

National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 421

December 12, 2024

General Branch Meeting

The regular branch meeting of Alamo Branch 421 was held on December 12, 2024, via ZOOM (virtual meeting) and in person. The meeting was called to order by President Homer Hernandez at 7:05 pm.

Invocation by Burnie Miller

Pledge of Allegiance Gabriel Guerrero

Roll Call

Dennis Alltop Recording Secretary, Assistant Recording Secretary Kevin Welch was excused, and all other officers were present. The minutes for November have been presented, may I get a motion to accept them? Gerry Aldorf, second by Alex Alcora.  
(MOTION NOT VOTED ON)

Dennis read a Christmas Card sent in by Jean and Elizabeth Goodwin.

Dennis Alltop read a letter sent in by Ernest Gonzalez to the Branch Board Members regarding the soliciting of stewards for Tejada Post office. As of December, the Branch successfully solicited and recruited stewards for the Tejada Post Office and removed me from my duties within the office. These stewards are City Carrier Assistance and an office with management that is unfairly hostile to the Union stewards is a concern of mine that these two individuals are not prepared to deal with the obstacles. They're about to be presented with given that the solicitation to have these stewards take over our duties without consulting me during my medical recovery seems to be political in nature. It nevertheless is the situation the branch leadership has opted to take. I have continued to receive phone calls from carriers who are now stuck with discipline that I have determined procedurally defectively. It is now my request that the Executive Board of the NALC Alamo Branch 421 institute a new policy. A policy that every steward in the branch swears an oath to their membership. Although it's only a small step, it is my hope that this pledge. Was and still upon our shops towards the importance of their obligation to start contracting force enforcement. In my opinion, our stewards need to be held to the same standard as the board. Due to my recent string of medical procedures, I'm not sure if I'll be able to attend the December General Branch meeting. I would also like to ask that. This policy is carried out by Branch 421 membership meeting in person and that all stewards signed their oaths before January 1st, 2025. I was officially moved that this body accept the following. I Ernest Gonzalez moved that Alamo Branch 421 would adopt the policy of requiring all stewards to sign. Goes to their respective memberships before any steward can be designated to

handle grievances duties past the informal a meeting filing date. The oath shall be read as such. I, the steward's name having been appointed or elected a steward of the National Association of Letter Carriers, Alamo Branch 421, do solemnly declare that for my term I will work with the officers of the branch to represent our members and fulfillment with the obligation responsibilities of my position shop steward to the best of my ability in accordance with the NALC USPS National Agreement. Whether Chief Steward, Shop Steward or Alternate Shop Steward in title, I will maintain and uphold the dignity of our union's members. I will always keep confidential all matters concerning the affairs of the union that are brought to my attention. Will promptly deliver to the branch or components all monies, records and other property of the Union in my position at the close of my term in office. I understand that training may be provided to me by the Alamo Branch Mutual Benefits Association or NALC entity and this training. Could come to come at a cost to any one of these entities paid or with union membership dues in the event that I should further my career with the United States Postal Service and seek or accept a higher or lateral level position outside of the city carrier craft duties. I understand that this training may result in opportunities that will personally benefit the me financially. I accept the responsibility to personally pay back any costs associated with any training going back to a maximum of two years from accepting or seeking a higher or lateral assignment outside the city or carrier craft duties. I agree to pay this total sum for these costs within a six-month period from accepting or seeking such assignments. I also accept the financial responsibility of the administrative cost of Alamo Branch 421. The Mutual Benefits Association or national NALC entities may incur, should I fail to pay these monies back within a six-month period and collect attempts to sue. And then there's a line for a signature. It is time to tear out the practice of allowing management to infiltrate this union by soliciting officers and stewards with promises and financially lucrative opportunities based on training and money that was paid for by our members hard earned dues. I hope that this body will understand the apartments of this message. They will send to anyone hoping to accept these duties for personal gain rather than holding true the principles our union representatives are meant to stand for. Now this is in no way stated that any NALC member may not further their career ambitions with the Postal Service. However, the cost associated with the training for that career will come from the Postal Service. They themselves or from you personally and solidarity Earnest Gonzalez. It was also read at the Officers Meeting, and the Officers voted to table it till we get a decision from National with regards to violating the constitution.

Application for Membership – Vice President Esteban Ramirez

Current membership count 1207 plus approximately 12 signed up but not on the roster yet, 497 retirees, 142 Gold Members, and 41 retirees that have not submitted 1189's

yet. The branch has four new members, they are Johnny Jonson, Joe Munoz, Johnnie Rodriguez, and Jacob Sandella.

Unfinished Business – President Homer Hernandez, none.

New Business – President Homer Hernandez,

Ernest Gonzales, Beacon Hill, made a motion to have an oath for union stewards at Branch 421. Jim Ruetze 2<sup>Nd</sup>. I Ernest Gonzalez, move that Alamo Branch 421 Adopt the policy of requiring all steward sign and swear an oath to their respective membership before any steward can be designated to handle grievance duties past the informal step. A meeting or filing date. The oath shall read as such. I (Steward Name) having been appointed or elected as Steward of the National Association of Letter Carriers, Alamo Branch 421 do solemnly swear that for my term i will work with officers of this branch to represent our members and fulfill the obligations and responsibilities of my position as Shop Steward/USPS National Agreement Whether Chief shop steward, shop steward or alternate shop steward and title, I will maintain and uphold the dignity of our unions members. I will always keep confidential all matters concerning the affairs of the union that are brought to my attention. I will promptly deliver to the branch of components all monies, records and other property. To the union in my possession at close to my term. I understand the training may be provided to me by the Alamo branch, the National Business Agent or National NLC entity at this training and this training may come at a cost to any one of these entities paid for with union membership dues in the event that I should further my career. With the United States Postal Service and seek or accept a higher or lateral level position outside of the city letter carrier craft. I understand that this training may result in opportunities that will personally benefit me financially. I accept the responsibility to personally pay back any costs associated with any training going back a maximum of two. Years from accepting or seeking a higher or lateral assignment outside city carrier craft duties. I agreed to pay the total of these costs within a six-month period from accepting or seeking such assignments. I also accept the financial responsibility of any administrative cost Branch 421, the national business agent or. National NAACP entities may incur should I fail to pay these monies back with any six-month period and

collection attempts ensue signature date signature of officer administering the date. That's my motion. Ernest Gonzales, all right, it is time to tear out the practice of allowing management to infiltrate this union by soliciting officers and stewards with promises of financially lucrative opportunities based on training and money that was paid for with union membership earned dues. I hope this body will understand the importance of messages like this being sent to anyone hoping to accept these duties for personnel. Again, rather than holding true to the principles our unions representatives are meant to stand for. Now, this is in no way stating that an NLC member may not further their career ambitions with the Postal Service. However, the cost associated with training you for that career will come from the Postal Service themselves or from you personally. Thank you.

Tony Boyd, Retired, brother Ernest was correct as far as the 1<sup>st</sup> interpretation. The branch officers gave a recommendation to table the motion, and then it goes before the membership to decide from there, after the motion is made on the floor. I would like to make a motion that we table this issue until we get guidance from national, because there's a whole list of legalities here pertaining to this issue, and just some differences of opinion on this. I think we need some guidance from national before we go ahead and make a decision on this.

Louise Jordan, Thousand Oaks, 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion to table it.

Jim Ruetze, Lock hill, in favor of tabling the motion, I don't see any harm in postponing this until we get some guidance.

Ernest Gonzales, against the motion to table, for example Carmichael Lewis and the issue with the branch funds. We found no issue with trying to seek legal apparatus to hold him accountable for those branch funds.

Raul Reyes, NECA, against motion to table it, it was my understanding that Ernest Gonzales made a motion, Jim Ruetze 2<sup>nd</sup>., then Tony Boyd came in put in another motion to table it. The decision from the branch officers wasn't a unanimous decision to table the actual motion.

Richard Gould, Lock hill, for the motion to table it. Simply because stewards are elected in our branch, and even if they weren't you're going down a very slippery road here in possibly violating the Constitution with this motion and I agree with Tony Boyd 100% on that. I think it's best to get guidance from headquarters before we decide to vote on something that could possibly violate the Constitution.

Tony Boyd, Retired, just to clarify there was a motion to table, and that always supersedes a motion that's on the floor for the members to decide on. Secondly, there's a question of whether we can request reimbursement or not versus a national convention, and this is precisely why we should go to National and make sure that we get clear guidance.

Alex Alcora, Retired, in favor of tabling the motion. Stewards get training and perform their duties while they are a steward and then if they decide to go into management, well I don't like that. But what are you going to argue about if you take them to court? That they didn't perform their duties as stewards. Homer Hernandez, Branch President, in favor of tabling the motion. I know it's going to be against the constitution. No policy can be made but by me. I don't appreciate you saying we solicited these CCA to become stewards, I didn't even know that they were running for steward. I appointed you there as a steward because you weren't a steward anywhere else. I'm asking you to drop this and come talk to me about this, you're going about it all wrong.

Ernest Gonzales, Beacon Hill, things. first of, what to piggyback of what, um, Alex Alcora was saying, you know that you guys went after Carmichael Lewis because he went against his dereliction of his duties, which is exactly what this has to do with whether or not a steward is going to perform their duties or whether or not they're going to get trained solely because they want to perform or they want to get. Trained in a certain apparatus with our union dues so that they can seek a financially lucrative position for themselves. That's 1/2 the idea that well these people are elected like what Richard said, so are delegates. Carmichael Lewis was elected to be a delegate and y'all

still opted to go after him and you used. You can try to get him to pay that money back. That's 2-3. You know what we argue? The argument is you are going to use union dues to prefer to perform training that should be provided to you by the US Postal Service. If you want to be arguing against union membership and arguing in favor or against the contract, the Postal Service should be. The one who gets the burden of providing that training for you, not the National Association of Letter Carriers. You know, 3 The idea that this did not have a solicitation of stewards and the idea that I'm going to be called out. I specifically remember, Homer, that you sent me a message that was meant for Esteban Ramirez and not for me because you were upset that he was soliciting stewards at Dobie station. Against Cornelia Lashley and you accidentally sent it to the wrong person. So don't tell me that he's not doing that, this what's going on now is I'm talking what's going on now is that now you guys are starting to pin certain parts of this union against one another to form factions, which I really don't appreciate speaking about what doesn't be appreciated.

Homer Hernandez, Branch President, didn't you put it out on this media stuff stating that Tony Boyd and all of them didn't give you any proper training and so on and so on?

Ernest Gonzales, Beacon Hill, there was not any national training prior to last year. That is what it is.

Homer Hernandez, Branch President, Advanced formal training and beyond am I sending you to that?

Ernest Gonzales, Beacon Hill, I haven't gotten to any formal and beyond yet.

Homer Hernandez, Branch President, am I not sending you to the training?

Ernest Gonzales, as far as I know, yes. But you still reserve the right as the president to pull that at any point that you want to. I'm having a serious trust issue right now with the administration that we currently have. I'm going back to what we're talking about. If you go ahead and look at the training record that makes anyone like Kathy Ruffo, like Adam Reyna or like a Lenea Segovia, they're entire training apparatus came from us. The Postal Service did not train them in anything prior to them seeking their position in management

Now, I'm against tabling. I think that again the arguments that have been brought up could also have been brought up for the Carmichael Lewis situation which have never been brought up until now. It seems like more so is going on now that all y'all are upset that I'm the one bringing up this motion, which again I really don't appreciate but it is what it is. With that being said, I call for the question on whether we're going to table this issue. Erin McLaughlin, AMF, 2<sup>Nd</sup>. Dan Torres, Retired, made amendment to table the motion till next month and no later. 39 for tabling the motion, 16 against. (Motion Passes to table motion)

Raul Reyes. NECA, said that Jerry Garcia, Boerne is interested in going to the Formal A training and beyond whenever that decision is made.

Burnie Miller, Retired, point of information, you can't table a motion if you vote on the motion before the motion to table the motion is made and voted on.

Raul Reyes, NECA, I believe at the last meeting the previous administration said that they never paid any late fees. So, we went through the reports and looked at 2022 and 2023 and there were fees, fines and assessments totaling \$531.53. So, it's been a problem even before Homer Hernandez took over as branch President.

Jim Ruetze, Lockhill, said that what Burnie Miller stated was in fact what Tony Boyd stated with regards to the tabling of a motion.

Louise Jordan, Thousand Oaks, made a clarification for Raul Reyes, of the \$520 that year, we paid \$20 a month in fees because we don't maintain a balance of \$50,000.

Raul Reyes, NECA, these say City Card, AT&T, so they have nothing to do with the minimum bank balance you just spoke of.

Ernest Gonzales, Beacon Hill, point of information, technically I am the Parliamentarian, I'm sure I won't be much longer after this. But to clarify the process from motion to table a motion was done correctly.

Cornelia Lashley, Dobie, spoke about the late fees from the previous administration. I found a check that was not made out correctly. Instead of \$484, it was only \$84 and that created a late fee as well.

Erin McLaughlin, AMF, spoke about how the meeting started and how it's going and getting into a tit for tat on issues. We should be dealing with what we must deal with, which is the contract, leaving everybody's personal opinions out of it. Let's deal with what we must deal with and move on. If we go against management, then we go back to the contract. I'm getting tired of the whole tit for tat, who's doing what and who's not doing? The disrespectfulness needs to stop. Let's stick to handling the business like we did back in the day.

Homer Hernandez, President, spoke about what Nancy Feldt brought stuff up last meeting and that is part of the reason some members are upset. The current administration won, and my other brothers and sisters lost. We need to stop fighting among each other. I asked if I and the new executive board could come in and get trained and see how the past officers do things, and I was rejected as well as the new executive board. We've been doing this for 11 months now and we are doing the best that we can for the membership. Nancy Feldt, Retired, spoke about the minutes and financial reports being done on time.

Keelan Kelton, Beacon Hill, spoke about getting business done at the union meetings and leaving the bickering aside. Focus on fighting management regarding violations of the contract. Also stated that he is an injured carrier who has not gotten paid his COP.

President Homer Hernandez, clarified that occupational health has taken a different path and is denying all COP. I've had 13 this year and I have 3 left, and you are one of them.

Gabriel made a proposal that the branch leadership pick someone to draft a letter recommending uniform reform to be sent next National Convention, specifically dealing with



uniform allowance because of the increase in cost of items has failed to keep up with high item prices.

Ernest Gonzales, Beacon Hill, asked about his payment for ZOOM recording camera and microphone updates at the Union Hall. President Homer Hernandez stated that Dennis Alltop has mailed him a check.

Abraham Heikal, Schertz, complained about not getting help when his stewards were on vacation.

Raul Reyes, NECA, stated Carlos Harris and some members from Valley High are trying to log on to ZOOM. Also spoke about the business of being a trustee and bringing up the late fee's information up to the entire membership so they know where the money is going.

Karen Schoolcraft, Alamo Heights, spoke about Ernest Gonzales issue with stewards receiving training and going into management because of it, also brought issues with management blocking of the calendar for leave when we've already won a grievance on that, denying leave during route checks, vehicles not being cleaned, CCA's casing up mail on Sundays.

Ernest Gonzales, Beacon Hill, spoke about receiving steward training from the union, and that training is going to benefit management if that steward decides to go into management.

#### Reports of Special and Standard Committees

Dan Torres, AFL-CIO, central labor council meeting was held on November 20, 2024, in attendance from NALC were Louise Jordan and me (Dan Torres), the coalition of Black Trade unionists having a membership drive starting in January, new officers were elected in November, Louise Jordan was elected second trustee. Dues for active members are \$35 a year and \$15 for retirees. Labor Council for Latin American advancement is also having a membership drive beginning in January, active employees pay \$40 a year, retirees \$20 a year, and students \$5. Our Bylaws committee is going to be in January. Dan Torres to write a letter of support to the city council about San Antonio Independent School districts demands for support for affordable housing in the district, a parking garage and a new school. Mary Pardo,

NALC Health Benefits, spoke about open season to be extended until Friday December 13, 2024.

#### Good of the Association

Raul Reyes, NECA, spoke regarding suicides that are happening in the post office. Cornelia Lashley, Dobie, would like some information on suicides to help a carrier at her station. Bernie Miller, Retired, spoke about donating to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF). Dan Torres, Retired, spoke about (EAP) Employee Assistance Program. Joe Stevens, Nimitz Station, followed up to Raul Reyes, with stress created by management. Abraham Selma, Post Office, EAP doesn't really do much. President Homer Hernandez spoke on the safety of our carriers, Texas House Bill 1572 would upgrade from a misdemeanor to a felony for robbery of a letter carrier. Thanked all the union stewards, new officers, carriers for all their hard work throughout the year. Spoke about the Social Security Fairness Act, encouraged everyone to call senators so we can get that bill passed for our retired carriers that are eligible to collect social security that aren't currently collecting it.

#### Financial Secretary's Report

Jose Rodriguez, Financial Secretary

Louise Jordan, Thousand Oaks, requested an amended report for next month. It appears that we have income from the Ted Carter Fund of \$5,746 dollars. And I don't know how we get income from Ted Carter, but we also have an expense from federal health benefits of \$10,248, which I'm sure was supposed to be income. And the \$5,000 for Ted Carter was supposed to be an expense based on 50% of the health benefits that we give Ted Carter every year. So, I'm asking for those corrections and on page 21 and 2 the recaps for the balances don't match what the balances are and the November reports the account balances as of September 30th so if we could just. Take those few corrections and have an amended report for next month. I'd be happy. Thank you.

Jose Rodriguez, financial secretary, can I get a motion to pass October's financial report as presented? Alex Alcora, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Juan Cruz vote taken (Motion Passes) We're going to go ahead and amend November's financial report for next month.

Ted Carter Fund collected \$19.00

Burnie Miller won the Dollar Pot \$15.00

Burnie Miller won the Jacket

Motion to Adjourn meeting? Motion made by Erin Mclaughin 2<sup>Nd</sup> Esteban Ramirez  
9:01.