

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

General Membership Meeting Minutes  
November 6, 2010

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.

Number of Members in Attendance: 42

**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

**Associate Office Director** – Jack Fryling

The following officers were not present: **Motor Vehicle Craft Director** – Tracy Fleming;  
**Sergeant at Arms** – Vacant

A moment of silence for former Sergeant at Arms Jackie Pike was observed with her passing on October 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Review of previous meeting's minutes:** October's General Membership Meeting minutes were accepted by voice vote as printed. Carried.

**Applications for Membership (Accepted by Voice Vote of Membership):** None

**Bills:** None

**Officer's Report**

**Treasurer's Report:** Report ending October 31, 2010 was read aloud to the membership in attendance. Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Carried

Q – What did we have last year at this time compared to this year? We can provide this information, but it will come out in next month's meeting during the presentation of the Budget.

**President's Report:** The November meeting generally has been a meeting with numerous drawings. With tonight's COPA drawing, which is now a 50/50 with an approximate prize of \$900, at the beginning of new business, the sale of these tickets will be cut off.

Thank you for showing up and it was nice to see some nice weather today; could be anything here in Michigan and hopefully the snow and ice will hold off.

Elections will be held this month, per the constitution, the ballots have to be mailed out within 10 days from tonight's meeting (which will be the 16<sup>th</sup>). You should receive your ballot by at least the 18<sup>th</sup>. If you don't receive your ballot by then, please contact the union office and/or Election Chairperson (Catherine Beemblossom).

I would like to thank the membership for sending me, along with a few other Executive Board members to the National President Conference. Outgoing President Burrus, new President Cliff Guffey, new Executive Vice President Greg Bell and new Industrial Relations Mike Morris were in attendance, along with other National Officers and our Central Region Coordinator and some Business Agents. The Presidents were very eager to receive information regarding negotiations, but the National officers were tight lipped. You might have already read that the PMG has asked that the current employees will be grandfathered for wages; but any new employees will be hired at a lower rate. However, nothing else was stated (No Lay Offs, Raises, Excessing, etc.). The current contract expires November 20<sup>th</sup>. Complicating the issue is the retirement of the PMG and President Burrus. Vice-President Donhue will resume the reins of the Postal Service, with the PMG retirement (on December 3<sup>rd</sup>). Bottom line is that we really don't have any good updates right now regarding a new contract.

Local Excessing is still in high gear. 22 clerks are still identified for excessing out of craft. It looks as if the Postal Service will be creating Carrier positions for these excessed employees in Grand Rapids and in the local commuting distances. When the excessed employees are given their orders to become carriers, we will be offering a training class at the union hall to ensure those who are being excessed can and hopefully will pass. Failure to pass the actual test could result in separation from the Postal Service.

We have heard that other employees have asked to be sent to other offices as Senior In-Lieu of. The Senior Opt list has been presented and if other employees either chose to go, are promoted, or retires, will reduce the impacted employees.

We have identified one custodian positions that was being assigned to an excessed employee from Kalamazoo. This was in error and has been corrected and will be held now for one of our own local excessed employees.

The Budget committee will be meeting this month, and per the constitution, will present a report and proposed budget in the December meeting for the membership's approval.

The transition process has already begun and I don't anticipate any problems from this administration to the new administration next year. I hope to have all the paperwork to be turned over and will have a report of my last three years at the next meeting.

Q – We thought the excessing was going to happen next summer...why is it happening now? The Postal Service originally stated that it would be in July 2011, but the letters that were sent out started the ball rolling. It may still be in the summer by the time it is all done. As with the last excessing, we asked management to hold off to ensure that it is done right and they knew what they were doing, but they just went through with it.

Q – Is there any truth that management is going to excess more than the original? Management has told us that they will continue to excess until they reach the numbers they want. The only thing they are required to do is provide Central Region Coordinator with a minimum 90 day notice, then they have to provide each affected employee with a 60 day notice (minimum).

Q – Is there actual positions being withheld, not within the carrier crafts? There are jobs being withheld within the comminuting distance. There are presently 36 Transitional Employees in the Carrier craft.

**Executive Vice-President:** Thank you to the three new stewards that I just trained from the Associate Offices (Shelia Suiter from Lowell, Jessie Dewitt from Rockford, and Patti Mattheus from Grand Haven). We are starting to get stewards out in the Associate Offices.

Excessing. Those who have received the excessing letters, they are asked if they want to revert to a PTR status. PTRs are not guaranteed any hours. Once you go from full-time to PTR, you are not going back, and could be excessed out as a PTR. If you have any questions, or get one of those letters, make sure to contact your union.

There is a lot of Article 1 violations with management doing work in almost every craft. Our Senior MDO is doing craft work almost every night (transporting mail to Kalamazoo). Keep your eyes open. We are filing grievances on it every time. I know President Page sat down with the Senior Plant Manager about this.

Management is attempting to fire people. We have five people right now who are out on removals. Management doesn't care. They are going to take their chance in Arbitration. Be careful! They are looking to remove everyone.

RI-399. Ray and I have been attending RI-399 meetings. Mail Handlers are grasping for everything (they are excessing 37 mail handlers). We can go into the carrier craft (since it is the same level with excessing), but Mail Handlers can't. Mail Handlers are constantly arguing and nit picking at everything we do. The Detroit Mail Handlers have gone all the way to Des Moines Iowa.

National Elections. We had the contest for those elections to try to get our membership to vote, 30.8% of our membership only voted. There were a lot of good people who ran besides the Leadership team. We put out endorsement, but the reports on how we as a local voted was just discouraging, not only in our local, but all across the country.

Local Elections. We have local elections coming up. Get out there and vote. The next three years are not going to be pretty by any means.

Arbitration in Rockford. We had an Arbitration recently in Rockford regarding an Injured Carrier doing Clerk work. Hopefully we will be successful in this arbitration and should hear something back within 30 days.

Q – A Mail Handler steward is telling their Mail Handlers that they may be going to the Carrier Craft. A – They were originally told by management that this would happen; however, this has been set straight.

The only thing that might be possible is when it comes to a Veteran since they are not allowed to reassign a veteran into a lower-level position.

Q – Was there any problem with anyone not receiving ballots in the National Elections? We did not hear of anything in our local.

**Recording Secretary:** With the elections now history, we are going to have an uphill battle in Congress in the coming year. While we did hold on to the Senate, we will definitely see some anti-union legislation coming down the pike. Congressman Issa from California has already made his mark, hours after the elections results, and months before Republicans already take over Congress, his agenda for the House Oversight committee (which oversees the Postal Service and Federal agencies) was made public...and the Postal Service is in his scope and crosshairs.

While I am on it, isn't it ironic that the day after the elections, Gas prices rose 10 – 15 cents, and now is over \$3.00; something that hasn't happened within the last two years (when the Democrats ruled Congress)...coincidence??? I think not.

**Clerk Craft Report:**

I want to thank all the Clerks for showing up. Thank you to all the Stewards that are here and thank you for all you do for the membership. Keep up the good work.

I want to thank the membership for allowing me to go to the National President Conference. It was interesting and it nice to see and get an update from the old and the new officers. The new/upcoming officers spoke about the new ideas and the challenges, and are really positive about what is forthcoming. This is to set history as to how and where the union will be going. A lot of these are experienced officers.

Excessing and Clerks. There are numerous attacks and excessing on the clerks; this is all over the country and it is occurring everywhere. One thing that we have that other unions would love to have is our No-Layoff Clause. Even if you have to move, just remember that we still have a job.

Locally, on Tour 2, the Realignment of the jobs in the Main Office windows. Management posted the changes, and we filed 25 grievances. Management then admitted that they did mess up and that is why they were not awarded. We have since met with Mark and Garth (Customer Service management) and got things taken care of. We have a memo that defined what the Principle Assignment areas are now in Customer Service. We still have a few grievances left.

RI-399. It is a long drawn-out process. It doesn't move very fast. It is hard to get all three parties to agree with something. We will continue to meet to ensure the membership is represented.

Q – What was the original issue regarding the Windows? There wasn't any Primary Duty Assignments. The stewards were excessed out of the section (that wasn't suppose to be done). It wasn't closed bid. There were five people excessed out of the section and they will have the opportunity to come back into the section. We have still seen problems, but management has been addressing these issues.

**Maintenance Craft Report:** I e-Mailed a new form out to the Maintenance stewards. If you have any input, please let me know. The contract says that if someone is on leave, and want to have the bids mailed to them, this form will allow the contact to be followed and to allow ease.

Fighting Schools a lot. Norman generally gives us training billets, and locally they cancel them and say they don't want to spend the money. Recently we had sub-contracting, I asked

management if we had any available, capable people. Was told no, but then asked if there was any available training within the past year so we would not have to sub-contract. Management said Yes. If a billet is posted and you want to go, apply to go. If it is cancelled, see your steward.

We have more than one custodian job being withheld. There is also an MPE position being withheld. What I am trying to do is to get management to have this MPE position reposted and give our people another crack at this, and give someone a chance to promote, etc.

The next three years are going to be tough. Just going along as we have always done isn't going to work. Some of the things that have bothered us before, will seem miniscule in the future. If we see violations, we must step up our game and file on everything.

AFCS was subcontracted. We were allowed to assemble in overtime.

Q – 4-10's. Any chance of getting them back? More than likely not. Art cancelled this locally.

Q – AFSC (010) job is getting bigger? Supposedly, we are getting a higher volume of mail with Kalamazoo, and these are updated. We are awaiting jurisdictional too to see who is awarded it.

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

**Associate Office Report:** It is pretty safe to say that every Associate Office is having issues and it is pretty ugly.

I have been working on Travel packages that those who have been loaned or borrowed out to other offices. I have started with PP 19. When I get each package done for each clerk, I am sending it out to the clerks and having the clerks fill out the Green cards, and then having the Postmaster to do a Pay Adjustment. Barb and the District have told the Postmasters not to pay for Travel time. Some still are. We need to put this paperwork in front of management, and have them say No and then we can file the appropriate grievances.

PTF clerks being taken from Star Routes are being moved from their offices and being sent to Hub offices and then sent home. Anytime a clerk is being sent to another office, they are paid for the travel time. I would suggest going on a site (e.g. MapQuest) to get the mileage and how long the travel would be.

Postmasters are doing a lot of craft work. If it is happening in your office, please let me know.

Timecards that I have been receiving from the offices are missing a lot of the information. Make sure when you fill out a Time Card that you fill them out completely. BT, ET, where you are going, OT, etc.

**Retiree Chapter Report:**

I stopped in at the 3-Mile Rd station, there were three windows, and only two were staffed. What I did at the bank the other day, there was five people in front of me. The only thing that we can offer is Service.

Postal Magazine today. Retirees are the biggest contributors to COPA. We have done this before, and we will be doing it again...Retirees will be pulling back their COPA contributions until Retirees are treated better by National and the union that they help build.

145 members in our Retiree Chapters. Like the Local, we will be having our elections. We will be having our Swearing-In on February 1, 2011 at 11:00 at the Golden Corral. It is asked that President Puhalski (at that time), will be on-hand to swear in the officers.

We had an election last Tuesday, and people did not get out and vote. This will be a difficult two years. Five day delivery is on the table. Retirement will be on the table. Make sure to contact your Representative and keep the lines of communications open. Break the ice! We will have issues in the next couple of years.

Union people need to work together. All different unions need to support each others.

### **Committee Reports:**

**POWER Committee.** I would like to invite everyone and get your union co-workers together to make a POWER meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon. We will be talking about the Wish-Upon-A-Star program, and looking at the National Veterans Backpack Program.

**Health Plan.** Roy Bailey is our Health Plan Representative. There is a Health Fair set up at the P3 on December 1<sup>st</sup> from 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. I am available to take phone calls. Our prices did not go up. The other plans went up 7 – 13%.

**Election Committee:** Met with the President on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September. The dates that are important: November 15<sup>th</sup> (stuffing the ballots); November 16<sup>th</sup> (mailing the ballots); December 3<sup>rd</sup> (Counting of the ballots). If you are planning to send an observer to watch the counting, please let the Election Committee know by November 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Correspondence:** None

**Old/Unfinished Business:** None

**New Business:**

**E-Board Recommendations:**

- To donate \$100 to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services for use in the Children's Santa Program on December 18, 2010. Carried.

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

Motion by: Catherine Beemblossom, Seconded by: Doug Warren for One \$50 incentive for the Local Elections to get people to vote.

**Labor Management:** Ink Pens and Gloves. Bob Aguire has agreed that the Postal Service is required to provide gloves. Dick stated that if the Postal Service does not provide you with a Pen or Marker, then you don't have to write it down.

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

***\$250.00 Attending the Meeting Drawing.*** # 481 – Rachel Wright (If she would have been at the meeting, she would have won!)

**National Election Incentive:** \$100 – John Niswonger; \$50 – Steve Natte; \$25 – David Janes

***COPA:*** 50/50 Drawing: \$130 total collected. \$65 to the winner - #973019 – Dan Quillin

***COPA Drawing from Raffle Tickets (due to not all tickets being sold, the raffle reverted to a 50/50 drawing): \$927.50 to COPA & \$927.50. Winner is: Lisa Borchardt***

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

1. #4 – Jennifer Amos
2. #25 – Dan Quillin
3. #21 – Roy Bailey
4. #2 – George Hendricks
5. #23 – Michael Long
6. #40 – Mila Webb
7. #32 – Linda Kindle
8. #33 – Martha Wainright
9. #17 – Scott Larabel
10. #15 – Jennifer Gilbert

***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. #3 – Lisa Borchardt
2. #29 – Kay Griffin
3. #10 – Irene Erickson
4. #36 – Ann Hill-Graves
5. #41 – Carolyn Mannion

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yours in Solidarity,



Michael A. Long  
Recording Secretary