

**Western Michigan Area Local #281**  
**American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO**  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
January 5, 2013

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: 28

**Roll Call of Officers:**

The following officers were present:

**President** – Amy Puhalski

**Executive Vice-President** – Ray Novakoski

**Recording Secretary** – Michael Long

**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: **Treasurer** – Linda Chandler; **Motor Vehicle Craft Director** – Tracy Fleming

**Review of previous meeting's minutes:** To accept the December's 2012 General Membership Meeting Minutes. Motion by: Ray Novakoski, Seconded by: Roy Bailey. Carried.

Motion by: Michael Long, Seconded by: Ray Novakoski to suspend the order of the business to move to the Share Holder's Meeting of the Western Michigan Postal Workers, Inc. (at 7:05 p.m.)

General Membership Meeting Order of Business was reconvened at 7:12 p.m.

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

Kenyada Smithers – Clerk (PSE –

Jack Aurricho – Clerk (Grand Rapids)

Ashely Saganski – Clerk (PSE – Grand Rapids)

Barbara Walters – Clerk (PSE – Grand Rapids)

Nga T. Vu – Clerk (PSE – Grand Rapids)

James Kristan – Maintenance (Grand Rapids)

Mary Jane Bessey – Clerk (Grand Rapids)

Jessie Ochoa – Clerk (PSE – Grand Rapids)

Gail D Winters – Clerk (PSE – Grand Rapids)

Gary A. Humphrey – MVS (PSE – GR)

Motion by: Doug Warren, Seconded by: Ray Novaoski to accept these members into the local. Carried.

**Bills:** Charge of \$216.91 for Postage of the Christmas Cards for the members. Motion by: Ray Novakoski, Seconded by: Dessa Long to expend the money of \$216.91 for the Christmas Cards of the members. Carried

**Officer's Report**

**Treasurer's Report:** Report ending December 31, 2012 was read. Motion by: Michael Long, Seconded by: Jack Fryling to accept the Treasurer's Report as read. Carried

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

Right to Work passed. I did not go to Lansing, but there were many other APWU members (as far away as Iowa) that were there. This was a sad day for unions in Michigan. In the Postal Service, employees do not have to join the local, we have about 650 members, but we have 130 non-members. People who do not have the passion of what the union has attained for the members will choose not to join the unions. All this was is an attempt to break the unions. What is really upsetting, is our Governor stated he would not entertain this, but five weeks later, he signed it into law.

5% pay more for the retirements – The House passed a bill for Postal and Federal employees to pay 5% more to our retirement, Thank goodness we have a Democratic Senate and this bill will not go anywhere.

Children's Christmas Party. Went over good. Was a full house. Thank you to our volunteers.

Retirements at the end of the month. This is not a final number, but we are currently looking at 70 members retiring in all the offices that we represent. Of that 70, 20 are VERA retirees and can't back out and are locked in, the other 50 can back out all the way up until the actual date of retirement.

Postal Inspectors. We are seeing our members being pulled into the office with the Inspectors. I can not stress enough: ASK TO SEE A STEWARD before you say or sign anything. If you admit to everything, and they walk you out the door, you are done. We can not do anything to undue what you have already stated.

PSEs – These are the future of the Postal Service. It is our job to educate them of their rights. They are entitled to a steward. They are entitled to Dignity and Respect. ASK TO SEE A STEWARD if you are brought into an office. Management has it set in their mind that PSEs are the same as casuals. They have rights, just as career employees do. Please help the PSEs and inform them of their rights.

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

We have a new steward coming on in Motor Vehicle and will be training him next week.

Couple of grievances. One of them was for the AMS Jobs. One of the people that was awarded that job was up in higher level and not eligible for the position. Thought it would be an easy fix by falling to the next qualified bidder; but it has to be appealed.

Electronic Grievance filing – We have been using this for a couple of these grievances.

### **Recording Secretary's Report:**

Right to Work – I just returned from a meeting with other unions throughout the state. They feel that there will be a large exodus of members once it becomes effective. They believe that most will come back; however it will take some time.

2% Pay Holiday. Just a reminder that the 2% pay holiday that we have enjoyed for the past two years that went into Social Security (from 6.2% to 4.2%) has expired and will be back to the 6.2% rate.

Telling on your co-worker - Make management do their job. Do not tell management what your co-workers are doing; worry about your own job and not others.

### **Clerk Craft Report**

Welcome back from the hellish Christmas season.

Welcome to the new members. There are some PSEs that have come into the installation recently. Ask them if they are union members. If you need a sign-up sheet for them, contact the steward.

Annual Leave / Prime Time/Choice is coming up. All the stewards and the members. Closely watch the rosters and make sure management is doing it right by seniority. Make sure to put in all time that you want. If you get a denial for Prime-time/Prime Choice, take a copy of the denial and send it down to Roy.

Postal Inspectors – We have had employees walked off the floor for no reason. When you are on the floor, remind people that if you are pulled in to an office with an Inspector, the first words out of your mouth should be: I WANT MY STEWARD HERE NOW.

Northeast Station – Will be looking at establishing a new position.

Retirees – Those who are going to be retiring – I wish you well. Thank you for being a member of the Western Michigan Area Local.

### **Maintenance Craft Report**

If you are called at home, make sure to see your steward. We have signed language that states that management will not call you at home.

Congratulations to those who are retiring. I can't say this enough. Wish you all the best. Some of you I have seen more than my own family.

In 2001, management instituted a new MS-47. Management lost this on this blatant unilateral action and the grievance was won. Management is now trying to change methods on how we clean. We have already seen some of this. An example of this: there are three different ways that we are given time standard: Manual (most time) Hand-Held Machine (less time to do this), Riding (less time for this). Management is trying to change we use automated equipment, when we aren't, just to lower the amount of time. We will ensure that all grievances are filed on this. We are going to be under attack again. The appropriate grievances will be filed.

Paperwork – 4776. Make sure you fill out the paperwork accurately. Management can't tell you to mark your paperwork anyway, and neither can the union. Just fill it out and it reflects your work accurately. Especially with snow removal now.

Bargaining Unit Details. We have people that have come into our office from another office, and now management is soliciting employees to go back to their old offices on long-term details. Management is trying to get these people to go without Per Diem, Out of Schedule, etc. However, guess what?...you are entitled to it. We have learned that the MCD in Saginaw, that they have been getting signed statements from our employees to waive their out of schedule pay. These employees are our people. It is just like when they go to the NCED, they still belong to this office. Also, if they go to another office, leave approval is through our office, not the detailed location. If you see someone doing this, please let your steward/officer know. Some jobs require that they qualify on their job within a year.

Snowplowing – Trying to recapture this work at Stations and Branches.

Scott Achterhoff is the local's Retirement Representative. If you have any questions, use him. Most of the stewards are keeping busy with grievances. Keep up the good work.

High Level – if you are plowing snow, riding a machine, you are entitled to a higher level.

5% Pay Cut – Remember this when it comes to 2014. Stay Active.

Clerks – If you are at a station or a branch, if you see someone plowing the parking lot, please contact Amy, Ray, or let me know who it is (e.g. Company).

Let management do their own work. Don't help management. Don't write statements against another employee(s).

### **Motor Vehicle Craft Report**

We are trying to get the senior PSE converted into career status. MVS has good language.

Jane Brennan's job has been posted for bidding (with her retirement). This is posted for everyone to bid, but Motor Vehicle craft employees will be taken first, following by others in the APWU crafts.

### **Associate Office Report**

Prime-Time and Prime Choice. Associate offices will be going through this, make sure to follow the LMOU in their office. Fill out the PS Form 3971, and make the Postmaster approve/disapprove the leave.

**Correspondence:** None

**Old/Unfinished Business:** None

**New Business:**

### **E-Board Recommendations:**

Motion to suspend the policy for January 2013 of the local regarding watches, giving the retiree the option of either \$75 or a watch. Carried

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

Motion by: Ray Novakoski, Seconded by: James Smith, that the local absorbs the cost of the Airline ticket for George Hendricks for the 2012 National Convention. Call for the question by: Roy Bailey, Seconded by: Dessa Long. Call for the Question – Carried; Original Motion – Carried.

**Labor Management:** If you have anything for Labor Management please let President Puhalski, Craft Directors or Associate Office Director 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:** Linda Warner (If she was at this meeting, she would have won)

**COPA:** 50/50 Drawing: \$70.00 total collected. \$35.00 to the winner - #958681 – Amy Puhalski

**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. #5 – Karol Imanse
2. #18 – John Niswonger
3. #29 – Karen Hodges
4. #4 – Jim Kristan

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Yours in Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael A. Long". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Michael A. Long  
Recording Secretary