

NORTHEASTERN WISCONSIN AREA LOCAL



AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION  
AFL-CIO

Volume 70/Issue 1  
January/February 2024

# THE BAY BREEZE



## Next Meeting:

Tuesday, March 26th

7:00 pm

Gallagher's West

2655 W. Mason St.

Green Bay, WI 54304

Food & Refreshments

\$10 Fleet Farm Gift Card

Door Prize

\$120.00 Rolling Jackpot

Greetings union peeps, I hope you are all doing well during these trying times. A couple of people have recently asked me, "Why join a union?" ..... "what does it do for me?". I have submitted an article in this issue about the prison system in Green Bay which may give another viewpoint about the benefits of labor unions. This article points out what benefits a union provides, however for the prison employees Scott Walker stripped many of their benefits. NEWAL 2247 is currently fighting the excessive reversion of jobs. The APWU has fought for our wage increases, and will continue to do so, and to negotiate for better benefits. These wage increases assist in paying union dues and being a member gives you the option of extremely affordable health, dental, and vision care.

This union files grievances on your behalf when you get disciplined, and stewards spend countless hours off the clock to ensure management follows the contract. Management and mail handlers continually try and perform clerk work and the union

grieves those attempts to protect our jobs. Remember, your generous annual leave and sick leave benefits are because of a labor union. Ask friends or neighbors what kind of vacation and sick leave they get, ask them if they have a pension; you may become more thankful for your union when you hear their answers.

So, why join a union because unions are important, provide job security and yes, they matter. Wear your union shirts to show solidarity to management. Don't forget to come to the union picnic this year in which we are hoping the letter carriers will join us this year, details to follow.

Best Regards,

Kelly



President	Kelly Heaney
Vice President	Jennifer Ewald
Secretary/Treasurer	Art Ciesielczyk
Recording Secretary	Emily Ewald
Editor	Bill Kabacinski
Clerk Craft Director	Jennifer Ewald
Motor Vehicle Craft Director	Clade Adkins
Maintenance Craft Director	Samantha Fritz

**The Bay Breeze** is the official voice of the American Postal Workers Union, Northeastern Wisconsin Area Local, published six times a year. The due date for publication is the first day of the odd month unless otherwise publicized.

**The Bay Breeze** attempts to keep the membership abreast of all important issues. We are proud members of the National Postal Press Association and International Labor Communications Association. We are also members of the APWU of WI, Wisconsin State AFL-CIO, Greater Green Bay labor Council and were the first local in WI to join the APWU Accident Benefit Association as a 100% local.

Letters, correspondences, and articles by members and officers are encouraged. Send them to the return address on this newsletter. Articles must be signed by the author and names may be withheld upon request. Opinions are those of the contributors and not necessarily the Union, the Officers, or the Editor.

**The Editor reserves the right to delete, edit, or rewrite to fit the format or this newsletter, to disallow any attacks of individuals, and to refuse to print any article deemed improper or unfit for publication.** Articles that are not credited are those of the Editor.

**STEWARDS**

**Packerland Drive Office (GMF)**

**Tour 1**

Clerk Chief Steward	Jennifer Ewald
Clerk Alternate Steward	Kelly Heaney
Maintenance Chief Steward	Jesse Weber
Maintenance Alt Steward	Sam Fritz
Alternate Clerk Steward	Brian Conklin
	Christine Bouyear

**Tour 2**

Clerk Chief Steward	Sam Fritz Jenny E.
Clerk Alternate Steward	Ekaterina Bouyear, Kelly Heaney
Customer Service Maintenance Chief Steward	Sebastian Zeutzius
	Ekaterina Bouyear
Alternate Maint Steward	Molly Crevier
MVS Chief Steward	Clade Adkins

**Tour 3**

Clerk Chief Steward	Sam Fritz
Clerk Alternate Steward	Kelly Heaney
	Christine Bouyear

Maintenance Chief Steward	Kelly Heaney
Alternate Maintenance Steward	Lance Bouyear

**VME**

Chief Steward	Clade Adkins
Alternate Steward	Vacant

**AO Stations**

Clerk Chief Steward	Dave Sass
Clerk Alternate Steward	Mike Anderson

**DePere Post Office**

Clerk Chief Steward	Sheri Beauleau
Clerk Alternate Steward	Vacant

**All other AO's**

Clerk Chief Steward	Kelly Heaney
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## Green Bay prison sees results of unaddressed warnings

By Mario Koran/Justin Mayo/Jack Kelly

### WISCONSIN WATCH

GREEN BAY – Wisconsin’s top prison official wrote to the governor in 2015 with a dire warning: The state prisons were dangerously understaffed, imperiling both guards and inmates. Five years later, two men escaped from a maximum-security Wisconsin prison, fleeing early one morning when four of the facility’s five watchtowers were unmanned. Today, two of the state’s prisons have been in lockdown, including Green Bay Correctional Institution. Prison officials who initially blamed the restrictions on violent outbursts have since conceded that a shortage of guards has kept the lockdowns in place. That should not have been a surprise.

By the time the crisis began, the state had known for years that it was losing guards faster than it could replace them. Almost half the jobs for guards at the state’s maximum-security prisons were unfilled in mid-2023; up from just 10% at the start of 2017, according to an analysis of Department of Corrections data. Overtime costs have skyrocketed, and so has the percentage of inexperienced officers in the workforce. The lack of personnel drove prison officials to take extreme shortcuts in how they ran the facilities, interviews, and records show. Even so, state leaders did not take significant steps to slow the hemorrhaging of guards until last year, long after the earliest problems were apparent.

Wisconsin’s struggles to staff its prisons is reflective of a crisis building across the country, as the job of prison guard, long seen as a stable position with generous benefits, has become increasingly undesirable. Working conditions deteriorated as the pandemic ravaged aging correctional facilities, and other entry level jobs suddenly began offering higher wages. The number of people employed by state prisons fell in 2022 to its lowest point in more than two decades, according to U.S. census data. The Department of Corrections declined to comment on this article.

In a statement this week, the department said that conditions in the locked-down prisons had improved and that it had hired nearly 300 new guards in November and December. In total, the department has nearly 3,000 full-time positions for corrections officers. Last year, the legislature approved significant raises for guards, which have begun to reduce the number of unfilled openings. The move came two years after a similar proposal died amid partisan infighting, leading the percentage of unfilled openings at the state’s maximum-security institutions to climb sharply, exceeding 50% at four of the six prisons.

(Continued on page 5)



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## MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF NORTHEASTERN WISCONSIN AREA LOCAL #2247

**Date:** Wednesday, January 17, 2024

**Place:** Gallagher's West

President Kelly Heaney called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

A quorum was declared with 21 members in attendance.

Kelly Heaney led the Pledge of Allegiance and Sue Pranke gave the Invocation.

The following officers were present: President Kelly Heaney, Vice-President Jenny Ewald, Secretary/Treasurer Art Ciesielczyk, Recording Secretary Jenny Starry, Bay Breeze Editor Bill Kabacinski, and Motor Vehicle Craft Director Clade Adkins. Maintenance Craft Director Lance Bouyer was excused.

Minutes of the November 2023 meeting were printed in the Bay Breeze. A motion was made by Sebastian Zeutzius and seconded by Sue Pranke to accept the minutes. Motion passed.

The financial report for October was read by Treasurer Art Ciesielczyk.

**Executive Committee:** The e-board talked about the budget for the new year and cutting back to be able to send new officers to training. Sending up to 2 people to the 4-state convention in North Dakota, sending up to 4 people to the state convention in La Cross. Budgeting up to \$5,000 on the NEWAL annual picnic, opening to invite the mail handlers, carriers, and Oshkosh local to help with the picnic. Disciplining for absent from overtime and declining overtime when on the overtime desired list.

**Labor/Management:** Items discussed for December LM meeting were CPR training classes possibly at the beginning of the year, customer service sorting out 541 parcels after taking them over the counter, outer offices coming into the plant for overtime and not working on rotation, pool clerks are regularly being asked to work out of schedule and out of tour, the visitor from headquarters that toured the plant, new transportation schedule were the AO trucks will be picking up and dropping off earlier and if mail handler start times will change, lighting in the carrier section, Tour 1 non volunteers were still coming in and max listers not being used, moving the PSEs start time to 7pm.

For the January LM meeting the items discussed were customer service separating priority and ground advantage, but mail handlers are not, why did management give a service talk about treating every mail piece as if it were their own when non machinable mail is being run on machines and mail sitting in manual for up to 2 weeks. Supervisors still performing clerk work when reverting jobs, union stewards being denied union time when jobs are being reverted, job posting for expeditor say Milwaukee when it's for Green Bay, management train supervisors on handling grievances, request for information are not being an-

swered in a timely matter, no contract or permit for the vending company when the prices are high, speaker system in the back can be fixed, how register will be handled when trucks start bringing registers in on tour 2, the determining factor for when a sick call will be listed as scheduled or unscheduled and is there criteria that is used in this determination or is up to the individual supervisor, no current protocols for covid, will AFCs be used on tour 1 and 2 with the new transportation schedule, 2 new window clerks training, clerks that are on the overtime list that refuse overtime, the new optimization plan was discussed.

**Grievance:** A step 3 filed on DBCS staffing, grievance filled for denial of steward time, step 3 filed on overtime bypass, holiday schedule for maintenance, and grievances filled on discipline cases.

**Safety/Health:** People need to report accidents when they happen. Snow bank at the end of the employee exit is too high to see as exiting, be careful and use truck entrance while they work on the problem.

**Legislative:**

**OWCP:** People that have LWOP status of 80 or more hours you lose annual and sick leave benefits.

**Constitution:**

**New Members:** Ashley Kinney

**Lost Members:** Steffon Clayborn and Jessica Meza

### COMMUNICATIONS

Potentially a new ET job to be added because maintenance took over the BDS, VMF job posting, job reversions, and results on the election were discussed.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### NEW BUSINESS

New officers Samantha Fritz, Sebastian Zeutzius, and Emily Ewald were sworn in.

A motion was made by Jenny Ewald and seconded by Jessie Weber if the representatives come in from national that the union take them out to dinner. Motion passed.

A motion was made by Jenny Ewald and seconded by Sammie Fritz to send Molly Crevier to fiduciary training in Maryland to cover lost time, per diem, parking, transportation, registration, and lodging. Motion passed.

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## Overworked staff and angry prisoners

(continued from page 3)

When Joe Verdegan was hired as a corrections officer at the Green Bay Correctional Institution in the 1990s, the benefits were good, the hours predictable and the work manageable. “When you got hired there, you were set for life,” Verdegan said. That has changed tremendously over the past decade, he and other current and former guards said. The first big shift came around 2011, when former Governor Scott Walker signed Act 10, a sweeping law that gutted public employees’ ability to bargain collectively with the state, a step Walker said was needed to close a \$3.6 billion budget gap. The law broke most of Wisconsin’s powerful public-sector unions.

Guards lost the ability to negotiate for better working conditions. Take home pay shrunk because workers had to contribute more to pay for their benefits. A record number of state employees retired the year the law took effect. The employees who remained were forced to cover for them, often through mandatory overtime. Veteran officers began to lose prized seniority rights, like the ability to choose preferred shifts and working assignments, according to Jeff Hoffman, who worked as a corrections officer at Green Bay until he retired in 2023. Schedules were even more grueling for the newest hires. “They were getting jammed every single day, working 16-hour days, week after week after week, until they quit,” Hoffman recalled.

Between 2013 and 2022, annual overtime pay for officers and sergeants more than doubled, to \$64.8 million from \$28.1 million, according to an analysis of state payroll data. The high levels of overtime resulted in at least 714 officers and sergeants – roughly one out of every six guards and sergeants – being paid more than \$100,000 in 2022. Twenty-eight of them made more than the \$152,755 salary of the head of the department. “The ballooning costs reflected the legislature’s decision to prioritize overtime ahead of increasing pay to attract new hires,” said Ed Wall, who led the Department of Corrections from 2012 to 2016.

In 2015, Wall saw the staffing shortfalls as a brewing disaster and wrote a memo to Walker to warn him. “If we don’t address the recruitment and retention issues appropriately, we will continue to see OT escalate and fatigue get worse,” he wrote, adding that overworked guards and angry prisoners were a recipe for trouble. He said he handed it to Walker’s chief of staff. It never came up again.

The view in the department, Wall said in a recent interview was, “They’re not going to take us seriously until somebody gets killed.”

Wall resigned in 2016.

*Press Times – February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024.*



### A Quick Visit to Minneapolis

Union President Kelly Heany recently had the opportunity to visit with National Business Agents (NBAs) in Minneapolis, MN. This was a great way to discuss local union matters and to get opinions and advice from national representatives to help combat violations of our contract.



(Pictured from L to R Curtis Walker, Gregory Becker, Kelly, and Todd Elkerton)



A motion was made by Sebastian Zeutzius and seconded by Jesse Weber to send up to 4 people to state convention in La Cross to cover lost time, per diem, parking, transportation, registration, and lodging. Motion passed.

A motion was made by Sammi Fritz and seconded by Jesse Weber for the annual picnic at Pamperin Park for up to \$5,000. Invite Oshkosh local, letter carriers, and mail handlers. Motion passed.

A motion was made by Jenny Ewald and seconded by Sebastian Zeutzius to send up to 2 people to the 4-state convention in North Dakota to cover lost time, per diem, parking, transportation, registration, and lodging. Motion passed.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **NEXT MEETING**

A motion was made by Jon Hasart and seconded by Art Ciesielczyk to have the next meeting on Thursday, February 22nd at 2 pm at Gallagher's. Motion passed.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Greg Hensel and seconded by Art Ciesielczyk to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 3:33 pm.

The postal pulse survey drawing was won by Bryce Thomas and Joe Dvorachek.

The \$10 door prize was won by Jackie Kudick.

The \$380 rolling jackpot winner was Sammi Fritz, she was in attendance.

Attendees: See attached sign-in sheet.

Minutes submitted by Recording Secretary Emily Ewald.

## **Unions Built This Country**

On December 5, 1955, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) was founded. This union has been instrumental in fighting for the safety, fair pay, and working conditions of millions of workers across the country.

As we highlight all the hard work the AFL-CIO has done, we have to highlight another individual who has been a champion for union rights for the last 50 years-President Joe Biden.

The Biden Administration stands up for unions and fights to advance their priorities at every opportunity.

President Biden:

-Joined the UAW workers' picket line, becoming the first sitting U.S. president to join a labor union on strike.

-Increased funding to enforce labor laws and appointed leaders who are fighting to ensure all working people can exercise their rights on the job without being undermined by greedy anti-union corporations.

-Moved forward with new rules to increase wages and job security for workers whose jobs are government funded.

-Signed an executive order to promote the rights of federal employees to collectively bargain.

-Passed the Butch Lewis Act which protects the pensions of more than 350,000 union workers and retirees from 60% cuts.

-Is prioritizing the passage of the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act and the Public Sector Freedom to Negotiated Act. (Source: CAP Actions)

In Solidarity,

Rowan Gravlin, Digital Director, For Our Future WI.

The Bay Breeze  
PO Box 10323  
Green Bay, WI 54307-0323



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**Union Meeting**

**Tuesday March 26th, 2024**

Executive Board 6:30 pm

**General Meeting 7:00**

**Gallagher's Pizza West**

2655 W. Mason Street

Green Bay, WI 54304

**Food & Refreshments**

**\$10 Fleet Farm Gift Card Door Prize**

**\$120.00 Rolling Jackpot**