

**Western Michigan Area Local #281**  
**American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO**  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
February 4, 2012

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 at this month's meeting: 35

**Roll Call of Officers:**

The following officers were present:

**President** – Amy Puhalski

**Executive Vice-President** – Ray Novakoski

**Recording Secretary** – Michael Long

**Treasurer** – Linda Chandler

**Clerk Craft Director** – Roy Bailey

**Maintenance Craft Director** – James Smith

**Sergeant at Arms** – Dan Quillin

**Associate Office Director** – Jack Fryling

The following officers were absent at this month's meeting: **Motor Vehicle Craft Director** – Tracy Fleming

Motion by Ray Novakoski, Seconded by: Tammy Byrnes to suspend the order of business to go to one motion from the Executive Board and to do the Vote for Delegates for the National and State Convention.

The local cast one vote for Jennifer Amos to be an unpaid delegate of the Western Michigan Area Local to the Michigan Postal Workers Union Convention. Carried

Need three people to count ballots for the State and National Conventions. Thank you to Barb Tubbs, Jack Fryling, and Sheryl Mol for volunteering to do this.

Voting for delegates to the State and National Convention commenced and concluded.

Return to Normal Order of Business

**Review of previous meeting's minutes:** January's General Membership Meeting minutes were posted. Michael Long motioned, Ray Novakoski, seconded to accept the minutes as posted. Carried.

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

**Bills:** None

**Officer's Report**

**Treasurer's Report:** Report ending January 31, 2012 was read. Motion by: Michael Long, Seconded by: Ray Novakoski to accept the Treasurer's Report. Carried

**President's Report:**

We just received the tax statement for the Union Hall. The assessed value of the property is: \$241,600. From last year to this year it is a reduction of \$9,200. When we originally bought the hall, it was assessed at \$330,000. Do you think we will see this reduction in our taxes? Probably not, but we will see.

Management changes: Lee Thompson who is the Senior Plant Manager is now the Acting District Manager. Nancy Reintense has been appointed to Tampa Area. We have not heard who will be replacing Lee.

Excessing Update. The Holland excessing has been put on hold. We have had conversations with management regarding the offices that are being impacted. Hamilton is in the process of excessing one PTFs, Alto is 2 PTFs (which is all they have in the office). Jenison is no longer impacted. Grand Rapids – we still have 26 FTRs who have letters. This is on hold pending the outcome of the consolidations and/or closures. We asked management if they will be sending out any letters and was told that they are not going to, and it was just on Hold. This just keeps those impacted employees in limbo.

Station Realignments. Management improperly posted the bid jobs in January. The contract states that if management wants to do a manual bid process, the union must be in agreement; we were not. This bid posting was then pulled down. Management has created a mess when it comes to reposting the jobs in Customer Service. Proper grievances will be filed, and we are trying to ensure that management adheres to the contract. The next big posting will be going up next week.

Postal Support Employee's Seniority List. The Seniority List for the PSEs is now updated and has been agreed to by all parties.

PSEs Supervising – PSEs doing 204B. It is National's position that it is improper. Per the CBA, PSEs are Non-Career, Supplemental, and Bargaining Unit employees. Class Action dispute/grievance is being filed.

PSEs learning Higher Level jobs. Yes, they can do it. However, the contract states that Management has to offer the training to career employees first. However, remember the old adage, be careful of what you ask for. You must remember that once you learn this position, if you are available, by juniority, after they take all volunteers, you may be working on the Holiday.

Ledyard Station. They finally took down the comment request form that was hanging in the MOW Front Lobby. Now they are putting up a posting soliciting business to have a CPUs in their business where other businesses can go and mail their packages/letters.

Audit Committee will be giving an Audit report tonight. Thanks to Barb Tubbs, Jennifer Amos, and Tammy Byrnes, who were on this committee for serving.

Management sent out a letter to everyone to go into the Carrier Craft. As a Carrier you are not protected as you are under the APWU CBA in regards to the No-Layoff Clause. It is my opinion that management is doing this with the anticipation of Congress decision and will allow five-day delivery. You may have 20+ years seniority in the APWU craft, and if you transfer, you start another period of seniority. If they do decide to go to five day, without this protection, you could be laid off after switching. If you do decide to transfer, there could be a huge mass lay-off.

VOEs – and Response of the Employees Survey. This is a solicitation only for a Financial Company. They look similar, but they are two different things. Make sure you turn in your VOE surveys into the Union Office for the December drawing.

OWCP - The Postal Service has notified the APWU that it has established a relationship with Align Networks to provide physical therapy services for employees with work related injuries and illnesses. APWU strongly discourages member participation. It is our understanding that as a contract provider, Align Networks and their therapists can share information with the USPS

that would otherwise be protected by doctor-patient confidentiality, including information that is unrelated to workplace injuries.

S 1729. Postal Realignment Act of 2012. Call 202-224-6221 – Senator Levin’s Office. 202-224-4822 – Senator Stabenow’s Office. Call them ASAP to tell them to oppose S.1729. If this passes it will close hundreds of P&DCs across the country, Close Post Offices, and Cost thousands of Jobs.

### **Vice-President’s Report:**

East Paris – I went out to East Paris on Friday and went over the jobs with management. Management will be resending out new letters to Customer Service. We are not sure what these new letters will look like. Management came up with these new schedules based on earned hours and their new system. Management knows that the system they used is a flawed system. The union has come up with new schedules that will impact fewer employees but have chosen not to take our input into consideration. Management is bound and determined to go through with this and blaming each other for this action.

ADRP for Non-Traditional Assignments. MVS has one Non-Traditional, Holland does as well. And now they will have some in the city as well.

### **Recording Secretary’s Report:**

Per the APWU E-Team, News Update yesterday, As of the end of this week there are no new updates as to when S. 1789 may come to the floor for a vote. This legislation can be brought forward any day. If you are on the e-Mail list, Please be vigilant in checking your inbox for e-team updates on S. 1789. For those who are not, go to the APWU website and sign-up. The APWU’s website will also provide up to the minute information as it comes in. It is likely this piece of legislation will come up for consideration in the very near future - - - possibly within the next week.

Recent notices posted by management have generated questions about APWU members’ right to participate in activities opposing the closure of postal facilities. Postal employees have the right to: Circulate petitions; Participate in public meetings; Encourage others to attend public meetings; Encourage local merchants and business organizations to speak out against postal closings; Contact elected officials to urge them to oppose postal closings. These actions must be off the clock.

There is a COPA Contest from National. Information is at the Sign-In Desk.

### **Clerk Craft Report**

Management – We sat down with management going over the jobs. They still insist that every job in Customer Service will have a Scheme and Window attached to it. Even if they start at 9:00. We will be monitoring this; however, management will not listen.

PSE – 204Bs. From the 1723 that I have seen, they say No-TACS Access. However, grievances will be filed.

Choice Vacation Period – If you are getting denied for leave for Prime Choice, fax down your 3971s to the union office (616-776-1536).

Staffing Packages – Phil Roth has sent in the Staffing Packages for the Associate Offices that I have been assigned to. I have gone out to Sparta. If we can prove that there is only 2 hours or less of cleaning – the Clerks should be given the work.

### **Maintenance Craft Report**

Hope you are enjoying the beautiful weekends.

We have four new MPEs that have come up from Kalamazoo. Please welcome them.

I have been working on a lot of staffing packages. Friday, we have finally come to agreement on Grand Haven. Jenison is being sent up to Arbitration. Holland and Zeeland, it looks like we may get another position there. I have done calculations for Northeast station. NW has been sent up. Easttown is at Step 2. These are still in process. It is a long tedious/complex process. Management now wants to do them every year. We are just going to keep going into it.

Clerks in Smaller offices. Management is under the myth that Maintenance management is under the assumption that they don't have worry about how clean your office is. This is not correct. Management is required to have maintenance staffing packages in every office. Every office must be cleaned to Postal Standards.

Be careful! Management is looking for any reason to try to get rid of anyone they can. Management is whipping out with discipline for everything. At one point, I was told that if I walked out of a meeting with a pen and took it home I could be disciplined for that.

Document everything! Back up what you are doing! Start sticking together with each other. Cover your co-workers.

### **Motor Vehicle Craft Report**

NTFT schedules – NTFT assignments. Management now has established a Non-Traditional Full Time assignment. MVS now has one. VMF now have nine additional positions. In the interim, management has been contracting out the work. We are now getting three of the positions filled. We need to keep filling these jobs.

### **Sergeant at Arms Report:**

Thank you Dessa for covering for me the last couple of months.

Make sure you sign the book. If you are a guest, you need to make sure sign the book under guests.

### **Associate Office Report**

Contract Cleaning – the New Language states that if the cleaning is less than 2 hours of work, then it should be performed by the clerks at this office. If there is more, then it should be a duty assignment. We have filed disputes for those offices we represent. Management has taken the position that they won't budge on this.

Express Mail Scans. Make sure if you are responsible for scans you are doing them correctly. Management is looking for every opportunity to discipline them for everything.

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

Make sure to contact your Congressional. Their staff/office keeps count of how many contacts (either phone calls, e-Mails, letters) they receive. If HR 2309 goes into effect, we will more than likely lose our retirements and jobs. If you haven't already done so...make sure to do contact your representatives to support S.1853 and H-1351.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### Audit Committee – Report:

The audit committee was made up of Tammy Byrnes, and Barbara Tubbs. Jennifer Amos was ill. The committee met on January 24, 2012 to review the Local's books for calendar year 2011. Items reviewed included the contingency account, the visa statements, the checking account, savings, accounts, the retiree account, the ABA account, the LM reports, and the meeting minutes to verify authorization.

The following issues were found:

1. The retiree account has been used to reimburse gas expenses without receipts or specific authorization in by-laws. Amy had already addressed this with the retiree chapter president, who plans to submit a change in their by-laws.
2. The mileage reimbursement rate changed July 1<sup>st</sup> from 51 cents to 55 cents. In September, some mileage was paid at the old rate and some at the new rate.
3. In December, the IRS tax payment of \$1,106.84 was deducted twice. Linda has already contacted the IRS to request a refund.
4. The POWER committee was advanced \$500 for Christmas gifts for the children at St. John's Home, but there were no receipts for them.
5. It was discovered that Amy had not been paid for 2.7 hours of LWOP for 12/1 that she had submitted on the same form or lost night differential and some committee hours.

The committee has for several years recommended that an inventory of physical assets of the Local be maintained and that now has been done. All accounts were found to be in good order.

Motion by: Ray Novakoski, Seconded by: George Hendricks to accept the Audit Committee Report's as read. Carried.

**Correspondence:** SOAR Coalition.

**Old/Unfinished Business:** Delegates Results:

Voting results for MPWU Convention: Ray Novakoski, Michael Long, Chris Fisher, Linda Richards, Tammy Byrnes, Dessa Long, Karen Hodges, and Joe Hall. All other nominees are considered alternates in order of the number of votes received.

APWU Convention: Ray Novakoski, Michael Long, George Hendricks, Linda Richards, Linda Chandler, Dessa Long, Tammy Byrnes, and Karen Hodges. All other nominees are considered alternates in order of the number of votes received.

**New Business:**

**E-Board Recommendations:**

- To donate \$50.00 to the American Cancer Society in the memory of Phyllis Garren (James Smith Sister). Carried.
- To take out a ½ page ad in the 2012 Labor Notes Conference Book at a cost of \$275. Carried

Change the meeting dates/times for the following months: April to April 15 and June to June 3 (both of these will have a General Membership at 2:00 p.m.)

**The floor was opened up for new business:** None

**Labor Management:** If you have anything for Labor Management please let President Puhalski, Craft Directors or Associate Office Directors know.

Forms – Triplicates and now using Carbons between in the Registry Rooms

**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.*** Mary Johnson (If she was at this meeting, she would have won!)

***COPA:*** 50/50 Drawing: \$140 total collected. \$70 to the winner - #796576 – Dessa Long

***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. #19 – Robin Neilson
2. #20 – Dan Quillin
3. #32 – Linda Kindle
4. #10 – Roy Bailey
5. #4 – Linda Yarnott
6. #25 – Lori Schimke

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Yours in Solidarity,



Michael A. Long  
Recording Secretary