



## **10/08/2023 General Membership Meeting Minutes**

In Attendance: Jason Johnson, Jason Dornford, Chuck Brien, Gunnar Lenihan, Jose Taveras, Kim Idzinski, Michelle Fielding, Dave Buchholz, Conniebeth Myers and members of local 81408.

10:05 AM-Meeting Called to Order

10:06 AM-Pledge of Allegiance

10:08 AM-Review of Agenda

10:13 AM- Dave Buchholz and Kim Idzinski announcement: Dave Buchholz has stepped down as Trustee. Kim Idzinski was appointed to fulfill the remainder of the term.

10:18 AM-Introductions

President Johnson introduced the members of the Executive Board, Diversity Committee, Women's Committee, Safety committee, Organizing Committee, Political Action Committee and Shop Stewards of each bargaining unit

10:26 AM-Ice Breaker

10:50 AM- Election update by Election Committee Chair Conniebeth Myers:

The time for nominating petitions has come and gone. The following members have asked for nominating petitions, have obtained the required signatures and with no one else requesting a nominating petition, are therefore considered elected by nomination and affirmation for the next term starting 1/1/24. Vice President/Delegate: Jason Dornford, Financial Secretary-Treasurer/Delegate: Charles Brein, Recording Secretary/Delegate: Gunnar Lenihan, Trustees: Jose Taveras, Kim Idzinski, Michelle Fielding.

The position of President had two petitions requested. One candidate has turned in their petition with the required signatures and the committee awaits to see if the other will be turned in. If so, an election will take place.

Question: Shawanna Thomas: If an election does take place, when will that happen? Answer: December

Question: Steven Poston: How will the election take place? Answer: By mail ballot.

Question: Ken Stuppy: How will the ballots be sent? Answer: By secret ballot

Motion: Andrei Yermakov: Called to question the topic, approved by all

10:54 AM-State of the Union/2024 Budget: presented by President Johnson.

A moment of silence for members David Solomonoff & Anthony Insero and any other members who we lost through the year that we may not have been made aware of.

### **Previous Year**

1. In November the Local sent Steve Poston from the Diversity Committee to the IUE

Diversity Ambassador Meeting

2. In November President Johnson attended the CWA District 1 meeting.

3. In December a new three-year contract was ratified for Balester Optical, highlights include the largest raise the facility had ever seen, with an average of 8% increase in year one and an average of 3% increase in year two and three.

4. In January the local negotiated midterm raises at Visionworks for about 70 workers over the changes to the incentive.

5. Balester Optical won small lab of the year again for the third time in a row.

6. In March the Women's Committee in Long Island gave out flowers to the women of our local in honor of Women's Month.

7. In April a new three-year contract was ratified for Newtown Square. The contract was ratified at 93% and highlights include: \$1.35 moved over from incentive to base wage, \$250 sign on bonus, annual increases of 4.5%, 2.5%, 2.5%. Increases to Temporary Transfer, ABO and Minimums/Midpoints/Maximums. Changes to mandatory OT, night shift going back to 4-day work weeks and cementing new Holidays and Bereavement Time.

8. In May the Diversity Committee partnered with Brighter Schools Middle School to celebrate Diversity Day in the community.

9. In May Michelle Fielding graduated from the IUE Mentorship Program.

10. The local organized Plymouth Meeting Visionworks in November and secured a first contract in June that was ratified at 100%. Highlights Include: \$400 sign on bonus, annual increase of 3% and 2.75%. Grievance process (with arbitration for terminations), three-step write up process, cementing Holidays, Vacation and Personal Time.

11. In July President Johnson and some members of the Executive Board attended the CWA Convention.

12. In September the company (Davis Vision) offered a final offer to the Davis Vision Latham facility, which was rejected at 100% and a strike authorization was approved.

13. In September the Women's Committee took a collection for women's products.

14. New Stewards: Alim Leggett Davis Vision NTS, Carmen Gamble  
Plymouth Meeting Visionworks and Elizabeth Juarbe Westchester/NYC Visionworks.

15. Alvin Ellis has joined the Safety Committee.
16. Alim Leggett has joined the Diversity Committee.
17. A discount for CWA Retirees was secured in partnership with the CWA, Visionworks and Local 408. Cards are in the mail now for the first phase, which includes Westchester, NYC, Long Island and NJ.
18. Throughout the year President Johnson has visited all 125+ locations for the third time since elected.

### **Coming Year**

1. Steward Training
2. IUE Training Davis Vision, NTS
3. Contract Negotiations Value Vision
4. Contract Negotiations Visionworks
5. Quarterly Lab Visits
6. IUE Divisional Meeting
7. CWA District 1 Meeting
8. CWA President Meeting/Political Conference
9. AFL-CIO Biannual Meeting
10. GMM

New Steward Carmen Gamble of Plymouth Meeting spoke about the benefits of being a union member for the first time. This included seeing her schedule not being changed at the last minute and no more bullying by the manager.

In Favor Response: Jose Taveras spoke on the mic in favor of the support behind the strike authorization at Davis Vision Latham. This included how a 100% strike vote is unheard of, as many people live paycheck to paycheck and are often afraid to stand up for themselves. But this vote signified to the company that we are unified and will not tolerate a contract with sub-par wage increases and takeback.

Question: Andrei Yermakov: Is the committee fighting to have part of the incentive in the Latham contract negotiations added to base pay like what was done at NTS? Answer: Unlike NTS, the incentive isn't enough to make doing that worth any value, additionally, incentives was not listed as a priority in the surveys or meetings held, so the focus is more on increases to wages instead of moving money, so it is unlikely that is a direction we would go, but never say never.

## **2024 Budget Proposal**

IUE-CWA Divisional Meeting: \$20,000

CWA District 1 Meeting: \$2,500

CWA Presidents' Meeting: \$3,000

GMM: \$15,000

Quarterly Lab Visits: \$8,000

Quarterly Executive Board Meetings: \$10,000

Supplies: \$5,000

Steward Training: \$62,500

Women's Committee: \$5,000

Diversity Committee: \$5,000

Safety Committee: \$5,000

Organizing Committee: \$5,000

Political Action Committee: \$10,000

Value Vision Contract Negotiations: \$5,000

Empire Vision Contract Negotiations: \$50,000

Administration and Contract Services: As needed

11:42 AM- Budget adopted by all

11:43 AM-Minutes of Executive Board Meetings presented by Recording Secretary Gunnar Lenihan with reports furnished.

11:44 AM-Minutes adopted

11:45 AM-Trustee Audit Review presented by Jose Taveras with reports furnished.

11:47 AM-Trustee Audit Review adopted

11:48 AM-Treasury Report presented by Treasurer Chuck Brien with reports furnished.

11:50 AM-Treasury Report Adopted

11:51 AM-Investment Report presented by Treasurer Chuck Brien with reports furnished.

11:52 AM-Investment Report Adopted

11:53 AM-LM-2 Report presented by Michelle Fielding with reports furnished.

11:54 AM- LM-2 Report adopted

11:55 AM- Diversity Committee Report presented by Committee Chair Jose Taveras.

Alim Leggett of NTS is a prospective candidate to fill a vacancy in the Diversity Committee.

The committee's goal is to bring awareness of diversity in our local. The committee also partners in the community to make a difference and make the labor movement visible. Our Facebook page posts relevant content to bring awareness of diversity, and we intend to recognize Indigenous Peoples' Day as well as Columbus Day. In the past year, we have partnered with Street Soldiers Schenectady in the community to distribute goods to the needy. We also partner with Brighter Choice Charter Schools in their annual Diversity Day march and fair. Next year we plan to be even more involved in that effort. We are planning a training day on implicit bias, which is a form of bias that occurs automatically and unintentionally, that nevertheless affects judgments, decisions, and behaviors. Our hope is to have this training provided for the Newtown Square Lab location in the near future and then hopefully expand from there.

12:00 PM- Women's Committee Report Presented by Committee Chair Carmel O'Hanlon

Women's Committee Shirts have been delivered.

In March/April flowers and chocolate were delivered to some of the Long Island stores.

During the Months of August-October, a collection was conducted for women's hygiene products and scheduled to be delivered to women's shelters soon.

The Committee is going to continue its goal to support our women in the workplaces within our union. We will continue to follow through with the projects that we have done annually and add more projects as we go. We will strive to have at least one project per quarter.

Our next two goals are to implement a Union cookbook and crock pot gift for mothers coming back from maternity or reentering the workforce who are "nominated" by another member. The idea includes having the members submit a crock pot recipe of their own to create a cookbook to deliver as a gift to the nominees.

The Committee would also like to plan a movie night with a union focused movie. (Harlan County War was suggested).

We have some union members who are interested in getting more involved, and Carmel will be reaching out to them to let them know about what they can do to help.

12:04 PM -Political Committee Report presented by Committee Chair Jason Dornford.

Progress in vetting candidates to support in upcoming elections has been slow which is not surprising in an off-year election cycle. Committee will be shifting focus to putting pressure on candidates to support pro-labor and pro-union legislation. The committee remains committed to joining IUE/CWA actions toward this cause.

Committee chair Jason Dornford and member Andrei Yermakov will be attending the CWA political action conference in 2024.

Shirts have been received to show our local's presence when taking action and support of the committee.

The PAC was able to secure donations for the Women's Committee feminine hygiene products drive and is committed to supporting the other committees in their actions. (The PAC has your back.)

The committee will be working on showing the effects of the collective action of Unions and the events that led to the numerous actions and strikes occurring in 2023 and posting on their Facebook page.

12:10 PM-Organizing Committee Report presented by Committee Chair Kim Idzinski.

Internal Organizing- The committee organized a show of support via Facebook and a text chain to Visionworks Union members for Davis Vision Latham members currently undergoing contract negotiations. Members were asked to wear red and Local 408 pins on Friday 9/28/23. Pictures of members in red were posted on Facebook. We are asking Newtown Square to join in support by wearing red on Fridays.

Davis Vision Latham has rejected the company's final offer at 100% and approved a strike authorization. The company expressed interest to get back to the bargaining table.

External Organizing- The local has successfully organized Plymouth Meeting, PA Visionworks and secured a contract that was ratified 100%. The contract is available for viewing on the local's website [www.opticalworkers.org](http://www.opticalworkers.org)

Facebook presence- The Committee has a Facebook page entitled IUE-CWA Local 81408 Organizing Committee. It continues to grow and is currently at 53 members.

Organizing Committee shirts have arrived and been distributed to committee members.

12:14 PM-Safety Committee Report presented by Committee Chair Conniebeth Myers.

Jason Johnson nominated Conniebeth Myers to take over the role as Chairperson of the Safety Committee. The nomination was seconded by Gunnar Lenihan, was in favor by all and Conniebeth accepted the position.

In response to the fentanyl crisis, Ken Stuppy suggested having the company have Narcan available in all locations and provide training.

Conniebeth stated it is something that can be suggested to the companies, but the union can't force the company to do so.

President Johnson brought up that NYS offers two free Narcan nasal sprays per household and suggested that we post on the Facebook page to the members where to obtain that information. Also that the Safety Committee should research if PA, RI, MA and NH also offer this and if so, post that information on the Facebook page.

IUE-CWA will be sending staff to the Newtown Square, PA lab on November 1st and 2nd, 2023, to work with management and the workers to help close the gap in how old school and new school employees work with one another and the need to find common ground to work better together. This will be the first of its kind training for the local, bringing the IUE, management and the members together.

12:21 PM-Door Prizes: \$100 Gift cards: Mary O'Connell, Alim Leggett. Rain jacket: Kim Idzinski. CWA jacket: Rhonda Stefan. IUE jacket: Cathy Croce.

12:28 PM- Adjournment