

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

General Membership Meeting Minutes  
September 10, 2011

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: 33

**Roll Call of Officers:**

The following officers were present:

**President** – Amy Puhalski  
**Vice-President** – Ray Novakoski  
**Recording Secretary** – Michael Long  
**Clerk Craft Director** – Roy Bailey

**Maintenance Craft Director** – James Smith  
**Motor Vehicle Craft Director** – Tracy Fleming  
**Sergeant at Arms** – Dan Quillin  
**Associate Office Director** – Jack Fryling

The following officers were not present: **Treasurer** – Linda Chandler

**Review of previous meeting's minutes:** April's General Membership Meeting minutes were posted. David Janes motioned, George Folk seconded to accept the minutes as posted as printed. Carried.

**Applications for Membership (Accepted by Voice Vote of Membership):**

Nicole Schellinger – Clerk (Caledonia)  
Michael Green – Clerk (Grand Rapids)  
Nathan Keech – Clerk (Grand Rapids)  
Jacki Yocom – Clerk (Grand Rapids)  
Amber McDonald – Clerk (Grand Rapids)  
Justin Blaylock – Clerk (Grand Rapids)  
Rhonda Timmers – Clerk (Grand Rapids)  
Denise Myers – Clerk (Grand Rapids)  
Tiffany Williams – Clerk (Grand Rapids)  
Sarah Schneider - Clerk (Grand Rapids)

**Bills:** None

**Officer's Report**

**Treasurer's Report:** Report ending August 31, 2011 was read. Motion by: Michael Long, Seconded by: Jack Fryling to accept the Treasurer's Report. Carried

**President's Report:**

Thank everyone for coming. I am glad that we have a quorum today. I hope that you had a great summer and spent some quality time with friends and family.

We are currently in local negotiations for 13 offices that we represent (to include the plant). Long days/long hours. Thank you to Ray and the board for their support and help during these very busy times.

USPS requested local negotiations for 10 offices and the union opened up 3. Thank you to Dick Page for assisting in 3 of those offices.

The week before Labor Day the Postal Service put out information that they were looking to consolidate and or close over 200 offices (P & DC) They will announce what offices could be impacted on September 15<sup>th</sup>. They further stated that the studies will be conducted from November –December and the PMG will announce those being closed down in Feb. They al also requested to relax the service standards (i.e. no more over night).

The postal service has appealed to congress to eliminate Article 6/no lay off clause, withdrawal from the FEHB and federal retirement benefits. This is NOT the fix that we need.... We need congress to support HR 1351.

Support of HR 1351 (currently has 202 co-sponsors)- this will stop the mandate of the USPS having to prefund the health benefits and retirement. HR 2309 does nothing to correct the problem however does mandate Post Office closures and the demise of the collective bargaining agreements.

Ray, Roy and myself have been to Representative Justin Amash's office and spoke with his aide. He is not one of the co-sponsors of HR 1351. Please contact his office and request he does co-sponsor.

Rally set for September 27<sup>th</sup> from 4:00-5:30 pm outside the Federal Building (Representative Amash's office). This is a nationwide rally and all the unions are participating. NALC president called and I told him that APWU would be there! Please make every effort to attend.... We need Amash to co-sponsor this bill. The Tea Party supports HR 2309. They currently have sent 160,000 to DC showing support for such bill. We need to double that support for 1351.

Obama administration recently asked lawmakers for a 90 day extension for the postal service to pay the billions in mandatory retirement/health benefits due at the end of the month. If approved he stated it would buy some time for the white house and congress to seriously address Postal issues.

The postal service is hiring PSE's and most of them are joining the union during orientation. Keep in mind folks that these are your brothers and sisters....these people are the wave of the future for the postal service. I have heard way to many negative comments from co-workers about them. Each of us should be extending a hand and helping them.

Associate office issues continue- Article 1.6 global settlement (disputed) custodial issues. We split up the offices amongst ourselves (Puhalski, Novakoski, Fryling and Bailey).

Numerous disputes have arisen on the new language in our contract. PSE's working in maintenance (other than custodial); PSE's working the window in offices that have less than three (3) window clerks; Hiring PSEs at lower wage level then the job they are working (i.e. level 4 for doing level 5 work).

Non-Traditional, Full-Time assignments (NTFT) - Effective August 27, 2011 MVS no longer has any PTFs, as well as any level 21 and above. (Rockford, Holland, Jenison and Grand Haven) There are many issues with non traditional schedules and the stewards have been instructed to file the appropriate grievances. Management has no regard for their employees. One manager stated in regard to the PTFs converted to NTFT schedule that this manager hopes they (the employees) and their family starve and then quits.

We are no longer an impacted offices for potential employees to be excessed. All previously impacted employees should have received a letter by now.

Congratulations to MVS – The VMF will have three (3) new Level 9 Tech jobs.

Labor Charges. We have filed three labor charges. Two for management not providing information, and one for not allowing Stewards Time/Representation for the MVS Craft Director.

Please make plans to attend the upcoming retirement seminar on September 18 here at our hall.

**Executive Vice-President Report:**

Legislative Issues. This is very important that each of us act. We have been really relaxed in the past and people have said that another person can deal with what is happening now. It is important that everyone gets out and show our unity and support. We need to show the public that we will fight for our jobs.

Friends and Families. We need them to be there also, not as strength for your own self, but to show unity and support to all. These changes proposed will affect everyone, not just those of us in the Postal Service.

**Recording Secretary's Report:**

Numerous rumors have surfaced recently as to the demise of the Postal Service. Even though it would only take Congress to enact one piece of legislation to make this fiasco go away, they have, in their "bipartisan" political fashion, not to do so. HR 1351 is currently co-sponsored by 183 representatives. HR 2309, which is being supported by the Tea Party, would destroy the Postal Service and does nothing to fix the Postal Service (it actually requires us to close over 2 billion dollars worth of Postal Service within the first two years).

As President Puhalski and Ray has stated about the upcoming rally: The APWU has joined forces with the three other postal unions to designate Sept. 27 as a day of action to Save America's Postal Service. Together, the APWU and the National Association of Letter Carriers, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union and the National Rural Letter Carriers Association will rally in every congressional district in the country to build support for H.R. 1351, a bill introduced in the House by Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA).

There are also two bills currently in the Senate. S.1010 – Postal Operations Sustainment and Transformation Act of 2011 & S.353 – USPS Improvement Act of 2011. Neither of these bills are perfect. While we do support the majority of these bills, since they do provide relief to the Postal Service, there are some issues regarding forcing employees on OWCP into retirement upon reaching their minimum retirement age, and having the arbitrator look at the financial health of the Postal Service, etc.

Legislative Committee. If you would like to be on this, to get the word out to our members, please let President Puhalski know.

**Clerk Craft Report:**

As President stated, we are going through Local Negotiations. Management initial proposals were ridiculous.

PSEs are at the Plant doing Automation, and some are in the stations learning schemes. If the PSEs need help, please do so. They are our union brothers and sisters as well.

I sat in on two town-hall meetings (one with Customer Service and one with the plant). These were basically saying what dire conditions we are in

I received an e-Mail on Late Friday is proposing to move Zone 8 from East Paris to Kentwood. They have had numerous disruptions at Kentwood. We will listen to management and give us our input.

It is going to important that everyone show up at Justin Amash's office on August 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **Maintenance Craft Report:**

I hope everyone had a nice summer. I have been doing staffing packages for Maintenance. We got another position in Holland. I am still working on a few other Associate Offices.

I like to get as many custodian jobs as possible. This allows spots for those who wish to transfer.

I hit management with a couple of bombs that they haven't had in a couple of years. One is returning the snow plowing at the Stations to Downtown, and Minimum Cleaning Requirements. I have been working with Pam Bohn and Tammy Byrnes regarding looking at the minimum cleaning requirements.

If you see new faces popping up into the custodian craft, be welcoming to them.

Pre-Funding to the Healthcare for the Retirees. One of the reason for the stalemate in DC is this money is paid directly to the treasury department. This goes towards the deficit. If they take this off, it will look as we are 5 billion more in the whole.

### **Motor Vehicle Craft Report:**

Since this new contract, and the conversion to full-time, one of our PTFs quit. Numerous grievances are being filed every week regarding the conversion to full-time.

We have to get out and do these protests. Make sure to be at the Informational Picket on September 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Sergeant at Arms Report:** We have 33 people here tonight. Some of you signed the petition to show your representative to support HR 1351, some didn't. Take a copy with you to get people to sign it. Have your friends, family, and co-workers sign it and send it back to the Union Office.

### **Associate Office Report:**

The new contract has brought up a lot of new changes. Most were really good for the clerks. The Postmasters have their hands tied. The POOM is directing Postmasters to do the work. Grievances are being filed; however, a lot are being held in abeyance awaiting for an outcome from National.

### **Retiree's President Report:**

First issue: The Last Convention, there was indecent treatment of Retirees – in 2008, they tried and got an increase in the dues from \$24 to \$36 per year.

Remember this. You are going to retire or going to die first. Please help us and to prepare the way for your retirement.

We need to get public support and start a Grassroots effort to make change and to save the Postal Service. We don't have time to sit on our hands.

### **Committee Reports:**

A&E: We are going to do a Children's Christmas Party on December 10<sup>th</sup> this year. We have reached out to the Mail Handlers to do an adult one with them, we are awaiting their response.

### **Correspondence:**

1. Thank you card from Richard Fletcher from his wife's funeral
2. Thank you Card from Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services.

**Old/Unfinished Business:** None

**New Business:**

**E-Board Recommendations:** To donate \$100 to sponsor a hole for the NALC Muscular Dystrophy Golf Outing on September 11, 2011. Carried

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

Constitution Changes. Three changes regarding Article 9. (These will be posted with current language and new language).

1. Section 1 – to change to: “...and have general “administrative supervisory power of this local where not in conflict with any other provisions of this constitution...”
2. Section 5 – to change to: “The Craft Directors shall be responsible for all grievances, matters, and policies pertaining to their respective crafts...”
3. Section 10 – to change to: “Stewards shall be appointed and/or decertified by their respective Craft Director. Within 7 working days of the Craft Director’s written notification to the President, the President will sign and submit to management any and all changes to the steward designation list per the Craft Director’s written notification.”

**Labor Management:** If you have anything for Labor Management please let President Puhalski know.

**Drawings:** (The # preceding the name is either the ticket number or raffle number at the meeting it was drawn at and may change at each meeting.)

***\$250.00 Attending the Meeting Drawing.*** John Niswonger (If he was at this meeting, he would have won!)

***COPA:*** 50/50 Drawing: \$102 total collected. \$51.00 to the winner - #973628 – Dan Quillin

***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. #2 – Dan Quillin
2. #26 – Tracy Fleming
3. #20 – John Collison
4. #4 – Richard Twilling
5. #1 – David Janes
6. #10 – Roy Bailey
7. #19 – Kathy Strunk

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yours in Solidarity,



Michael A. Long  
Recording Secretary