

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

General Membership Meeting Minutes  
October 2, 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.

**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

**Motor Vehicle Craft Director** – Tracy Fleming

**Associate Office Director** – Jack Fryling

The following officers were not present: **Sergeant at Arms** – Jackie Pike

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

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

Eun Kim - (Clerk – Grand Rapids)

Robert Eldred (Maintenance – Grand Rapids)

**Bills:** None

**Officer's Report**

**Treasurer's Report:** Report ending September 30, 2010 was read aloud to the membership in attendance. Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Carried

**President's Report:** Thank everyone for coming to the General Membership meeting. May was the last time we had a quorum. As you all know, we have nominations for officers tonight; so I have asked the Officers to make their reports brief for tonight.

The rumors are confirmed that Grand Rapids has proposed excessing once again out of the Grand Rapids office for Level 6 clerks. There was a notice sent to our Regional coordinator in Chicago that they are proposing excessing up to 23 clerks out of the Grand Rapids office. We have a meeting scheduled here in Grand Rapids along with other offices in the Greater Michigan District with local management along with those from Washington and Area. We will try to prove that their numbers are flawed once again. The last time, there were 27 clerks to be excessed and that was reduced down to 8. Hopefully we can do that again.

You may have seen in the news that the Postal Service received a double-whammy this week, by the PRC not approving the rate increase; and by Congress not addressing the 5.4 billion deposit into the Retirement fund account. There is another House bill forthcoming that may address this; but not in enough time to address it for this past fiscal year.

We have not received any word as of yet from the Negotiating team. The current contract is set to expire on November 20<sup>th</sup>. The next President conference will be held this month in Kalamazoo. President Burrus has announced that he will attend this conference, and provide an update regarding the negotiations. Hopefully he will be able to give us an update and the direction they are taking.

Once again, we do have nominations again tonight. I have announced to the board previously, and I want to make it official this evening that I will not be seeking re-election as President of this local.

Q – Have we heard anything about the taxes on this building. A – We were assessed and we sent the city of Wyoming a check in the amount of \$14,000. Q – Wasn't there any appeals regarding the taxes? A – Yes there was, but a decision was made for forgo any appeals because of the cost and delays that would be placed upon the locals. We are also in discussions with the VFW, to try to put the building back into their hands (technically). As for the taxes, we were obligated and we paid it. We have been lucky enough to be renting out this facility quite regularly.

**Executive Vice-President:** Contract negotiations have begun. If you go to the APWU website, you can watch the opening discussions and view who is on our team, so you can put the face with the name of who is representing you.

Your fifteen delegates at the National Convention represented the local well.

There are many people who have not yet exercised their right to vote for National Officers. Ballots have to be in by October 14<sup>th</sup>. We have over 640 members, and as of today, a little over 100 people have voted thus far. The local has a contest to get out the vote. Exercise your vote.

Some of the things discussed at the convention was to increase the number of bids to 7; and to allow those who were excessed the option of returning to their craft (currently if they are excessed within their installation, they must return). Burrus also mentioned that even at the National level, we get charged for Information Requests over 100 pages.

At this convention, there was a 35 or younger program to bring them to the convention with the National office picking up the bill. Only 100 took advantage of this. There are only 6,000 members currently under the age of 35 nationwide. We have an aging workforce.

Attack on the Associate Offices nationwide. Work hours are being shifted to the Postmasters.

RI-399 disputes. The next case that is up is a Mail Handler case is dealing with their 4-hour requirement for a job. The next case is the APWU's case and deals with Containerization, which could be a big one for our office, but don't expect it until 2012.

Another issue is the upgrade on the AFCS. Management is expanding the number of stackers (sorta like a mini-DBCS). As soon as they are put in, we will file the appropriate grievances.

Do Not Mail Initiative. The Legislative Directors stated that more than a dozen states tried to place Do Not Mail Bills; however, the APWU was able to help defeat these bills; but now they are trying to get non-binding resolutions through these states as well. So be vigilant!

Management is reverting jobs when they become vacant. We have been filing grievances. In the plant, we have a lack of staffing, both downtown and at P1. At the Labor Management, we brought

this forward and Senior MDO says that management will not be doing craft work; however, we then noticed him pulling jams, fixing the machine, etc.

Management keeps saying they are cutting their staffing; however, we are seeing employees (many of them junior employees) stepping up for 204Bs. If you step up for 40 hours a week, that is one position that management can justify reduction in your section. Remember, you are taking away one of these jobs; and since most of these are junior employees they will be the first to go. It isn't worth the money. We make 6-O level; the difference between 6-O and 17 isn't enough to justify.

We did finally get Vance to agree in Labor Management that if any employees are to be forced in for the holidays; that he will not have anyone on as a 204B; and that is one less senior employee that will have to be forced.

We need to stick together! We are a union. If we don't stick together, where are we going to be? People are trying to do their side-deals with management; running the machines by themselves. We need to start opening our eyes and sticking together.

**Recording Secretary:** With the double whammy that President Page spoke of, HR 5746 (the US Postal Service CSRS Modification Act) needs to be passed. Please make sure to contact your representative and tell them to co-sponsor this bill.

If anyone needs to know how much PMG Potter is totally out touch with what is happening. For those who do not know, PECS and OIG employees do not pay anything for their health plan. Even after this defeat this week, Potter is still saying that this benefit is needed.

Rates for next year Health Insurance is expected to increase by 7.2 percent.

Make sure to get out and vote on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Clerk Craft Report:** Local voting for the National Election. Make sure to get out and vote.

There are a lot of changes within the Postal Service. Even though the Postal Service is not per-se a Federal entity, a lot of it is controlled by Congress. With the upcoming Mid-Term elections, make sure you vote for those who support us.

When you use LWOP or 204B, you are reducing the hours in the section and it affects the sections. This last excessing report is done by volume and hours. Make sure to think about what and how it can affect your co-workers as well.

**Maintenance Craft Report:** Been a lot of problems recently with people wanting to file grievances with PERs or Training billets for those people who have verbal agreements with management. We can not defend a verbal agreement. The contract specifically says that PARs and PERs needs to be in writing. I am trying to create a form/template to ensure that when someone is on leave or in training, to have their bids sent to them. Make sure you have your up-to-date.

We have contractors putting in new lights. This is a National Contract. Downtown is currently the only building I know of at this time. However, it is enough to force management to redo our staffing packages once again. So brace again once for that for management to once again to manipulate these numbers once again. We are about jobs! We are trying to get a staffing package done now. They have months to redo their staffing package, and we only get a couple of weeks.

We currently have one job under withholding at the P3 with Tuesday and Wednesday off. What withholding means, this is a job is being withheld with the understanding of someone being placed into it. It is justifiable overtime until it is filled.

AFCS is suppose to be coming up from Kalamazoo in October. I have heard rumors that this could be in Spring, but the last official thing I have received is in October.

Vote for your National Officers and the same for the Local Officers. I strongly believe the next three years will be a going to be the hardest and toughest time that we have ever seen.

November 2<sup>nd</sup> Election. Basically, if you look – GOP is against us; Democrats are for us (for the most part). If you go to YouTube you can watch how GOP is against us. Activism is needed. It is so easy now to jump on a computer and send your Representative a form letter in less than 5 minutes.

Training billets. There was an issue with a sub-contract. When I went in with management, I asked if there has been any training for this issue. Management stated that they cancelled the class (not Norman, but locally) If you are turned down for training locally, contact your stewards to file the appropriate grievances. If Norman has the billets, we need to fight to send our people to be trained and ensure that people are qualified.

There was a recent Arbitration award which was horrible for Mechanized staffing. What we have to do now is to prove the work is there to win Mechanized staffing. When people fill out the paperwork it also proves if we need more staffing. It can either hurt us or help us. It all depends on us..

Q – I thought we were going to have a full-time cleaner in Jenison. But right now there is a contractor. A – The grievance is at the Regional level; and it may have to go to National.

### **Motor Vehicle Report:**

We are still having a problem with management, clerks, or anyone else trying to get out of the building; by running mail to other offices. If you see anything, send me an e-mail if someone else is running the mail. I have been told that we can't go East Paris because it is an HCR route; I go there every day. There is no reason MVS employees can't go anywhere to transport the mail. We have drivers available to transport the mail. We are down nine drivers from a few years back.

MVS drivers should be checking with the clerks at the stations to see if there is any mail to be transported.

Q – How do we get MVS to transport the mail? A – Call Transportation.

Q – Didn't you just get some work back? A - We just got back Seymour Square. That is 30 minutes. This might be a pretty good sum for those MVS employees.

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

**Associate Office Report:** For the Associate Office members for voting for National Officers. Please send me an e-Mail and let me know if you have sent in your ballot and will get this information in for the contest.

Management doing craft work; it has been happening in the Associate Offices for a long time.

Cutbacks in the Associate Offices. Employees are being asked to come in later and/or leave earlier. They are asking you to do more work, and when we can't get the work done, they are bringing in management and/or carriers to do the work; you need to let the union know so the appropriate grievances can be filed. Please provide as much information as

Another issue that has arose is PTFs that if PTF clerk volunteers to go to another office that they will not being paid mileage. The contract says that you are paid mileage; there is nothing in the contract that specifies volunteer or non-volunteer. Make sure to input your mileage weekly. Most of the clerks are getting paid, but there are some that are not (we need to file grievances on those who are not). Make sure you make copies of everything you submit.

If you are asked to go from one office to another office, if you use a badge reader system, make sure to use it, or if you have to use a 1265 form, turn those in. If you don't get paid, there is a Times Adjustment. Fill that out, and when the supervisor refuses to input, we then have something firm to file grievances on.

Q – If you fill out the form and give to your supervisor, and he/she tells you to give them to the other office. A – Then give it to the other office. (Dick suggested that you fill it out and give it to your supervisor, but give a copy of it to the gaining installation).

One of the games management is playing is when they scrutinizing where someone lives and where they work. For example, if someone lives in Grand Rapids, but work in Rockford. That is 16 miles. Management only pays mileage in excess of anything outside of your normal work (thus 16 miles).

**Retiree Chapter Report:** They are talking everywhere you go about saving Paper. Paper is our job. Forest industry grow and cut down trees primarily for wood pulp and in turn paper.

Who has received a post card in the mail today saying something: Having your own Post Office on your Computer. In this Post Card it says: "This is my own Post Office." What ever happened to the one we work at? We are destroying ourselves from within.

The convention went well overall, but went worse for retirees. People have to remember, that there are going to be two things that happen in your life...either you will retiree; or die before you retiree.

### **Committee Reports:**

COPA Tickets. We still have a lot of them remaining before the drawing next month. If they are not all sold, the raffle is turned into a 50-50 drawing.

Building. We do have many rentals for the next two months; while most are public rentals. Thanks to Shane for keeping the building clean after the rentals.

A&E Committee. There will be an A&E meeting this Wednesday (10/6/10) at 5:30 p.m at the Union Hall. Hopefully we will be discussing a Christmas party and Casino trip. If you would like to participate, please come on out.

### **Correspondence:**

1. Labor Heritage Society Thank You Letter
2. Thank You Card for DHHS

3. Thank You Card from John Marcotte
4. Thank You Flyer from Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
5. Thank You letter to Ray from Census Bureau.

**Old/Unfinished Business:** None

**New Business:**

**E-Board Recommendations:**

- To reimburse Jennifer Amos for Eight Hours of Annual Leave and Four Hours of Sick Leave due to Local Union LWOP usage. Carried.

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

Election Committee: Tammy Byrnes, Mike Hill, Karol Imanse (Catherine Beemblossom and Doug Warren who was not present at this meeting). The provisions of the Election proceedings per the constitution was read to the membership.

**Nominations for Officers**

**President**

Amy Puhalski – Nominated by: Ray Novakoski, Seconded by Linda Chandler

**Executive Vice-President**

Ray Novakoski – Nominated by Roy Bailey; Seconded by: Jim Smith

Jennifer Gilbert – Nominated by: Beverly Jarrett; Seconded by: Jennifer Gilbert

**Recording Secretary**

Jennifer Amos – Nominated by: Jennifer Gilbert; Seconded by: Amy Puhalski

Michael Long – Nominated by: Linda Chandler; Seconded by: James Smith

**Treasurer**

Linda Chandler – Nominated by: Dessa Long; Seconded by: Ray Novakoski

**Sergeant at Arms**

Dan Quillin – Nominated by: Roy Bailey; Seconded by: Jennifer Gilbert

Lisa Borchardt – Nominated by: Linda Chandler; Seconded by: Jennifer Gilbert

George Folk – Nominated by: James Smith; Seconded by: Roy Bailey

Greg Carlson – Nominated by: James Smith; Seconded by: Roy Bailey

David Janes – Nominated by: Ray Novakoski; Seconded by: Roy Bailey

**Clerk Craft Director**

Roy Bailey – Nominated by: David Janes; Seconded by: James Smith

**Maintenance Craft Director**

James Smith – Nominated by: Brian Ratigan; Seconded by: Beverly Jarrett

**Motor Vehicle Craft Director**

Tracy Fleming – Nominated by: Roy Bailey; Seconded by: Jack Fryling

**Associate Office Director**

Jack Fryling – Nominated by: Jennifer Gilbert; Seconded by: Beverly Jarrett

POI – George Hendricks. I wanted to thank everyone who is running for a position. It is sometimes a thankless job.

Motion by: Ray Novakoski; Seconded by: James Smith, that the President, Vice-President, and Craft Directors (including new Clerk Craft Director Roy Bailey) be authorized to attend the upcoming National President Conference with Lost Time (2 days), Lodging(1 day), Registration, Per Diem, Mileage, and applicable taxes. Discussion. Friendly amendment to include the new Clerk Craft Director (which was accepted by the maker of the motion) Motion with the amendment Carried.

Motion by: Jennifer Gilbert; Seconded by: Beverly Jarrett to send Jennifer Gilbert to the upcoming District Meeting in Gaylord with 2 days nights lodging, 2 days of Lost Time, Mileage, and Per Diem. Discussion. Defeated.

**Labor Management:** For Grand Rapids it is scheduled October 21<sup>st</sup>. Individuals in Associate Offices please contact the Associate Office Director and President. Please see your steward or officers to submit items for discussion.

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

***\$250.00 Attending the Meeting Drawing.*** # 280 – Thomas Newton (If he would have been at the meeting, he would have won!)

***COPA:*** 50/50 Drawing: \$85 total collected. \$42.50 to the winner - #972920 – Sandy Page

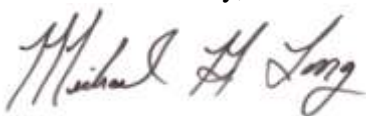
***Four (4) - Ten (\$10.00) Dollar Door Prizes:*** (NOTE: According to local policies. When an Executive Board member receives one of the door prizes, another drawing is done. If 40 or more than are present, there is one additional drawing per ten members).

1. #23 – Michael Long
2. #8 – George Hendricks
3. #26 – Tracey Fleming
4. #16 – Michael Hill
5. #31 – Jack Fryling
6. #11 – Joe Hall
7. #34 – Pam Bohn

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yours in Solidarity,



Michael A. Long  
Recording Secretary