



American Federation of Government Employees
Local 476

Affiliated with AFL-CIO

451 7th Street, SW, Suite 3142
Washington, DC 20410

Ashaki Robinson-Johns
President
Regional Vice President, Council 222

Phone: 202-402-3077
Fax: 202-708-7638
E-mail: Ashaki.Robinson-Johns@hud.gov

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 18, 2017

Brooke Mondale Auditorium

The following members of the Executive Board were present: Ashaki Robinson Johns (President), Kirk Mensah (Secretary), and Eddie Eitches (1st Vice President). Monique Love (Treasurer) was not present. The position of 2nd Vice President is currently vacant.

Ashaki called the meeting to order at 12:12pm. A quorum of 25+ members was reached for today's business. Ashaki welcomed new members and regular members. Ashaki asked if there were any questions about the meeting minutes from the March 16, 2017 General Membership Meeting. Eddie Eitches, 1st Vice President asked if Ashaki would do a roll call of officers prior to accepting the minutes. Ashaki mentioned that it was not done in the past but she did a roll call nonetheless. After the roll call, Ashaki asked if there were any additions or corrections to the March minutes. As there were none, Ashaki asked for a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the March 19, 2017 meeting. A motion was properly moved and seconded to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was passed without objection.

Treasurer's Report – Ashaki informed the members that Monique Love, Treasurer was out on personal leave and so Ashaki presented and opened discussion for the Treasurer's Report, dated January 1 - May 16, 2017. Ashaki stated that due to the recruitment incentives District 14 is currently advertising, membership has increased and as such, membership dues income has increased. A request was made for a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. A motion was properly moved and seconded to accept the Treasurer's report as presented. The motion was passed without objection and the Treasurer's report was accepted.

Steward's Report – Ashaki stated that the stewards have been busy filing grievances and responding to removal proposals and office moves.

-Ashaki advised members that the current recruitment incentive of \$100 dollars for the new member and \$100 for the recruiter will expire on June 1, 2017. After which, the recruiter will receive \$50. Due to the recruitment incentives, the membership has increased by 15%.

-Regarding moves, Ashaki stated the Department's overall goal is to reduce the employee footprint that is spread all over Washington D.C. and to bring all employees back into the Weaver Building. She stated that non-managers may be moving from offices into cubicles. Ashaki stated

that if you have been advised to move and you have not heard from the Union, to contact the Union immediately.

-Ashaki commented on the importance of performance reviews now that the mid-year rating season is upon us. She stated performance reviews should be done annually and continuous feedback should be received throughout the year. She advised members to request a performance meeting via email, if they have not yet had a performance meeting. She also advised to document performance as often as possible. Ashaki further advised members not to wait until the end of the fiscal year to start having discussions surrounding performance. Ashaki advised members to inform the Union as soon as possible, if they receive a performance evaluation that is less than fully on any element. She commented that often the Union is unaware of such a rating unless the member informs us. She commented on the importance of Union involvement because if the employee is placed on a Performance Improvement Plan or an Opportunity to Improve Plan, the Union can ensure that the plan will assist the employee to improve performance and more importantly, written to the parameters as described in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Further, Ashaki stated the way the current Administration is operating, Employee and Labor Relations are discouraging management from finding alternatives, i.e., reassignment to another office, but rather removal from federal service. She advised members to take their performance seriously. A member asked about probationary employees and their removal from federal service while under their probationary period. Ashaki stated that last year the Department removed three probationary employees. She continued that probationary employees have limited rights while under probation and unless it's discrimination it's extremely hard to fight the removal. She advised members who are under probation to keep a low profile until the probation is over, unless the situation is causing harm to themselves or others. Another member asked about 360 reviews between management and employees. Ashaki stated that it's voluntary, but not mandatory. A member asked about a change in performance and elements and what to do if it's been changed. Ashaki advised the member to talk to a steward as a steward will be able to advise on the elements being S.M.A.R.T. and the timeframe in which an employee should be rated after issuance of the new elements.

-Cynthia Carter discussed protocols regarding Hostile Work Environment (HWE) interviews. Cynthia stated that management is not following protocol regarding the interviews and program areas are not following uniform procedures. She stated the Union is attempting to work with management to have a uniform investigatory process that all program areas will follow. Cynthia advised members to immediately report instances of a HWE to their administrative officer so that the HWE assessment/investigation can begin. Cynthia stated that Union presence is important to ensure that the employee's rights are protected, employees are comfortable with telling his/her account of the HWE and to ensure that privacy is maintained.

FAIR & EQUITABLE UPDATE – Ashaki gave a brief history of the Fair and Equitable case to those that may have never heard of the case. She stated there are still no updates other than the attorneys currently handling the case informed the Council that they wanted their fees to be 51% of what the Council was offered to settled. Ashaki informed the members that the attorneys have failed to produced billing records to substantiate the work that has been performed and

the dollar amount they are asking for. As such, the Council has decided to turn down the offer made by the Department as most of the payout would have gone to the attorneys. To date, the Council has secured an attorney to assist with discussions involving Snider and Associates. Once the attorney issue has been resolved, the Council will be free to reengage in settlement talks with the Department. If there are any updates, Ashaki stated that members will hear them directly from her. She also advised members that if they had any questions, to please direct them to Local 476.

Continuous Improvement Negotiations – Antonio Gaines from local 1568 gave a brief synopsis on why the Council is negotiating the national supplement. Mr. Gaines stated that the proposal establishes a standard procedure throughout HUD to increase the effectiveness of activities and processes to provide added benefits to both the organization and its customers. Mr. Gaines continued that the team is comprised of Mr. Sal Viola, Executive Vice President of Council 222, Kirk Mensah from Local 476, and himself. Mr. Gaines stated that the team’s goal is to ensure equitable treatment of all interested employees, the selection criteria is fair, and employee’s rights are protected. Mr. Gaines also stated his team wanted to ensure this supplement will not be used as a tool for downsizing federal service.

EVS Survey – Ashaki stated this is Employee Viewpoint Survey (EVS) season and SES managers are starting to send out emails encouraging employees to fill out the survey as it is not only for the benefit of the Department but for the employees as well. Ashaki informed the members that she received a forwarded email from an employee in OCPO. The email was from Keith Surber where he commented on prohibited personnel practices, EEO complaints, performance issues, etc. while referencing the EVS survey. Ashaki stated that the email is a bullying tactic and the email creates a hostile work environment. She continued that she will meet with the EEO Director to specifically address this issue regarding EEO complaints and HWE.

COMMITTEE REPORT(S)

Audit Committee –

Ashaki stated that Local 476 has not had an audit in the past two to three years. She continued that the audit should be done annually to ensure that the Local’s funds and the member’s funds, are expended properly. Ashaki called for three volunteers to join the committee to perform the audit. Ashaki continued that the audit must be performed prior to the election in November. One member expressed interest in joining the committee. Ashaki stated that if other members are interested to please send an email to Ashaki and Monique.

Legislative Committee – Thaddeus Wincek (Chair)

Thaddeus informed the members of the status of H.R. 1259, H.R. 1364, H.R. 1461, and Senate Bill 160. Thaddeus stated that some of the bills are up on the Hill for votes and as information comes out regarding the results of the votes he will inform the committee appropriately. The committee also discussed the FY 2017 Budget commenting that the budget was approved based on FY 2016

numbers. He stated the FY 2018 Budget request details numerous amounts of cuts to various programs. Thaddeus stated that members of the Council will be on the Hill during the budget talks.

Ashaki asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made to adjourn the May 18, 2017 meeting at 1:08 p.m. The motion was seconded and the meeting adjourned at 1:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kirk Mensah
Secretary
AFGE Local 476