

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

General Membership Meeting Minutes
January 6, 2010

Meeting was called to order at 6:04 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: 36

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

Maintenance Craft Director – James Smith

Motor Vehicle Craft Director – Tracy Fleming

Associate Office Director – Jack Fryling

Sergeant at Arms – Jackie Pike

Review of previous meeting's minutes: December's General Membership Meeting minutes read and accepted. Carried

Applications for Membership: Barb Smith (Clerk – Grand Rapids)

Bills: None

Officer's Report

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

President's Report: Happy New Year. I would like to thank everyone for coming out tonight. I hope you had a nice holiday season and welcome to 2010.

Thanks to the A&E committee for putting up the decorations for the holiday period (that was in advance of our Christmas parties). Hopefully they will last. We have a hall rental this weekend, so we will see.

Tonight we have many discussions and decisions to make, with regards to the number of and who to send to the upcoming conventions and District Meeting.

We have a new Senior MDO in Grand Rapids. As usual with new management, they come in with their own agenda, and don't follow local procedures. Senior MDO is another layer of management. Postal Service preaches that they are short and losing money. However, they have no problem adding another layer of management.

At a recent GMD meeting, District Manager Chuck Howe stated that he is looking very closely at consolidating Postmasters and have one Postmaster manage three or four offices. However, what

they did was actually the opposite. They kept the Postmaster in each of the offices and reduced the clerk hours.

When the Senior MDO came in and attempted to impose some of his rules. We filed two Labor Charges. Management has to abide by the rules that are in place. We do not like going to the Labor Board, but we have to do what is needed/required.

Plant Manager stated in a recent Labor Management meeting that we need to follow the Chain of Command and ensure that we go through the new Senior MDO prior to coming to her.

Associate Office issues. Cedar Springs carriers will be consolidating to Rockford and along with other offices consolidating smaller offices into other offices. Clerks that are affected are entitled to travel mileage until they are actually given proper notice (e.g. Excessing or reassignment letters). I have a meeting with Barb Martin (493/494 POOM) regarding these changes to ensure that the contract and safety is followed.

APWU has posted on their website and survey for Associate Offices. We have seen these in the past; it is our intent to send out the survey to all the employees in the Associate Offices and have them returned to us to forward on to National.

People in Associate Offices must have to fill out this survey and mail it back if you wish to be part of any possible class action grievance. We highly encourage you to fill out these surveys. I believe it is in your best interest to fill out the survey and mail it back to you. It is not definite that a class action will be filed, but it seems to be leaning that way.

Soon a Major Shakeup at GMF and P1 due to the elimination of Stamp Distribution Office. There is a Level 7 & 6 clerk. According to Article 12, it will affect all clerks who are below the seniority of those who are affected on the same tour and section/area. However, the clerks in the office are some of the most senior employees in the city.

Also some excessing/reassignment letters were sent to the Level 7s already, which management screwed up on. We are trying to reach an agreement with management to make this action less inconvenient and try to have only one reassignment. However, it looks unlikely. It will require us

We have strong language in Article 12 and 37 that protects the seniority. We can not stop management; we can only enforce the contract.

Cleaning used to be done on Tour 2, but now is being done on Tour 1 and Tour 3. You can continue to file 1767 forms on a daily basis until this is rectified. Management is giving the custodians a directive, which is causing friction.

Local Union officials are being closely scrutinized. Management is giving us new requirements due to clock rings, travel. I see it as an attack on the APWU, specifically Article 17 rights. We are up to the fight.

Currently we had a longtime steward resign out at P-Campus (Jeff Schellenger). I would like to thank him for his time and efforts. We are currently seeking a Tour 3 steward at the P-campus. If you would like to become a steward, please let Bill Scutt know.

Per the By-Laws of the WMPW, the books of the WMPW are open to inspection this evening. If you wish to view them, please see me.

Q – for the excessing out of the Stamp Distribution office, what does the LMOU state. A – The LMOU states it is by section and tour. Accordingly, it will affect Level 6 & 7 on tour 2 in the manual section.

Vice-President Report: Wishing you a Healthy and Happy New Year.

Management is reverting a lot of job when they become vacant. We are filing the appropriate grievances.

One of my main issues is when Employees/members are doing the jobs of more than one person. We have employees not taking a lunch, running the machines by themselves, etc. If and when you are doing the work of more than just yourself, you are providing management with the tools needed to possibly revert positions. It seems almost every day, there is at least one person running the machine alone and/or management asking employees to take their breaks late. You are entitled to a break every two hours. Stop doing the work of two or more people. The contract states a Fair Day's work for a Fair Day's Pay. Doing the work of more than yourself is unsafe and against the contract.

At the GMF, we have a new Senior MDO. We have been put on notice that when there is a break, management will try and have you run the machine by yourself. If you are told to work by yourself; follow the directions of management, but make sure to ask to see your steward(s). We have past awards/settlements which state that two people are to be on the machine.

Associate Office issues. Postmaster doing clerk work. If your hours are being reduced and the Postmaster is doing your work; you need to contact your union (steward/Associate Office director) to file a grievance. You need to contact us. There are 42 Associate Offices, and without your help, there is no way for us to know what is happening in every office. If you allow this to continue, it will make it more difficult for us to get our work back.

Training. If you are awarded a bid job that requires training, you must notify PEDC (Training) within 10 days. Just don't wait; make sure to follow up and stay in contact with training. If you are having any problems, notify your union.

Recording Secretary: I hope each of you and a healthy and safe holiday season. Welcome to new decade and new challenges for not only the Postal Service, but our country as well.

Health Bill was passed in both houses. Now it is going to committee for items to be worked out. It is still not a done deal.

Postal Consolidations. Wyoming and Kentwood were taken off the Consolidation list.

Clerk Craft Report: It has been a productive and busy month. We had three people put out of the building on Emergency Placement. All have been returned to work; and management ended up paying 108 hours of pay to these employees.

Smoke Shack at the P1 is schedule to be rebuilt by the 24th of January.

Hallmark. Finally just talked to the General Manager in St. Louis. Hallmark is supposed to stock their product and have a one-time instruction on Ready Post. People from Hallmark thought their contract was expanded and once again the Western Michigan local took the lead.

Oasis training in Sparta. If you are required to go out to Sparta for training. When you used to take training in Grand Rapids it was a no-loss, no-gain. Now that it is Sparta (Paramount Aviation) for training, make sure to see your steward right away. You are entitled to mileage and time. File a grievance. You have to let us know within 14 days.

AO Surveys. These are very important. If you send them directly to National; please provide the local with a copy.

Maintenance Craft Report: Happy Holidays to everyone. I hope you have a good year.

We have some new stewards coming in Maintenance. Some of the stewards have shifted. I am on Tour 3 now. We have Greg Carlson and John Collison stepping up as new stewards.

Downtown Second Floor smoke shack is suppose to be fixed today.

We lost a couple of jobs with the people who took the VERA. Grievances have been filed (we are not letting them go without a fight). Our position is simple, the people left, but the work is still there.

Tomorrow night I will be doing the staffing for the P1. Those Safety Reports are important. You don't have to be a clerk to file a Safety Hazard Report.

Q – What about stations and contract cleaning. A - We don't have any jurisdiction over contract cleaning.

Cleaning by clerks. File a Safety Hazard report on how you found your work; not what was left when you were done doing the cleaning

Safety Hazard reports. I went through all of them, one by one. There are grievances on them. When management goes after these jobs (when people sign 14 hours of work completed within 7.2 hours of work). We fight daily to keep our work. When you receive a 4776 that is your written instructions from the Senior MDO and Maintenance manager.

Looking at sending three people to different cities.

Q – When does Phase 2 start. Do all custodians have to rebid? A – I never heard of Phase 2. No. There is no rebidding.

Motor Vehicle Report: Hope all is having a good new year.

Radios have been turned back on in the trucks. That is a good thing and now we can talk back and forth.

Still have a problem with clerks and custodians transporting mail around. If you are told to do this, make sure to let your steward know so the proper grievances can be filed.

Q – GPS. A – Management has done this and we have filed a grievance and it is at national.

Don't worry about the Postal Service numbers. Worry about your job. The contract says fair days work for a fair days pay. Don't get mixed up with the numbers BS. Concentrate on the craft work. Just do your job. Do the best job you can. Eight hours work for eight hours pay.

Sergeant at Arms Report: None.

Associate Office Report:

In the Associate Offices and Retail world. Everyone out there is very professional and highly motivated. It is really easy to look the other way when you allow the Postmaster to run the office. Postmasters generally look the other way when you take a shortcut; until there is a problem, and then management will go after you with a vengeance. I am asking that you try not to take these short cuts. Follow the rules and what the regulations state.

Separation of duties. In your office if you are not seeing the separation of duties, please contact me or Bill.

Delivery Unit Relocation. Because this is not a consolidation, some of the offices that are being affected do not affect the clerks. However, the gaining office that does have clerks; the job of distribution that is being done by clerks should remain clerk. Not the rural carriers that may have done it at their previous offices.

Old Habits that we need to change. We saw this back in November. Accepting of the check procedures. It is just not in Grand Rapids area; it is happening all over. Make sure you follow the regulations. Just to let you know about this check scheme. Yesterday, I met with Labor, and all Letter of Demands have been rescinded.

Retreat. If a Full-time or PTF clerk is involuntary moved into another office. Only if that clerk that is moved puts it in writing that states that you want to retreat if the need arises.

Q – Retreat back to Holland? A – One clerk retreated back to Holland.

Q – Cedar Springs and Rockford. What is happening? A - Dick stated that this is why the meeting is taking place with Barb Martin.

Q – RCAs at Kentwood and Wyoming. A - There are legitimate two dual appointees in Grand Rapids.

Retiree Chapter Report:

Retiree Chapter is doing very well (beyond expectations sometimes). We have been working hand-in-hand with the National office. Remember that Retirees still have things to share and are able to help.

Healthcare. It is a joke from what was originally designed. Healthcare affects all of us. Please understand that healthcare continues into your retirement. When you retire, figure that your income is cut in half.

This year is contract year. It is one manager for each five. The Postal Service is top heavy.

Remember, that the Postal Service may have given you the job, but the union has given you the benefits.

Census is this year. There is a good possibility that we might lose representation in Congress. Please cooperate with the census taker.

Committee Reports:

POWER Committee: We fulfilled 72 wishes off of the Wish-upon-A-Star at the Home for Veterans. We were also able to fulfill the wishes of the Family we adopted along with a fellow union brother. Thank you to all who helped and donated.

Correspondence: Letter from NBA Linda Turney

Old/Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

E-Board Recommendations:

To send up to 20 stewards to the Area 7, 8, & 9 District Meeting, February 19, & 20, 2010 in Grand Rapids, MI to specifically include the five new stewards, craft directors (to include the Associate Office director), and President, with up to two days of Lost Time, Per Diem, Registration, and Mileage. Discussion. Carried.

To send up to 15 people to the National Convention in Detroit, Michigan (August 23 – 27, 2010) with Hotel, Registration, Lodging, Mileage, and Per Diem, and applicable taxes. Carried.

To send up to 15 people to the MPWU State Convention in Lansing, Michigan (April 15 – 17) with Hotel, Registration, Lodging, Mileage, Per Diem and applicable taxes. Discussion. Carried.

To reserve one hotel room for the President for up to two nights at the upcoming District Meeting. Discussion. Carried.

To hire a Certified Public Accountant to do the financial reports/books for the Union Hall (due to being the first year) and the local if needed/necessary. Discussion. Call for the Question. Seconded. Call for the Question carried. Original Motion – Carried.

The floor was opened up for new business:

Motion by: Michael Long, Seconded by: Karen Hodges; that all members who have satisfied the three meeting requirement per the constitution be considered nominated for the National and State Conventions. Discussion. Carried.

For the record, and per the above motion, the following individuals are hereby nominated for the National and State Conventions: Scott Achterhoff; Jennifer Amos; Roy Bailey; Lisa Borchardt; Tammy Byrnes; Linda Chandler; Cindy DeLaFuentes; Tracy Fleming; Richard Fletcher; Jack Fryling; Jennifer Gilbert; Nancy Gingery; George Hendricks; Michael Hill; Karen Hodges; Karol Imanse; David Janes; Beverly Jarrett; Rose Jeralis; Don Kramer; Dessa Long; Michael Long; Al Mackovich; John Nisownger; Ray Novakoski; Sandy Page; Jackie Pike; Amy Puhalski; Keri Rose; Patrick Sipperley; Jim Stoddard; Cathy Strunk; and Doug Warren

The floor is open for additional names to be nominated to the State Convention:

Karen Hodges nominated Catherine Beemblossom

The nomination period is closed.

Motion by: Karen Hodges; Seconded: Rick Velesaquez to call a Special Meeting for the purpose of changing the by-laws and electing two additional members to the WMPW board. Call for the Question. Call carried. Original Motion Defeated. Division called: Eight for, 17 against (Defeated)

Motion by: George Hendricks. Seconded by: David Janes to extend the meeting until the end of all business. Carried.

Jackie's Benefit will be on January 16th. The community has come behind this. Johnny Branns will be donating all the food, wait staff, etc. Thank you to all

Labor Management: Voice for scheme. Any other items, 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. # 389 – Kerri Rose (If she would have been at the meeting, he would have won!)

COPA: 50/50 Drawing: \$104.00 total collected. \$52.00 to the winner - #972371 – Jessie Dewitt

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)

#29 – Karen Hodges
#33 – Lisa Stockdale
#35 – Carolyn Manion
#31 – Jack Fryling
#14 – Linda Chandler
#20 – Amy Puhalski
#1 - Tim Ozinga

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yours in Solidarity,



Michael A. Long
Recording Secretary