



American Federation of Government Employees Local 476

Affiliated with AFL-CIO

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GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 7, 2016

Auditorium C

The following members of the Executive Board were present: Ashaki Robinson Johns (President), Kirk Mensah (Secretary), Monique Love (Treasurer), and Will Taylor (2nd Vice President). Eddie Eitches (1st Vice President) was absent.

Ashaki called the meeting to order at 12:10pm, a quorum of 25+ members was met. Ashaki asked if there were any proposed amendments to the November 19, 2015, General Membership Meeting minutes. No amendments were offered. Nathaniel Johnson moved to approve the January 28, 2016 General Membership Meeting minutes. Monique Love seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Monique stated that due to the rescheduling of the meeting from March 31 to April 7th, she did not provide a Treasurer's report prior to the meeting. However, Monique stated that copies of the revised report were available for members to review. There were no questions or comments regarding the Treasurer's report so Monique asked for a motion to approve the report. Nathaniel moved to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Sandra Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Old Business

Chief Steward's Report – Chief Steward Antonio (Tony) Carraway began by extending his gratitude to all the stewards for diligently working hard behind the scenes ensuring that the membership is properly represented. He further stated that the stewards have been addressing some issues regarding telework, within grade increases, performance management, and flexi-time. Tony advised employees to be proactive and engage management as soon as possible regarding performance issues. Tony also mentioned that Local 476 has a website at www.afge476.org where documents pertaining to Local 476 may be found including the collective bargaining agreement, by-laws, etc. He also reiterated that it's crucial that employees notify the Union of any issues as soon as an issue arises.

Food Patron Committee Report – Ashaki stated, on behalf of Otis Collins, management in collaboration with the union put together a survey and she expects it to be sent to employees within the next week. The survey will inquire about preferences for the cafeteria including types of food employees are interested in and how much employees are willing to pay. Ashaki asked members to fill out the survey and to also tell colleagues once it's issued as it will be in an integral part of the solicitation for vendors of the cafeteria. She stated that the better the participation on the survey the greater the chances that employee's needs and desires are met. Ashaki stated that the goal is to have the cafeteria reopened by September 30 prior to a change of Administration.

Recruitment Incentives – Ashaki mentioned that the local has recruitment incentives for both the recruiter and the new member. The recruiter receives \$50 and the new member receives \$100. She stated the Union will start giving awards for the top recruiter (except for stewards) for the quarter and then also for the year. Ashaki also stated that District 14 (which HUD is a part of) is also having recruitment incentives. For example, the person who recruitments the most in District 14 for the month of April will receive an Apple Watch. Ashaki stated that Nathaniel Johnson, Rodney Rose and Christopher Mclennon are in the process of setting up a recruitment fair for the end of April or beginning of May with various types of incentives that will be awarded. Ashaki also introduced a new steward that has joined Local 476, Ms. Sandra Wright and Ms. Ingrid Brown.

New Core - Ashaki stated that New Core negotiations are scheduled for early June. Ashaki also mentioned that she received confirmation from Employee and Labor Relations that there are no new initiatives planned for New Core, including Grant Management. In fact, she stated that based on language in the appropriations bill, Congress wants to halt New Core and now management has completely stopped the expansion of New Core. Ashaki stated that New Core is chockfull of problems including issues within CFO, PIH, etc. Employees are taking direction from BFS that’s causing all sort of internal issues. Ashaki asked members to contact the Union and soon as possible if they are experiencing any issues with New Core so that those issues are included when the Union goes into negotiations.

Voluntary Leave Bank – Ashaki explained the voluntary leave bank program to the members and stated that it will be something new at HUD. Ashaki stated that negotiations will begin in the coming week with implementation expected by the end of September. With the new leave bank, employees will donate hours that will go into a pool. The Union proposes that a panel (comprised of a member of AFGE, NFFE, and a management representative) will review the application to determine eligibility. The only determination will the panel will make is amount of leave the employee will receive. Ashaki mentioned that the leave bank will not be in place of the leave donation program but in collaboration with. She mentioned it will be advantageous for all bargaining unit employees, especially those with low leave balances, new employees, etc. Ashaki stated that there will be a maximum of 160 hours that employees may be eligible to receive. A member stated that members and BU employees can currently transfer leave to a specific person and then asked if that option will still be available. Ashaki stated that employees may participate in the transfer program in addition to the leave bank. However, you cannot participate at the same time. Employees must utilize the hours received in the leave donation program (if applicable) prior to receiving leave from the other program. A member asked if employees will be able to donate sick leave into the leave bank as well. Ashaki stated that currently, it’s not possible but it is an issue that will be brought up by the Political Action Committee (Thaddeus Wincek).

New Business

Transit Subsidy – Ashaki stated that Local 476 was the only local in Council 222 to file a Demand to Bargain on the transit subsidy issue. She mentioned that the national capital region (NCR) has different requirements regarding the transit subsidy compared to the rest of the country. Ashaki stated that the language in the Executive Order under President Clinton that requires the NCR to have a transit subsidy program and that where possible, Agencies must offer the maximum amount available. In collaboration with Council 222, local 476, has worked with management to get the increased transit subsidy issued with a start date of May 1. However, the issue of retroactive payment has not been decided as management contends that funds are not available to retroactively pay

employees for the transit subsidy. Ashaki stated that before management decided to issue the increased subsidy the Union was letters that all members and bargaining unit employees could use to send to their respective Congress person. She encouraged members to consider sending letters to their Representative to shed some light on the issue of retroactive subsidy payments and now is the time to do it as many of the top officials at HUD are leaving. A member asked about parking being covered under transit subsidy. Ashaki stated that parking is at the Agency's discretion but the topic was included in the Demand to Bargain but believes that the Agency will not include parking as part of the subsidy. She also stated HUD has never purposely paid for parking and prior to the metro system smart card change; employees were able to use the subsidy for parking. Another member stated that due to the anticipated closing of the metro lines, there is a stronger point for HUD to include parking in the subsidy. However, Ashaki mentioned that there is no political will for the Agency to include it.

Local Committees –

Social Engagement – Rodney Rose stated that the committee met and looked at options for the Holiday Party with some specific goals including saving the Union money, make the party as convenient as possible, and to have a good time. Rodney stated that the We Are One Celebration will be held on May 10 at Headquarters and more information will be disseminated in the coming weeks. After numerous amounts of research and inquiries, the committee has found a location that is willing to offer the Union half what the local has continuously paid in the past; that is \$40,000. The location will offer a sit down dinner, a dance floor, and alcohol. Rodney mentioned that the name of the place is Camelot located in Maryland. He stated that because it is in Maryland the committee is currently looking at options to accommodate those members that live in DC or Virginia. The party is tentatively scheduled for Friday, December 23 in the evening. Ashaki mentioned that the Union usually brings a large crowd for its Holiday celebration and the only locations that can accommodate our size are hotels or Carmines and the cost as Carmines is approximately \$40,000. Further complicating the celebration is that members have to be back at work at a certain time. An evening event was recommended by many members in the past. Basically to have the party during the day comes at a premium. With the event occurring afterhours, members are not bound by the hours of the office and they may bring a friend or significant other for a nominal fee. Ashaki mentioned that the committee is looking into providing transportation to and from the closest metro station. A member asked about the location and Ashaki mentioned it's a banquet hall that has put on various types of weddings and other events. Ashaki also stated that although it has been recommended that we combine our party with other locals but this year it will be HUD only. Rodney stated that the venue saves the local approximately \$20,000 which can be used for other things in the local. A member asked what the savings be used for. Ashaki mentioned that the savings will prevent the Union from drawing from the Morgan Stanley account. In addition, the savings may be used for other items such as arbitrations, etc. Another stated that some members will not be able to attend due to transportation issues. A different member mentioned that for those members cannot attend the Holiday party, the Union could possibly have a luncheon. After discussions, Ashaki asked for a motion. Rodney Rose moved that the Union have the Holiday Celebration at Camelot Banquet Hall in Upper Marlboro, Maryland on Friday, December 23 in the evening. Monique Love seconded the motion. There were 18 members in favor and 8 members opposed. The motion passed in favor of changing the venue for the Holiday Party for 2016.

Legislative Political Coordinator - Thaddeus Wincek stated that the committee is currently working on bringing the issue of donating sick leave to the leave transfer program to members of Congress. He stated that FAA allows sick leave donation so the there is a possibility of getting it done. He also mentioned that in FY 11, there was a Bill that was drafted to explicitly allow sick leave donations but it failed so the committee's goal is to see how the Bill can be reintroduced. Ashaki mentioned that

employees have numerous amounts of sick leave that is not utilized. She also mentioned AFGE National is very interested in this issue and is enthused that local 476 has taken up this issue. She also mentioned that other has expressed interest in this issue as well which is important as it gives the issue a much larger voice than just HUD alone. Ashaki also stated that a recent District 14 meeting, the National Vice President asked local president's to ask its members to "Please make sure to check your voter registration before your voting day." District 14 has stated that there have been numerous instances where people have been dropped off the roles and were not able to vote because they are not registered although the voters know they have registered.

Ashaki informed the members that Eddie Eitches, the Union's First Vice President retired on Friday April 1st. He will remain First Vice President. Ashaki mentioned that he will be honored for his years of service at the We Are One Celebration.

Raul requested all members and BU employees that have not been rated for FY 2015 to pass that information on to him or any other Steward in the Union as soon as possible.

A member asked about the space changes that are going around the building. Ashaki mentioned that no notice has been issued to the Union but the Council is aware of some issues and a Demand to Bargain has been issued to management. Ashaki asked that all issues relating to space or other matters be brought to the Union's attention immediately so that swift action can be taken.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and passed. The April 7, 2016 General Membership Meeting was adjourned at 12:56pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kirk Mensah
Secretary
AFGE Local 476