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August 18, 1994

Dear Cambridge City Council,

Please find enclosed, copies of letters which I sent to the Postmaster General, Mr. Marvin Runyon, Postmaster Cambridge Mr. Frank Carbonneau and the Honorable, Joseph P. Kennedy II, regarding the United States Postal Service in Cambridge.

Sincerely

Joan McCaughey

August 12, 1994

Dear Mr. Carbonneau,

My name is Joan McCaughey, perhaps you are familiar with the name if not the face. I have been an employee of the United States Postal Service for almost eleven years, the last eight as a window/distribution clerk in Cambridge. I report to work every day, take my job seriously and try to do it to the best of my ability, but today I received a letter of warning (a first) for failure to follow my supervisor's instruction. As you know, a time-clock has recently been installed at the Kendall Square Post Office and I hit on the clock at 0898 instead of 0900.

Mr. Carbonneau, according to my union representative the National Agreement calls for a five minute grace period. It seems every postal employee in the country is allowed eight units, over or under their report time, not to be charged to their annual leave nor to the Postal Service as overtime, I guess with the exception of Cambridge. According to my calculations 2 units is approximately one minute, well within the time limits set by the National Agreement.

Mr. Carbonneau, the reason I dared to hit on the clock one minute early was because our office has been short-handed three people for most of the week. Three absences are quite a bit considering it's an eight person office; the work force was down to approximately 60%. Central Square was made aware of the situation and we were told there was no help due to unfilled vacancies... "deal with it!" There were trays of mail to be sorted, the truck from Central Square had to be unloaded, callers were waiting for their mail, the phone was ringing, with all good intentions I couldn't stand around, waiting for the clock. Infact, according to the National Agreement the Postal Service benifited from a minute of my time and I was reprimanded for it.

Mr. Carbonneau, I would appreciate any insight you could add to this situation. According to the Postal Service, I have done something wrong for

which I can be suspended or even lose my job! Was it caring about delivering the mail? Perhaps it was helping customers? Mr. Carbonneau, I'm not sure I understand the priorities of the Postal Service or perhaps it the priorities of the Postal Service management?

I appreciate you taking the time to listen to me. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Joan M. McCaughey

c.c. M. Runyon

J. Kennedy

M. Hannon

APWU, R Luti

m. Biller

Cambridge City Council & Mayor Ken Reeves

Cambridge Advisory Board

August 16, 1994

Dear Mr. Kennedy,

I am enclosing copies of letters that I sent to the Postmaster General, Mr. Marvin Runyon and the Postmaster of Cambridge, Mr. Frank Carbonneau. I am doing this because I am a constituent, a United States Postal Service worker and most importantly, you were instrumental in helping to convert Cambridge into an Associate Office.

The Associate Office status was to provide Cambridge customers with better service. It was to create a stable, less transient workforce. I have no statistical data on customer satisfaction; I can only hope it has improved. I can honestly say that my co-workers and I struggle and strive daily to provide our customers with the quality service they are entitled to.

Since becoming an Associate Office the lives of Cambridge's Postal Service workers have become almost unbearable.

There are unfilled vacancies, which tie up relief pool clerks who are supposed to be used to cover absences due to illness, annual leave or the temporary replacement for clerks who bid out of their assignments.

Function 4 audits were conducted in July, traditionally off-season for most post offices (particularly for Cambridge, since Harvard, M.I.T., many businesses and residential customers go on vacation) as a result some offices may lose vital positions. No thought has been given to the period of time from September to June when Cambridge's population increases by tens of thousands; who also need delivery and window services.

The workforce has already been spread quite thin. Last year lobby and window hours were extended but no extra help was given; instead we pulled together and made do.

While management allows positions to go unfilled, adds to our busy work load and delights in the possibility of decreased positions, they have increased their ranks from about eight to at least twenty. I work in an eight person office, on any given day I can answer to as many as four supervisors, at times none of which knows what the other is doing. I hardly think that it is the workers who are tripping over each other and in need of down-sizing.

Lastly, many employees have been harassed and intimidated by management. I can only recount my incident which is mild in comparison to the horror stories many of my co-workers have faced.

I can not imagine the rationale behind disciplinary action for doing what was in the best interest of my customers, perhaps management has not been told that they are their customers, too?

Mr. Kennedy, the United States Postal Service management might talk a good game, delivery, service and customer satisfaction are supposedly top priority, but I and my fellow co-workers know the truth. The methods being used to bring about change in the Postal Service, at least in Cambridge are neither employee or customer friendly.

I appreciate you taking the time to listen to me. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Joan M. McCaughey

cc. M. Runyon  
F. Carbonneau  
APWU & R. Luti, steward  
M. Biller  
Cambridge City Council & Mayor Ken Reeves  
Cambridge Advisory Board  
Cambridge Chamber of Commerce

August 16, 1994

Dear Mr. Runyon,

Enclosed is a copy of a letter which I sent to the Postmaster of Cambridge, Massachusetts, Mr. Frank Carbonneau. It is in regard to a letter of warning that I, as well as two of my co-workers, received.

I realize the United States Postal Service is facing many serious issues and in the big scheme of things, this issue in itself might be considered trivial but I think highlights a reoccurring and ongoing problem in the Postal Service.

I understand at times there may be a need for disciplinary action and if ever I do something worthy of it, I will graciously accept it but I can not sit quietly by and be chastised and disciplined for trying to do my job, despite the United States Postal Service management. Incidents such as this affect morale and eventually productivity. Mr Runyon, at times it seems the Postal Service management has nothing better to do and thrives on harassing and intimidating it's workers.

Mr. Runyon, I usually don't complain and I will undoubtedly face some sort of retaliation from my superiors for voicing my frustrations, but every day my co-workers and I strive to do our jobs well and provide exceptional service, many of our customers feel that we do; this behavior goes unnoticed by management.

Mr. Runyon, how much has my 2 units cost the Postal Service? A supervisor took the time to check the timecards, a secretary had to type and copy the letter of warning, the supervisor made a 10-15 minute commute to and from my station, it took 5 minutes of his time as well as mine (leaving only one clerk to help the afternoon rush of customers) to explain my crime against the Postal Service. I have in turn, contacted my union representative, who is filing a grievance which will undoubtedly cost the Postal Service even more money. All of this,

because I hit on the timeclock one minute early; a minute, according to the National Agreement, not to be compensated with overtime; a minute of my time given to the Postal Service because I feel obligated to provide my customers with the service they deserve. Is it for this, I face suspension or removal from the Postal Service?

Mr. Runyon, I report to work every day, on time. I don't abuse my sick leave. I have never been reprimanded or disciplined (until now) in eleven years of service. I carry out my duties in a timely manner. I treat my customers, co-workers and superiors with respect. I try to meet my customers needs and provide them with exemplary service. Apparently, I've been doing something wrong?

Mr. Runyon, it is very disheartening to see what the United States Postal Service ultimately sees as important; I would have thought it was delivery and service.

I appreciate you taking the time to listen to me. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Joan M. McCaughey

c.c: J. Kennedy

F. Carbonneau

M. Biller

APWU & R. Luti, steward

Cambridge City Council & Mayor Ken Reeves

Cambridge Advisory Board

Cambridge Chamber of Commerce

Consent Communication #15

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A comm. was received from Joan McCughey  
Postal Service Employee re: the United States  
Service in Cambridge.

In City Council September 12, 1994

*Placed on file*