hours of work, if you didn't.

Q- How do you know if someone is being browbeaten over this? Jim posted a memo to tell people not to sign off on these hours. You sign for the job. Dick reiterated that you are adults, you need to make sure you do what you have to do. Stand up for yourself. Everyone that works for the Postal Service are adults. Act as such and make sure you stand up, stick up for yourself, and be honest on what you did. If you do 7.2 hours, and management states that you need to sign off that you did more, stand firm. Don't falsify your records. Spread the word!

Q – Did they do away with dusting of the cases? No. It is still in there. What Art is doing is taking bare minimums. (e.g. if it says an office is to be cleaned 3-7 times a week, management is taking the position that it is now 3). This is partly how they are accomplishing this.

Q – It is not just the custodians that are marking complete. MPE are also doing it? Their staffing is done by the machinery in the building. MOS is staffed on the amount of people you serve.

Q – Is there any alluding to progressing to the ET and MPE? As of now, nothing has been said.

Q – Why don't we have a traveling custodian that could go to the smaller offices? The staffing of smaller offices was changed two or three contracts ago, when they reduced the amount of square footage and requirements to sub-contract out custodial work.

Q – Falsifying. If management tells you to mark something complete and you didn't get it done, don't do it. You could be disciplined by falsifying documents.

Q – Can stewards look at the paperwork before they are turned in? Yes. But additionally, if you are given work in excess of 7.2 hours, make a copy of the form and give it to your steward.

POI - Level 7s should never state that their route is completed. Because Level 10s and 11s have to confirm and finalize.

**Motor Vehicle Craft Director:** Thank you for sending me to Multi-Craft. Learned a few things.

Management is still discussing the pilot program regarding working 8 hours within 12 hours in a 200 Man-hours office.

Management is still looking at contracting out and eliminating runs.

We have two drivers and one mechanic retiring.

**Sergeant at Arms Report:** None.

**Associate Office Report:** I want to thank you for allowing me to attend the Multi-craft. The amount of information was overwhelming. National provided everyone with CDs with a lot of the information on it.

In offices in 20 or below; Postmasters can do some clerk work. It depends on what management has historically done in the past. It is not necessarily the number or hours that they are doing, but it is also the type of work that they are doing. E.g. if they have normally did windows for someone while on break or lunch, but then they took it upon themselves to do distribution or box mail, this is a change and needs to be addressed and grieved.

RCA and Dual Appointees. We will be requesting all Form 50s to ensure that everyone that management states is a dual-appointee if they truly are one.

PMRs can only work in the absence of the postmaster. If you are aware of it going on, please let us know.

Postmasters are being asked to do more. If they are working beyond a 8-hour day or beyond a 40-hour week, that is work that could have been given to a clerk. If you have a Postmaster working on Saturday, if they are doing clerk work, they are doing our work. Make sure to see/ask for a steward.

For all those retiring, congratulations. I would ask that all the people staying behind to let management manage. Don't remind them. If they screw up, let them; and then inform your union of the problem. If you help them, there is a chance that we might lose a job.

### **Committee Reports:**

**A&E:** Upcoming Casino and Shopping Trip. November 8<sup>th</sup>. Watch the Bulletin Boards. We are looking at 4-Winds along with the Michigan City Outlet Mall.

**POWER:** Catherine and Karen both attended the POWER convention in Detroit at the end of July. POWER provides some of the best training. We still have T-Shirts for sale. They come in Black, Navy, Red, Orange, Purple, Hunter Green, and Royal Blue.

There is a misconception that POWER is suppose to self-sufficient. This is untrue. We used to be part of the budget when the committee was formed. The committee was told that when and if monies would be needed, that the committee would only need to ask.

### **Correspondence:**

1. American Diabetes Association Thank You Letter.

**Old/Unfinished Business:** None

### **New Business:**

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

- Motion to reimburse Marcia Elwanger in the amount of \$262.99 for dual payments of union dues. Carried.

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

- Voting of Grant, Hopkins, and Rockford is/was being conducted by Secret Ballot .
- Motion by: Scott Achterhoff, Seconded by: James Smith. To send the MVS and Maintenance Craft Directors or their designee to the upcoming President's Conference in Portland Maine including Lost Time, Lodging, Travel (to include Baggage Fees), Per Diem, Registration, Ground Transportation, and applicable fees. Call for the Question (Barb Tubbs, Seconded by: Jennifer Amos). Call carried. Vote on original motion. Carried.
- Results of the secret ballot regarding the voting of the following offices are as follows:
  - Grant: For: 42 No: 3 Motion to accept into our local approved.
  - Hopkins: For: 42 No: 3 Motion to accept into our local approved.
  - Rockford: For: 43 No: 2 Motion to accept into our local approved.

**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. # 627 – Steve Lang (If he would have been at the meeting, he would have won!)

COPA: 50/50 Drawing: \$98.00 totally collected. \$49.00 to the winner - #972087 – Mike Hill

Five (5) - 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)

# 35 – Theresa Gina  
#22 – Jennifer Amos  
#33 – Linda Kindle  
#26 – Tracy Fleming  
#11 – Scott Achterhoff  
#5 – Tim Ozinga

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 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, flowing style.

Michael A. Long  
Recording Secretary