

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

General Membership Meeting Minutes  
April 7, 2010

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: 40

**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** – Ray Novakoski  
**Maintenance Craft Director** – James Smith  
**Motor Vehicle Craft Director** – Tracy Fleming  
**Associate Office Director** – Jack Fryling

The following officers were not present: **Sergeant at Arms** – Jackie Pike

**Review of previous meeting's minutes:** March's General Membership Meeting minutes were accepted by voice vote with the following correction: Motion by Ray Novakoski was to only send a letter to Bill Scutt for the amount owed to the local (not an invoice nor was the info regarding the oath needed to be in the minutes). Carried.

**Applications for Membership (Accepted by Voice Vote of Membership):**  
Charlie Morris (MVS – Grand Rapids); Sharon Northouse (Clerk - Jenison)

**Bills:** None

**Officer's Report**

**Treasurer's Report:** Report ending March 31, 2010. Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report.  
Carried

**President's Report:**

We have been extremely busy preparing for the upcoming Constitutional Convention. There is approximately 33 Constitutional Changes. Luckily the state has a Constitution Committee that meets the day prior to the convention to work out some of these changes. Sometimes they can be contentious. I have scheduled a meeting on April 13<sup>th</sup> for the delegates to go over these changes so I can be well prepared for the meeting. We will have the largest block of votes, and probably the largest amount of delegates attending. Everyone that wanted to go was allowed to go.

Building. I did meet with the City of Wyoming. They seemed to be willing to listen to what we had to say, but we are awaiting their decision; and then if we want to appeal it to the State.

We did receive a letter with a courtesy copy sent to Sharyn Stone regarding excessing. The Postal Service has notified us that they want to reduce 27 clerks within the Grand Rapids Installation. We met with management on this to reduce this number (promotions, retirements). Management is going back and reassessing their “plans”. We asked for full disclosure as to what they are going to be doing (e.g. Individuals affected). We still have not been provided any information. As always, we will challenge any violations of the contract.

Q – Should we be discussing the building issue in this venue (Membership Meeting) and not going into a Shareholder’s meeting. Shouldn’t we be suspending the meeting? A – We could do that, but I wanted to keep you aware of what is going on in my report. Internally, this is the local’s building and hall and everyone has a right to know what is going on. The forming of the corporation is a legal matter to stop any possible legal actions against the local or individual member. I am just trying to put everything in the open and being as transparent as I can.

Q – How much money have we made in rentals? A – I know our Building Manager handles the rentals. They are filling up. However, as for an amount, I will be happy to provide this information, and we could do that as part of mine or the Treasurer’s report.

Q – The By-Laws of the LLC says there should have been a Shareholder’s meeting. Did we have one? A – The intent of the Shareholders meeting is to open the books for everyone to see. The books were open for viewing in January. We technically did not have a separate meeting, but we did have the books open in January. If the membership would like a special meeting, I would be more than happy to call for a Special meeting for the Corporation at any time. When we first started the corporation, we needed the by-laws and it was drawn up by lawyers and so that it would hold up in court.

Q – Excessing. Does management have to hold jobs in other crafts in case clerks get excessed? A - The Postal Service is required to send a letter to the Central Region Coordinator to authorize them to withhold positions. If there is not enough position in the Clerk craft, then they will look at the Carrier craft, Mail Handler craft, and Maintenance craft here in Grand Rapids first, before they send a clerk out of the installation.

Q – How does casuals play into this? If they start excessing in Grand Rapids, casuals will be gone.

### **Executive Vice-President:**

I attended the President’s Conference in lieu of the President. There was over 500 people there, as well as most, if not all, the National officers. Twelve Million Dollars was set aside for Outside Organizing. B&B (a local trucking company) is now organized and is now part of the APWU.

Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell spoke about the finances of the APWU. She said that they cut down on a lot of expenses for the upcoming convention (e.g. Combining the COPA Night and Parade of States into one night and combined the Convention books into one).

APWU Health Plan picked up more participants.

May 2011, the APWU Headquarters building will be paid off.

The Amount of APWU members – 248,000 members currently; before the Early Outs 273,000. Because of the 1.2% increase in pay we earned in November, it helped out a lot with the loss of the membership.

Of those that early out – 18,000 letters were sent out to join the Retiree’s chapter and they have received hundreds back. Of those who retired, there are still some who have not received their Annuity Checks as of yet (I have not heard of any in our local), but there are some big issues with that.

President Burrus talked about 5-Day delivery. On the APWU website there is talking points regarding this so everyone can be on the same page. We are trying to get an Informational Picket with the NALC. It is not about our jobs, it is about the Service to the public. President Burrus stated that he is looking into a Nation-wide campaign. The APWU craft could possibly lose 3,000, but NALC could lose 23,000. If asked, stay with those talking points.

Article 1.6 (Supervisors doing Bargaining Work). There are clerks out there only getting 2 hours a pay period. President Burrus filed a National Dispute on this and have moved it to the top of the docket and is now scheduled for May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> for this grievance.

Office Depot is now an approved provider of USPS services. Headquarters is looking into this; in some offices, T-7s are being solicited to go into these offices to train these employees in these stores. If you are being asked, please contact your steward or officer so we can let our National officers know.

Health Plan. One of the biggest issues that will take effect January 1, 2011 is to keep your child on your plan until their 26<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Nationwide Testing Initiative. Steve Raymer at the National level is handling this. If you are being required to go to Sparta or another location to test, please let us know.

President Burrus talked about contract negotiations. They have been in negotiations since last year (more than likely we will be going to arbitration). We have offered to accept an extension, but management did not bite as of yet.

President Burrus talked about his relationship with President Obama. Since Obama took office, he has been able to go in eight (8) times (and Director Myke Reid has been able to go a dozen times); during the first year of office. During President Bush’s eight years, they were asked not even once.

Myke Reid wants our members to go on the website on APWU.org and sign up E-Team regarding and keeping you updated on Legislative Issues.

Q – Did I understand you correctly that only the carriers will be affected if we went down to 5-day.  
A – No. President Burrus said that while our impact will be minimal, but it is about the service, not the jobs.

Just a reminder that 5-day delivery is not a sure thing. It still needs to go through two subcommittees, and the majority of the Representatives on those committees are Democrats and are favorable to APWU.

**Recording Secretary:**

In this edition of the Michigan Messenger, on the back page, you will find a letter to submit or to forward to your representative/senator regarding the 5-day delivery that the PMG Potter wants to ram down the throat of the American public. Even back in 1967, then PMG Blouter said the demise of

the Postal Service (or Post Office Department). When you watch the Face-the-Nation interview that is now available (if you want to view, go to MPWU.com and click the link). Even the Larger Mailers are not on board with the five-day service.

### **Clerk Craft Report:**

Excessing. I want to commend our Vice President Amy Puhalski for the excellent job of keeping track of the jobs. By looking at that, we should have minimal impact to our office regarding excessing.

Stewards training. There was a lot of information provided. Stewards please share this information.

Smaller Offices (they don't call them Function 4s with offices less than 30 employees) to evaluate the offices. They are having a meeting on Thursday for East Paris. It doesn't look like they are excessing anyone, just looks like there might be realignments.

Hallmarks. Barb sent me some information regarding the Hallmark program. I received a copy of the training manual and the clerks are suppose to be doing all this work.

Voice Recognition Program. I know it is in Northeast, and they just placed in Easttown. It is similar to when you call for Credit Card, etc, and you speak into it and it tells you what carrier it goes to. Management has written the program is now testing it. If they bring it to your station, please let the union know.

Interpreters for the Hearing Impaired. There was an issue with only having one interpreter on one tour. This has been rectified and there will be one on tour 1 and one on tour 3.

5-Day Delivery. They sent it to the Postal Regulatory Commission. On June 30<sup>th</sup> they will probably present something. Most of the businesses and mailers are opposed to it. One of the things they talked about was reducing the carrier force by 30,000 (Rural and City carriers as well). We must tell the public this is a Service to the American Public and we want to keep that service. Business state that when you are in financial problems, you look to increase service. The Postal Service is just going the opposite way. While the USPS is not looking at Lay Offs since there are a lot of people eligible by 2013.

\*\*The Five Day Delivery is not a done deal. We need to get the facts out there. Management has done a great/effective job getting their information out. We need to remind them we are a service.

### **Maintenance Craft Report:**

We had stewards training last Thursday on staffing. I want to thank the stewards for the great turn out.

We have a lot going on with Job Abolishments, excessing, etc. It is a whole cornucopia of personnel actions, mixed with excessing actions from withholding. Now that we are out of withholding, we still have to wait to see how things shake out.

Job History we need to review. There is still some missing information, some got excessed under Article 12, some were abolished (and we already have a grievance on this from before). Basically what they wanted to do was reduce their staff. Now that withholding is lifted, they want to move the custodians to match their staffing. Some people were forced into positions depending on what your

status was. We are still looking into it, and while we may not agree with what they are doing, we will file the necessary grievances if it is not done contractually.

Q – When Art took the floor space away from us, should we still have to blacktop it, etc. A – Management didn't take the floor space away because of the machines (this has been done before in another office and they lost). What they did was, Art went to a specific area on a Tour and said there was no activity and it wasn't needed. Our measurements are from wall to wall. I am pretty confident that they are trying to do it right this time, just shows that they did it wrong the first time. We can't stop management from doing what they want to do, we can just file the appropriate grievances and ensure they follow the contract.

Q - We have two vacancies (one at East Paris and one at the VMF). Now they are going to ask for volunteers to go to these offices. A – That is why we agreed to relief positions, because you can not be forced to another building (or outside your domiciled facility).

### **Motor Vehicle Report:**

We have two grievances that were recently settled in Pre-Arbitration, which netted quite a bit money. One more we are waiting on the Arbitrator. If this is settled in our favor, will net even more money than the previous two.

If anyone transports mail of any kind, please forward a note to me so we can file the appropriate grievance.

**Sergeant at Arms Report:** None (Thank you to Nancy Emelander for filling in this month).

### **Associate Office Report:**

Only one thing to talk about briefly. Financial accountability. At one time or another, we have been at the wrong place at the wrong time. I am really amazed at the common practice that is out there in the retail area (working out of others drawers, transferring funds to cover shortages, cash reserves). Sooner or later you will be at the wrong place at the wrong time and you can lose your job. Do what is required and do it by the book! I know the Inspectors are out there watching. Be careful and be smart.

If you haven't already heard, they are going back to "Summer Hours" back in the Associate Offices. This means that clerk hours will be cut. If you are in one of those offices that your hours are being cut and management is working more hours, please let us know.

Q – Have you heard anything back from Bill Scutt regarding the monies owed to the local for training. A - Never heard anything from since he has left. I sent him a letter asking for reimbursement, but haven't heard anything.

### **Retiree Chapter Report:**

We are looking at saving our jobs; but management never loses theirs. Management makes work for themselves. That is why they never get excessed out.

We had a retiree meeting yesterday. We try to advocate to keep our retiree's to stay up on everything.

We have Representatives on the Postal Committee who are favorable to us. You need to have a good rapport with your Representative's office and staff. There is a book from APWU National that tells you who is the head of each committee.

We need to keep and maintain public support. We are a 24-7 operation.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Audit Committee:** Made up with Nancy Emelander, Barb Tubbs and Tammy Byrnes. Report presented:

The committee reviewed the books for 2009; Items reviewed was the Checking Account, LM Reports, Contingency Account, Savings account, Meeting minutes for authorization, and the Bond.

We found the following discrepancies that:

February and April there were no receipts for the General Membership Meeting.

The constitution appropriates .50 cents per member up to a cap of \$225,000. When we bought the building in April and the amount fell below the cap, the Treasurer started to transfer monies into the contingency account at \$1.00 per member.

In July 2009, the President paid an additional \$156 for leg room on this flight. The President stated that this was a necessary expense for his health.

- Motion by: Ray Novakoski, Seconded by: Amy Puhalski to accept the Audit Committee's report as read. Carried.

**Hall Rentals** – in June, July, and August – Every weekend there is something going on. We did take over the rentals from the previous VFW, but right now we have public and union members rentals.

### **Correspondence:**

1. Letter from Kent Ionia Labor Council – Labor Fest 2010

**Old/Unfinished Business:** None

### **New Business:**

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

- ✓ That the local participate and donate \$500 to the 2010 Labor Day festivities. Carried.
- ✓ To send a Letter of Endorsement to Fred Johnson campaign for 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional seat for the House of Representative. Discussion. Division. (18 for, 13 against).
- ✓ To authorize those delegates who are stewards (who wish to attend), to attend the Post-Convention Workshops on August 28, 2010 with Lost Time, Registration (if applicable), Per Diem, Lodging, and applicable taxes. Carried.
- ✓ To give out \$25.00 checks tonight in lieu of Gift Cards. Carried.

- ✓ To authorize those delegates to attend their respective Craft Conference on August 21 – 22, 2010 with Lost Time, Registration, Per Diem, Lodging, and applicable taxes. Carried.

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

- Motion by: Jennifer Gilbert, Seconded by: Ray Novakoski; to donate \$200 to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services for their upcoming June 12<sup>th</sup> Silent Celebration. Discussion. Carried.
- Motion by: Karen Hodges, Seconded by: Jennifer Gilbert; to pay for parking for the local's delegates while attending the National Convention. Discussion. Carried.

POI – Who came up with the two nights for the State Conventions? It was a Board recommendation.

**Labor Management:** Please 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.*** # 94 – Carol Durbin (If she would have been at the meeting, she would have won!)

***COPA:*** 50/50 Drawing: \$94 total collected. \$47 to the winner - #972739 – Linda Chandler.

**Scholarship Drawing.** Member's name (Child's name)

Winners.

1. #43 – Linda Richards (Jordan Richards)
2. #3 – Kathleen Strunk (Jacob Strunk)
3. #24 – Jennifer Amos (Maria Woszczak)
4. #19 – Andrea Peckham (Britney Peckham)
5. #42 – Kristine Johnson (Marcus Anthony Johnson)

Alternates

1. #30 – John Wojtowicz (Conor Wojtowicz)
2. #20 – Pam Jenkins (Sabrina Jenkins)
3. #6 – Carol Grysen (Taylor Grysen)
4. #31 – David Janes (Sarah Janes)
5. #5 – Steve Natte (Andrea Natte)

**\$25.00 Easter Drawing.**

1. #33 – Scott House
2. #19 – Doug Wells
3. #12 – Amy Puhalski
4. #16 – Tracey Fleming
5. #41 – Joe Bell
6. #39 – Shaundrea Lampkin
7. #14 – Linda Chandler
8. #6 – Tim Ozinga
9. #9 – Lisa Borchardt
10. #7 – Ray Novakoski

**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 40 or more than are present, there is one additional drawing per ten members).

1. #18 – Jim Smith
2. #15 – Jennifer Gilbert
3. #37 – Joe Hall
4. #35 – Donna O’Bryan
5. #8 – Barb Tubbs
6. #4 – Carol Imanse

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 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, slightly slanted style.

Michael A. Long  
Recording Secretary