

AWKA UNION USA/CANADA
LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 07, 2013

The meeting came to order at 5:25 PM with an opening prayer led by Ben Chinwuko.

Roll: Kanayo Ibe, Lawrence Okoye, Ben Chinwuko, Eunice Chine, Herbert Udeoba (Oba) and Azuka Anene, Sampsom Nwangwu, Dr. and Mrs. Ajekwe, Ifeyinwa Nwankwo.

Refreshments: Eunice brought fresh (home made) apple cider, Azuka kept the drinks flowing.

The minutes of the previous meeting was read and adopted. Azuka moved to adopt and Kanayo seconded.

Ben Chinwuko, the chapter president, expressed his appreciation for the efforts we put towards the inauguration ceremony. It started out to be an end of the year party. From that it was suggested that this place will not contain us and that we want to rent a hall so we could invite friends. But, halls are expensive some say up to \$500.00. Then Abode (Azuka Anene) decided that if the hall is what it will take, he will donate \$500.00 for it. That's how it all started. Then it was suggested that the meeting we are about to close for the year has not even been opened (inaugurated), how then can we be closing for the year. It was decided that we should try and kill the two birds with one stone. We decided to inaugurate the union but wanted to keep it small. We didn't intend for it to be this big, but people (members) who did not know of us started coming and it grew to this level. Everybody put in their best. We planned and executed this "project" in such a short time period, imagine what we could have done had we had enough time. He thanked everybody for the sweat put into the inauguration effort. His eloquence was applauded.

A free for all discussion of the inauguration ceremony followed.

Azuka excused Dubem from the meeting and was asked to write her name in the attendance list.

Ben asked for an accounting of the events.

Kanayo Ibe distributed a list of donors with annotations denoting redeemed and unredeemed pledges. A total of \$4070.00 was pledged and \$3220.00 of that was redeemed at the ball. A lengthy discussion of the donations followed at the end of which Kanayo implored everyone to do two things, 1) if you know any of our supporters or donors, call them and express our appreciation for their support and 2) if you know any one who pledged but have not redeemed their pledge, call them and urge them to redeem their pledges.

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Emeka informed us he had to use \$600.00 of his own money to complete the bill for the catering service, but since he pledged \$250.00 at the ball, we owe him only \$350.00. Eunice said she used \$180.00 from the "spray" money (ego adatal adata) to pay the servers.

Lawrence wanted to know how all these were recorded and Emeka said they did the recording. Emeka also informed us that the money for the brochure was not complete before Oby left. He said Chike had sent him a text message asking him to deposit the money but that Oby eventually paid and told him she would give us an account when gets back.

Ben commented that the accounting for the brochure should include all the members who sent pictures but have not paid. Emeka added that those who could not sell their tickets should pay out of their pockets as agreed. Kanayo said it was the rule. He paid for the ones he couldn't sell, so did Amuche his oli aku. Emeka assured us he had a good record of all who have paid.

Ben commented that the accounting is still a long way from being complete. The financial secretary and treasurer should get together and assure the accounting is correct. This should be done together with the brochure and all issues.

A bang at the door about one hour after the meeting started sounded like Oba has arrived. But, it was just the wind.

Ben suggested we send thank-you cards or letter of appreciation to our supporters. He suggested that the inauguration committee members collect the names and addresses and send the cards/letter.

Kanayo asked if we have a letterhead. Everybody turned to Emeka who claimed he was not given the authorization to proceed with procuring the letterhead. We authorized him to proceed. It was agreed that the secretary write a generic thank you letter and give it to the committee to send out.

Ben suggested reimbursing all members who loaned money to the union for any issue. Emeka refunded Kanayo Ibe and Ben Chinwuko \$50.00 each and Lawrence Okoye \$100.00. This is money they gave to Oby for deposit for the brochure. Emeka refunded himself \$350.00 for the money he had paid the caterer from his pocket.

Ify brought up a case of an Enugwu Ukwu man who accused us of not giving them an invitation. Emeka said he refuted it by telling the man that he personally gave the invitation to their president.

Ben reiterated that today's meeting was supposed to be held last month but that it was decided to move it forward to give us time to recuperated from the strenuous activities of the inauguration ceremony.

A lengthy debate on when to hold the next meeting ensued. Some argued that some of our members are in Nigeria and would not be back till late January therefore the meeting should be put off till February so they could give account of

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their activities. Some argue that our constitution states that the end of year general meeting shall be held on the third Saturday of November, therefore we should not change the meeting date. Ben suggested we stick to our constitution and not move the meeting dates at will or the constitution has no meaning. We should hold the meeting as scheduled in January and the accounting could be done the next meeting. This was agreed to unanimously.

In the middle of this debate, Dr Ajekwe suggested that members be emailed account information before the next meeting. This generated another spirited two-sided debate between Emeka and Dr Ajekwe with Emeka wanting to know what account information should be emailed. He detailed the issue we had with a text message about the dues to the national body and what an uproar it raised. Azuka acknowledged both sides and said he knew where Emeka was coming from because he (Azuka) was the one who sent the text message that caused the uproar. He also agreed with Dr Ajekwe in that it will be beneficial if everybody has a prior knowledge of their obligations before coming to the meeting. As a matter of fact it will save us money because printing and making copies for everybody costs money, but if we email information (minutes, account balances, dues owed etc) beforehand then there will be no need to spend money copying documents. Amuche suggested that if the information is sent ahead of time, people can even call the treasurer to discuss their dues before coming to the meeting. This may result in shorter meetings.

Kanayo suggested that we send emails for all dues owed for 2013 now so that by the next meeting we could settle all dues issues. Ben agreed and suggested that the treasurer update the dues/membership fees and email to all.

Emeka requested the names of people who have paid. Ben gave it to him.

Lawrence requested that Emeka send him the current email list for members.

Ben brought up the issue of out-of-state membership and asked for an update of the constitution from the constitution drafting committee.

Azuka informed us that they have not been able to meet, but that he has drafted something to present at their meeting. He has actually gone further than they were charged to do and requested that we give them till the next meeting to present their work. This was granted.

Ben discussed Nwokike's membership. He has joined our chapter, paid his membership fees for this and the national body. Lawrence informed us that Mr. Nwokike also pledged \$250.00 to the inauguration fund.

Ben narrated how they sent him a form to sign as the president of this chapter before Nwokike could run for national office. Ben signed and returned the form. Nwokike ran for secretary general and won. The body was jubilant on this news. Amuche suggested we let him know we have a uniform. Ify suggested we write and congratulate him. The incumbent PG and treasurer general also won reelection. Washington DC will hold the next convention.

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Ben expressed concern about the confusion in the national constitution regarding membership dues. In one section it said the biannual membership due is \$300.00 but in another section it said it \$360.00. Ben said he suggested to the PG that they amend the constitution to reconcile this but he said there was no time this year to do that.

Azuka made a passionate argument/discussion on the death benefits of national members. Our constitution requires that when a member dies we send the body home to Awka, in line with the national body's constitution. It was written like that because we expected to join the national body. As we are now, we will not be able to send a body home on our own. It will overextend us greatly. A few people here have not even completed their annual dues. These are what we considered before deciding that we will join the national body so that when things happen, they could meet us halfway. When he sent that text message, it was misunderstood. What he wants to make clear is, if any one decides not to join the national body, they don't have to. However when anything happens to such a member that requires intervention by the national body, he would not be entitled to that benefit because the national body does not know that member. Their membership ends with this local chapter. This is one of the issues he (Azuka) is trying to handle in the constitution amendment currently underway. Again anyone can belong to this chapter alone, but know that you will not benefit from the national body. This is all he had to say.

We thanked him for this effort. Ben explained that we had to pay into the national body before our member (Nwokike) could run for the national office. The PG was adamant that we pay for a delegate because the money will be accounted for the next year. If we do not pay, our candidate would not have a standing to run.

Dr Ajekwe suggested that we look into group life insurance. It was made known to him that this has been discussed much earlier but was tabled because there werer not enough people. We will look into it now. Some of our members are in the business we will get quotes from them. Kanayo wanted to know who would look into this. Ben and Eunice will make calls.

Oba arrived fashionable late about two hours into the meeting to applause.

Ben asked if anyone has anything else to discuss.

Emeka wanted to know how we would resolve issues between members. If a misunderstanding arises between two members, do we assign a committee? Ben said if that happens we will have to appoint an ad-hoc committee who will have to give us their recommendation.

Dr. Ajekwe said some group sign agreements to accept the findings/judgment of the committee. Ben commented of a case in Washington Dc that's in court now.

Azuka Anene moved to adjourn the meeting and Dr Ajekwe seconded. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM with a prayer by Oba.