

**Western Michigan Area Local #281**  
**American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO**  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
September 9, 2012

Meeting was called to order at 2:00 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: 32

**Roll Call of Officers:**

The following officers were present:

<b>President</b> – Amy Puhalski	<b>Motor Vehicle Craft Director</b> – Tracy Fleming
<b>Executive Vice-President</b> – Ray Novakoski	<b>Sergeant at Arms</b> – Dan Quillin
<b>Recording Secretary</b> – Michael Long	<b>Associate Office Director</b> – Jack Fryling
<b>Treasurer</b> – Linda Chandler	

The following officers were not present: **Clerk Craft Director** – Roy Bailey; **Maintenance Craft Director** – James Smith

**Review of previous meeting's minutes:** Due to no June meeting, May's General Membership Meeting minutes continued to be posted. Michael Long motioned, Ray Novakoski seconded to accept the minutes as posted. Carried.

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

Denise Mast (Clerk – PSE)      Courtney Crofoot (Clerk – PSE)      Erin Jurgelewicz (Clerk- PSE)  
Brian Wetmore (Clerk (Holland))      Norman Johnson (Clerk (Byron Center))  
Sabrina Smith (Clerk – PSE)      Samuel Naves (Clerk- PSE)      Mary Thompson (Clerk (Rockford))  
David Hoyle (Clerk – PSE)

**Bills:** None

**Officer's Report**

**Treasurer's Report:** Report ending August 31, 2012 was read. Motion by: Michael Long, Seconded by: Roy Bailey to accept the Treasurer's Report. Carried

**President's Report:**

Excessing on Tour 2 Clerks – We recently went through excessing seven (7) Level 6 Clerks on Tour 2. Most were placed on Tour 3 in Automation. There are still unassigned regulars on Tour 2. We have a meeting coming up with Senior Plant Manager to discuss this. He has stated that he was unaware of this excessing issue. They have excessed so many people that there are no one anymore on the tour to do the work.

Steve Peska. We have asked/solicited monies from the COPA fund to help in his battle against Justin Amash. We have spoken to Steve on multiple occasions. If you would like to help with Steve Peska campaign, your assistance would be invaluable. Please see Amy if you would like to help; I would like to provide him a list of names who he can call upon to help him. He is looking at attending the October 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Lead Clerk. The Lead Clerk is a Level 7 clerk who does everything a Supervisor does, except issue Discipline and/or Approve/disapprove leave. This job was created to reduce the 204Bs and bring more jobs back into craft. They can direct you to a different machine, different duties, etc. They can lead multiple crafts. T-7 clerks in the stations are also considered Lead Clerks per the sign-off at the National.

AMS Jobs. We had these jobs years ago over at District. With the new contract, these jobs were supposed to be returned to us. Those jobs were identified to be returned to us. We have contacted National and they said they are supposed to be returned to us. When we have spoken to the Human Relations manager, they have stated March 2013. We have contact National to see if we can get the jobs returned to us quicker.

PSEs. We have about 57 PSEs in the Grand Rapids installation. Management is under the misunderstanding that if they don't like the PSEs or their work skills, they don't have to bring them back. There are Q&As in the contract which addresses this exact issue. The contract states that as long as there is work, they need to be brought back. We have spoken to National that if management continues with this, they will step in and assist. This is not just a local issue.

Q – If a PSE is given a scheme and doesn't pass, what happens to them? They are supposed to be let go.

Labor Charges. We filed Labor Charges regarding the Clerk Craft Director (Roy) being removed from his union duties and being put back into his bid. The NLRB has put together a settlement, and submitted it to the Postal Service; but the USPS said No. We now have a formal hearing at the Federal Building at the end of October. We are running into additional issues with Customer Service stewards getting union time. We have put management on notice that if this is not corrected that we will file additional Labor Charges. We have the right to file grievances and have release time to investigate and write up grievances per the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Stewards. We need stewards. We have so much going on right now. If you would like to help, please step up and help.

National Convention. We sent 11 people to the National Convention. A lot of discussions took place regarding various things in the contract and National Constitution.. We are stuck until 2015 though. One thing that was brought forward was a resolution to correct the structure at the National level. The resolution would have allowed the National President to do away with a position. There was a lot of discussion on this prior to the convention. An amendment was put forth that passed. This change allows the President the authority to combine a vacant position; however at the next convention, it would be the delegates decision if that position would be

deleted, or needed to be filled. The other thing that passed with this resolution was that the dollar assessment that is currently being assessed is permanent.

Retiree's Resolution. For the past six years, they have been trying to get the ability to vote on the General / Top officers (9 officers). This finally passed. Now the \$36 per annum retirees will now have a voice to vote for the National officers.

Retirement. In the last couple of months, we have had a few retirements and coming up. Ben Konwinski, Bill Howerton, Dick Page, Jennifer Amos, Nancy Emelander, Brian Ratigan, Jerri Otto, Chris Haywood, Christopher Chelf, Marv Verboom, Robert Colenburg, and Ray Novakoski. Ray will be retiring on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, but will finish up his term.

The A&E committee will be down to 2 members after all retirements. It does the Casino trips, Christmas parties, Membership appreciations, etc., please step up and be active on this committee. We need help. If you want to be on this committee please let President Puhalski know. We are trying to put on a Children's Christmas party on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. We are still trying to get an Adult Christmas party in conjunction with the Mail Handlers union; but can't firm the date yet.

Membership Appreciation Barbeque/party is immediately following the meeting.

Special Recognition to Nancy Emelander and Ray Novakoski. Ray has been a mentor for years to me. They will be missed.

Thank you to Mick and Nancy for filling in on the Sergeant at Arms duties today.

### **Vice-President's Report:**

Thank you for everyone to coming today. Thank you to the membership for sending me to the National Convention.

National Convention – I feel this was one of the best one ran. There were some disagreements, but things were resolved. President Guffey is focused on the Legislative aspects as a grass-roots effort and getting the members involved. He truly believes that the slow down that has occurred from the Postal Service is from the members speaking up and contacting their representatives and the public. The membership bringing the information to the forefront. The letter writings, picketing, etc. that we have done has made a difference. He is trying to get the membership involved. We need to keep up the effort/fight.

Locally we are fighting for jobs. Management has taken the position that once they become vacant, they are being reverted. We continue to fight for those jobs. On the Customer Service side, management has reduced the staffing so much, the customers are taking out their frustrations on the clerks. Here in Grand Rapids, the Postmaster has the control over it. Even though they might say the Station Manager has the authority, they don't. Everything has to go through the Postmaster. They even have a team that handles all the grievances. This may even be happening in the Associate Offices with the POOMs.

Annual Leave – even when no one is off, it is being disapproved. We have tried to tell them the only thing that is going to come from this is that the employees will call in sick. Which in turn will increase our activity because management will issue discipline and we fight it.

**Recording Secretary's Report:**

Thank you to everyone for showing up today. Happy Belated Labor Day and I hope each of you had a great summer. Technically there is a little more than two weeks left of summer. Get out and enjoy the rest of it.

I would like to thank the membership for allowing me to attend the State and National Convention. While not much information came out of either convention, I did learn a lot.

I know at P1, overtime is a mad house with the Clerks right now. However, if you had time these past two weeks, I hope some of you caught both the Republican and Democratic National Conventions. If you wanted to see how different the two parties are, this is one place to watch and learn; all the while, getting a laugh in from time to time with their own spin of what is happening on how they plan to fix it.

On the Legislative front, pretty much everything is stalled; awaiting the outcome of the election. You will not see much movement on Postal reform, or anything until after November 6<sup>th</sup>. While the Senate and House returns tomorrow, it is only short-lived. The House will only meet for 13 days between now and the election. Don't expect anything to be accomplished. Maybe they will rename some more Post Offices, but true reform is unlikely. However, after the election, a Lame Duck session will meet for sixteen (16) days before the end of the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress.

As I stated, if you think your vote doesn't matter in this election or doesn't affect you personally... In a related matter, the House voted on May 10 to cut the pay of postal and federal employees by 5 percent by approving an increase in employees' pension contributions. All of the 218 votes in favor of the measure were provided by Republicans; 183 Democrats and 16 Republicans voted against the bill. Your vote does, along with all your family votes do matter!

Hatch Act and You! Much hoopla is being said about what we can and can't do as Federal Employees. Retirees can do whatever they want; however, Active Federal and Postal Employees are limited in the scope they are allowed to perform. You can't run for Partisan office. You can run for non-Partisan offices (school boards, city council, etc.) You can also make calls, copies, go door-to-door, etc., while you are off the clock. You can't use Government equipment to assist in campaigning for a politician. However, the biggest thing to remember. You are John Q Public. In this capacity, you can help out. If at any time you become John Q. Government Employee while helping out, you have broken the law in regards to Hatch Act violation. Keep your own personal and government life separate; and you should be fine.

### **Motor Vehicle Craft Report**

Thanks to sending me out to the National Convention. In the craft conferences, we had two days of them. A lot of the resolutions dealt with what we want (wish list). One of the resolutions was that all transportation jobs be brought back into craft completely. One of the other issues was for management to follow the contract (which they all signed on). This is what we want.

There is a big issue out in the Western District to eliminate the MVS/Drivers. Management is saying this because of California emissions/Air Quality. At one point, the union came forward to pay for the retrofit; management said No. They won't retrofit their own vehicles; but they offered to retrofit the subcontractors' vehicles. If they don't have the money to do their own, they don't have the money to do others.

In 2010, they had 11,506 employees. In 2012 we have lost about 1,000 positions. If we lose positions, we need to have them filled. The work is still there.

In Indianapolis, they took a lot of the runs and gave back all the jobs to the MVS craft, but didn't staff for this increase. So management turned around and cited an Emergency contracting issue and took them away.

East Paris run. We are still working on getting this run back.

If you are still transporting mail, you shouldn't be. It is a driver's job to transport mail. If you see it happen, contact a steward to report it. It is the same way if you see someone else doing your work, you file; do the same.

### **Associate Office Report:**

Lead Clerks – In Associate Offices, it has been sort of past practice, that when a clerk comes in on Saturday, they split their hours ½ clerk, ½ supervisor, because the Postmaster is not there. This must end. It is a Lead Clerk position. If a Supervisor is not there, a clerk in that office should be getting Level 7.

204Bs – In June 2011, the position changed. If an EAS is vacant for less than 14 days, they are not authorized to fill with a 204B. It must be vacant for at least 14 days, and up to 90 days. After 90 days it is management responsibility to have that position filled with another management employee. You need to file the appropriate grievances if you see this being violation/happening.

A lot of complaints regarding the contract, there is a headline on Postal Reporter today that with the NALC contract negotiations that the USPS has stated: No COLAs, No Layoff Protection, No Raises.

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

Retiree Chapter is doing well. Have asked the treasurer to show the activity of Retiree Chapter account.

New Retirees – Please join the retiree’s chapter.

Thank you for your support for the Retiree resolutions at the National Convention.

Legislations – It is up to everyone to remain vigilant. Make the contact. Justin Amash sits on the committee.

**Correspondence:**

- Thank you card from Dick Page from his Retirement
- Thank you card from Lucy Morton from her mom’s passing
- Thank you card from Brian Ratigan for his Retirement

**Old/Unfinished Business:** None

**New Business:**

**E-Board Recommendations:**

- to send Tammy Byrnes to the next available Custodial staffing training given by a State Officer or National Officer or their designee; this would include Lost Time, Per Diem, Hotel, Registration, and Travel. Carried
- to Donate \$100 to the NALC MDA Golf Outing, once it is verified that we were recognized at a hole. Carried

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

Motion by: Karen Hodges, Seconded by: Cynthia Delafunte, to reconsider the motion regarding the motion in January 2012 for the National Convention. Carried.

Motion by: Karen Hodges, Seconded by: Cynthia Delafunte to pay for mileage to and from the airport (Gerald R. Ford International Airport) from their residence. Carried.

Motion by: George Hendricks, Seconded by: Karen Hodges to read the letter from President Puhalski to George Hendricks. Carried. (George read the letter aloud; along with part of his rebuttal).

**Labor Management:** If you have anything for Labor Management please let President Puhalski, Craft Directors or Associate Office Director know. We have a meeting scheduled on September 11.

**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.*** Irene Erickson (**She was at this meeting, she won!**)

***COPA:*** 50/50 Drawing: \$102 total collected. \$51 to the winner - #958411 – Tammy Byrnes

***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. #12 – Amy Puhalski
2. #7 – Beverly Jarrett
3. #32 – Mary Thompson
4. #20 – Cathy Strunk
5. #16 – Geraldine Davis

Meeting adjourned at 3:24 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Yours in Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael A. Long". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Michael A. Long  
Recording Secretary