



10/20/2024 General Membership Meeting Minutes

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

10:13 AM-**Meeting Called to Order.**

10:14 AM-**Pledge of Allegiance.**

10:15 AM-**Review of Agenda.**

10:16 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.

10:23 AM-**Ice Breaker/Pictures.**

10:47 AM-**State of the Union/2025 Budget:** Presented by President Johnson.

Previous Year

1. **Davis Vision Albany Contract:** A new 3-year contract was ratified in October at 91%. Highlights include; large increase to minimums, at least 9% wage increase over the 3 years (including raises returning to October). New incentive for non-call center, internet stipend and separate paths for discipline. A discussion about AHT was also discussed.

2. **Elections:** The following members were elected/Reelected into office to serve a new 3- year term Commencing on January 1 2024. President Jason Johnson, Vice President Jason Dornford, Treasurer/Financial Secretary Charles Brein, Recording Secretary Gunnar Lenihan and Trustees Jose Taveras, Kim Idzinski, Michelle Fielding.

3. **Davis Vision NTS Management and Members Training:** A first time training was conducted at Davis Vision NTS by the IUE on how to bridge the gap between generations.

4. **Steward Training:** In the fall of 2023 over 15 stewards attended Steward Training, learning how to better serve the membership.

5. **Park Sher Optical Contract:** In February a new 4-year contract was ratified at 100%. Highlights include; 11% wage increase over 4 years, large increase to the minimums (where some will see \$3-5 per hour increase). Increased contributions to medical premiums, compensation for apprentices and sponsors, changes to store transfers.

6. **Executive Board Training:** In February, President Johnson, Recording Secretary Gunnar Lenihan, Trustees Michelle Fielding, Jose Taveras and Sergeant of Arms Conniebeth Myers participated in IUE Executive Board training to insure the newly elected/re-elected officers continued to run the local properly over the new term.

7. **Italian Union:** In February, President Johnson accompanied the IUE in welcoming the Italian Unions that represent the workers of Essilor in Italy. Discussion over the differences were held along with visiting a few labs in Georgia.

8. **Constitution Changes:** In February, the Local voted on a new constitution to insure the protection of the members rights.

9. **IUE Diversity Ambassador Training:** In March, Diversity Committee member Alim Leggett Attended the IUE Diversity Ambassadors Training.

10. **IUE National Women's Program:** In May, Women's Committee Chairperson Carmel O'Hanlon attended the IUE Nations Women's Program.

11. **Partnered with Brighter Schools Charter School for Diversity Day:** In May, Diversity Committee Chairperson and member Jose Taveras and Steve Poston attend the Brighter Schools Charter School to participate in their Diversity Day.

12. **Empire Visionworks Contract:** In July a new 3-year contract was ratified at 91%. Highlights include; At least 9% wage increases over 3 years, large increases to minimums (with some seeing as much as a 10% wage increase in 2024). Increases to the 401k, front desk workers now all receiving exam incentive, apprentices no longer starting on the bottom of the pay structure when becoming licensed and insuring no additional black out period or the elimination of the guaranteed 35 hours for full time employees. A discussion was also held about the Removal of chairs from the "desk with wings".

13. **IUE Divisional Meeting:** In June, President Johnson and Trustees Jose Taveras, Michelle Feilding and Kim Idzinski Attended the IUE Divisional Meeting.

14. **CWA Presidents Meeting and Political Conference:** In June, President Johnson and Vice President Jason Dornford attended the CWA Presidents Meeting and Legislation Political Action Conference, where they met multiple representatives of Congress, pushing to try and get pro Union bills passed in Congress.

15. **Women's Committee:** A collection of Women's products was held in September by the Women's Committee, to be distributed to Women in need throughout the communities we work in.

16. **Newest Steward:** In April, the Local appointed the newest Steward to the Local from the Davis Vision Albany bargaining unit, Denise Drake.

17. **Executive Board Meetings/Lab Visits/Virtual Visits/and Zoom Membership Meetings:** Were held quarterly throughout the year.

Coming Year

1. CWA District 1 Meeting
2. Quarterly Lab Visits
3. Latham Quarterly Zoom Meetings
4. Membership Quarterly Zoom Meetings
5. Visionworks Plymouth Meeting Contract
6. Quarterly Executive Board Meetings
7. CWA Biannual Convention
8. Steward Training
9. GMM
10. Balester Optical Contract

2025 Budget Proposal

CWA District 1 Meeting: \$3,000

CWA Convention: \$12,000

GMM: \$25,000

Quarterly Lab Visits: \$10,000

Quarterly Executive Board Meetings: \$20,000

Supplies: \$5,000

Steward Training: \$65,000

Women's Committee: \$5,000

Diversity Committee: \$5,000

Safety Committee: \$5,000

Organizing Committee: \$5,000

Political Action Committee: \$5,000

Plymouth Meeting Contract Negotiations: \$5,000

Balester Optical Contract Negotiations: \$5,000

Administration and Contract Services: As needed

11:26 AM- Budget adopted by all.

11:27 AM-**Minutes of Executive Board:** Meeting Minutes presented by Recording Secretary Gunnar Lenihan with reports furnished (Including Presidents Salary).

11:32 AM-Minutes adopted

11:33 AM-**Trustee Audit Review:** Presented by Trustee Michelle Fielding with reports furnished.

11:38 Trustee report adopted

11:39 AM-**Treasury Report:** Presented by President Johnson with reports furnished.

11:44 AM-Treasury Report Adopted

11:45 AM-**Investment Report:** Presented by President Johnson with reports furnished.

11:50 AM-Investment Report Adopted

11:51 AM-**LM-2 Report:** Presented by Trustee Michelle Fielding with reports furnished.

11:56 AM- LM-2 Report adopted

11:57 AM- **Diversity Committee Report:** Presented by Committee Chair Jose Taveras.

In May, The Diversity Committee partnered with Brighter Choice Charter School for a Community Diversity Day. We participated in a parade and a bilingual reading and had a table set up at the expo sharing the diversity in Unions and what we do in our community.

The committee is in discussion with Brighter Choice Charter School to set up a Spanish/English reading schedule for children who English is a second language year-round.

In March, committee member Alim Leggett Participated in the IUE Diversity Ambassadors trip to Washington D.C.

The Committee is visible in the community by partnering with Street Soldiers Schenectady to distribute good to the needy.

The Committee has a Facebook page and posts content relevant to diversity awareness.

12:02 PM- **Women's Committee Report:** Presented by Committee Chair Carmel O'Hanlon

Welcomed our newest Committee members, Bethany & Denise from Albany Visionworks/Davis Vision.

Union Cookbook is still in the works to be finalized and given out with the Crockpots to members coming back to work from maternity leave. Feminine hygiene collection is in full swing.

Carmel discussed her trip to Chicago in May. Philitia Carlton was a speaker and had an amazing journey of her own to share and inspire attendees with.

The Women's Committee continues to embrace ideas to bring ALL of members together to be united. They are open to explore input from all Local 81408 Members to build morale and a sense of unity.

When volunteering in our communities, wear your Union shirt. Let you community see our presence there.

Michelle attended an Events Training class at the IUE Divisional Meeting, which touched on liabilities and budgets, as well as how to proceed with planning events within the Local. (All ideas or plans have to go through President Johnson for final approval prior to any commitments on events)

"Water the Flowers, Not the Weeds" was an expression used encouraging us to embrace those that want to be involved.

It was pointed out that Davis Vision Albany is now work from home and not all of our members meet in person day to day. Suggesting's for some upstate area events to have a get together.

12:07 AM -**Political Action Committee Report:** Presented by Committee Chair Jason Dornford.

In June, President Johnson and Vice President Jason Dornford attended the CWA Legislative Political Action Conference in Washington DC. We saw several inspiring speeches given by Senators, House Representatives and the Labor Secretary. President Johnson was asked to join Representative Hakeem Jeffries on stage which was awesome recognition for our Local as well as our Diversity Committee.

We also join others from various Locals to lobby Pro Labor bills to Representatives Joe Morelle and Paul Tonko. These bills included.

1. Tax fairness for Workers Act.
2. No Tax Breaks for Union Busting.
3. No Tax Breaks for Outsourcing.
4. Empowering Striking Workers Act.

Our Local does not make endorsements of candidates for office, however per rules of the CWA Constitution we do share information provided by the IUE & CWA on our Political Action Page along with a listing of candidates who have shown by word and vote their dedication to Labor and Unions.

PAF/COPE: PAF is a non-partisan political action committee that fights for workers' political power. Labor advocates need our financial support if they are going to fight the interest of big corporations. This is how we can greatly level the playing field of finance that corporations pour into weakening Unions.

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

Internal Organizing: Discussions were held to participation in the Albany Labor Day parade for 2025. We will see if we can get interest from the membership to participate for next year.

Local Community Involvement: The Committee is in the early stages of planning to participate in food bank collection for people with food insecurities in the 8 regions of our local. We discussed possible virtual options or donation collections. The Committee will partner with the other Committees to identify possible organizations to partner with. Anyone who would like to volunteer to help out should contact the Organizing Committee. If successful, we would like to make this an annual event.

Empire Visionworks Union Logos: The newly ratified Empire Visionworks contract included the addition of a Local 408 logo on the Visionworks Stores entry doors. The logos arrived at the locations. The Committee will partner with the Visionworks Stewards to make sure the logos were installed at all locations.

External Organizing: Recently, the Local has received several inquiries from people seeking to organize their workplace. Their contact information has been passed onto the IUE with hopes to try and organize some of these locations.

12:17 PM-**Safety Committee Report:** Presented by Committee Chair Conniebeth Myers.

Fire Safety Awareness month: The Safety Committee posted on Union page about October being fire safety awareness month and about products you can buy for extinguishing fires.

Visionworks Lanyards: The Union Invoked bargaining rights “sighting safety” over Lanyards provided to the workers to display their name tag that did not “break away”. Visionworks has agreed to replace those lanyards with ones that are able to breakaway and adjust.

At Empire Visionworks, the new CBA saw the removal of chairs for the “front desk with wings” however the Union has been making sure that if the Company expects their employees to stand while working at the front desk, they are to ensure that the front desk is properly set up to “standing heights” based on OSHA recommendations; which include fatigue mats and proper height for monitors and keyboards. The company has also allowed front desk workers a break from standing while pulling insurances and prescreening.

Committee Member, Alvin Ellis was added the Company Safety Committee at the NTS Bargaining Unit. He will begin sharing the meeting notes from the facility to the Committee when the Company holds meetings.

The next time the IUE offers the “OSHA 10 training”, the local will send Alvin to attend.

President Johnson presented safety tokens to Conniebeth Myers and Alvin Ellis for their work in insuring safety throughout the Local & Bargaining Units.

Question- Andrei Yermakov: Is the company going to provide CPR training for all employees? **Answer,** we are not currently aware if any of the companies are providing that at this time. What we can say is company are not required to provide training, but we do know that select managers in some of the bargaining units were trained in CPR.

12:22 PM-**Door Prizes:** \$100 Gift card: Diane Fitzsimmons. IUE/CWA briefcase: Andrei Yermakov. IUE/CWA travel mug: Sherri Snair. IUE/CWA polo shirts: Miriam Bellamy and Carmel O’Hanlon.

12:30 PM- **Adjournment**