

**Western Michigan Area Local #281**  
**American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO**  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
May 6, 2012

Meeting was called to order at 1:00 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: 30

**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

**Motor Vehicle Craft Director** – Tracy Fleming

**Associate Office Director** – Jack Fryling

The following officers were not present: **Sergeant at Arms** – Dan Quillin

**Review of previous meeting's minutes:** April's General Membership Meeting minutes were posted. Michael Long motioned, Cynthia Delafuente, 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 April 30, 2012 was read. Motion by: Michael Long, Seconded by: Roy Bailey to accept the Treasurer's Report. Carried

**President's Report:**

S.1789 has moved from the Senate to the House of Representatives. The following is a list of the 39 amendments that came up for a vote and which Senator proposed these:

Plant Consolidations:

**Casey (#2042):** This amendment would maintain service standards on delivery times for the next four years. The amendment would not stop all plant consolidations, but it would presumably mean that the Postal Service would not be able to proceed with its Network Rationalization plan to close 223 mail processing plants, since that plan hinges on the change in service standards.

**Wyden-Feinstein (#2068):** This amendment would prevent the closing of processing plants in states with popular vote-by-mail programs, like Oregon and California, until after the election in November. The Postal Service already plans to suspend consolidations beginning in September, but a lot of them could take place this summer; this amendment would prevent that, at least in some states. The amendment would also require the Postal Service to conduct impact studies on how closing post offices would affect voting by mail.

## Post Office closings

**Tester (#2056):** This amendment would strike section 205 on “Preserving Community Post Offices” as described above and replace it with language that would make it somewhat more difficult to close post offices. The amendment reaffirms that the Postal Service has an obligation to provide “a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to rural areas, communities, and small towns where post offices are not self-sustaining.” It would also add as one of the criteria the PRC would look at in evaluating an appeal whether “substantial economic savings are likely to be achieved as a result of the closing or consolidation.” That presumably addresses the fact that the savings from closing small post offices is often quite insignificant and frequently inflated by the Postal Service’s cost-saving analysis.

**McCaskill-Merkley (#2031):** This amendment would establish a two-year moratorium on closing rural post offices. It would also prevent the Postal Service from closing a rural post office unless several factors were considered: seniors would continue to receive their medications through the mail as before the closings; businesses served by the post office would not suffer financial losses; the area is served by broadband; the closing would not require customers to drive more than ten miles to a post office, and so on.

## Mail delivery

**Schumer (#2050):** This amendment would strike Section 207 and preserve home and business door delivery.

**Udall (#2043):** This amendment would strike Section 208 and preserve six-day delivery for the foreseeable future.

**Corker (#2051):** This amendment would allow the Postal Service to switch to five-day delivery immediately, without waiting for two years. It also backs permitting the Postal Service to raise stamp prices beyond the rate of inflation and to lay off workers if necessary.

## Workplace issues

**McCain (#2033):** Like the House bill proposed by Issa, this amendment would establish a Commission on Postal Reorganization to overhaul postal finances and review sites for potential closure.

**Akaka (#2034):** This amendment would replace the changes in FECA with the NALC-supported FECA reform bill (H.R. 2465) that has already passed the House of Representatives.

**Paul (#2038 and #2039):** In addition to trying to insert an amendment tying postal reform to cutting aid to Egypt, Paul proposed an amendment (2038) that would end the mailbox monopoly and another (2039) that would prohibit the Postal Service from entering into a collective-bargaining agreement with any labor organization. Both amendments are a wet dream for the privatizers. They’re not going to pass, but you can’t blame the guy for trying.

**Warner (#2071):** This amendment would address problems associated with inaccurate pension estimates and slow payments. (There’s a good piece in Dead Tree Edition explaining the amendment.)

**Tester (#2032):** This amendment would limit the salaries of the six most-senior USPS executives to a base salary of not more than \$200,000. That may be good for headlines, but the top six salaries range from \$230,000 to \$276,000 — not much more than \$200,000. The problem is all the extras — bonuses and compensation packages — which can double the base salary. The Tester amendment would also reduce the size of the Board of Governors by two governors, but there won’t be much savings there — they earn \$30,000 a year.

Customer Service side of the house regarding stewards duty time. Management is going after steward's duty time. We have filed Labor Charges and Grievances.

Police and Firefighters approached us to regarding Bargaining rights. They are trying to get language on the November 6<sup>th</sup> ballot in Michigan. If you are approached to sign a petition to protect Bargaining rights, please do so. Remember each sheet is for each county. You need to sign the respective sheet.

**Recording Secretary's Report:**

Amy addressed S.1789. However, keep in mind that other bills are out there that can be destructive to not only us, but to all Federal employees.

FMLA Forms – We can go back to using our APWU Forms. New ones have come out. It is your choice.

**Clerk Craft Report**

I am back on the workroom floor. I was called to the Northeast Office on Friday. We feel this is in direct retaliation to Stewards duty grievances and Labor Charges that we filed. Just in one day, we have filed 13 grievances regarding this issue; not to mention more Labor Charges. Management messed with the wrong union/person.

Legislative - Postal Reform. Go to APWU.org and scroll down to the Legislative site. Sign up for e-Alerts to keep you informed.

**Maintenance Craft Report** It is nice to see a lot of Maintenance employees today.

I hear Union People say: “those officers are always in the union room/office.” We are blessed. We are filing grievances and we make sure the contract is being followed and adhered to.

I have been in discussion with putting up a BEM position on Tour 3. We will have to see what is posted.

I have been doing advocate duties for Arbitration since 2009. There are many that are umbrella under one case (lead case). If we win this, it could be one of the largest wins.

Step 4 – If custodians are not there, management is required to use overtime to cover these absences. When management went to minimum staffing, that is just it. All the hours must be covered to maintain the coverage.

Tour changes. If management does go through with these proposed changes, it will take until February 2013. Tour 2 and Tour 1 jobs will probably flip.

MOS jobs are under attack. This is a National initiative. I was told that management wants to reduce MOS jobs by 60%. Every job that has been reduced has been challenged and we will continue to do so.

4776 – If you are at a station or branch and not using a 4776, you need to start. It is your job to document what you do.

With the new award and contract, if there is only one custodian in an office, and he/she is absent, a clerk can now do the cleaning. If a clerk does this cleaning, please make sure to ask for the paperwork. Justify your hours. Contact your steward for more information.

Don't let management try to walk all over you. If you feel something that is happening is wrong, ask to see your steward. Union Stewards are there like the Postal Service. We are a service to our members. You use the Postal Service to keep your jobs. Use your stewards to secure your jobs as well.

Staffing packages for the stations. Management is looking at combining Centerpointe, Ledyard, Seymour, and Rogers Plaza into one job.

If you see the changes at the Main, these changes are due to the consolidation plan. Between October and February 2013, we are suppose to receive five new machines. If this happens, we will be addressing staffing.

### **Motor Vehicle Craft Report**

There seems to be a problem with some of the employees that go around feel that the contract doesn't apply to them. The contract applies to members and non-members alike.

PSE hiring. Management is looking at hiring PSEs outside the negotiated salary rate. The only way they can do this if the union agrees at the National level.

### **Associate Office Report:**

On the union website, there was an article regarding the agreement to the Level 7 Lead Clerk positions. There is some Q&As; however, there are still some questions regarding to how other things will be affected (weekends, PSEs, etc.). One I receive information back, I will forward out to the field.

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

When Roth first started doing our routes, he was nothing and Barnaby was the main player in town. Today Roth is a multi-millionaire, thanks to the Postal Service.

Amway is supporting Governor Walker (R- Wisconsin) in his fight against his recall. They stand together.

The fifteenth is coming up quick. We all need to contact our Representatives. Make the phone calls and write those letters.

### **Committee Reports:**

Resolutions Committee – the Resolutions that we have brought forth to the Michigan State Convention from our local is on the Sergeant at Arms table if you wish to view.

A&E Committee - Had a great Casino trip. Had a few winners. Might have another in the fall.

**Correspondence:** None

**Old/Unfinished Business:** None

**New Business:**

**E-Board Recommendations:**

To send the President to the National Pre-Convention workshops with one day lost time, one night hotel, and one day per diem. Carried

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

Motion by: James Smith, Seconded by: Thomas Calkins, to pay up to three days of Lost Time for Greg Carlson to learn Maintenance Staffing. Discussion. 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.*** Lee Wright (If he was at this meeting, he would have won!)

***COPA:*** 50/50 Drawing: \$94 total collected. \$47 to the winner - #7837962 – Roy Bailey

***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. #15 – Michelle Wilson
2. #18 – Ann Hill-Graves
3. #24 – Bonnie Eckart-Wilson
4. #14 – Linda Chandler
5. #4 – Tom Calkins

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Yours in Solidarity,



Michael A. Long  
Recording Secretary