



PITTSBURGH MUSICIAN

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF LOCAL 60-471, AFM
PITTSBURGH MUSICIANS' UNION

FOURTH QUARTER 2024
YOU ARE THE UNION!

WELCOME HOME PSO!!!

Overture

By George Clewer
President/Secretary

Well, it seems like we just saw the end of 2023 and ushered in the new year but it's almost October already. We have seen successor agreements involving 4 of our CBA's, each with raises and, in most cases, other improvements as well. It's always good to be able to report successes at the bargaining table rather than set backs! My thanks to all the committees involved and a special thanks to our legal counsel **Kevin Case** for his expertise along the way. There are very few of our agreements where Kevin doesn't have a hand in the process.

In other news around the Local, we held our Old Timers Party at Gaetano's restaurant on September 9th and I'm pleased to report a much stronger turnout that we've seen recently. The requirements for attending the party are fairly relaxed. You can either be at least 50 years of age or have been a member of our Local for at least 20 years. I, along with quite a few others qualify on both counts! We had a really nice buffet dinner with all the trimmings, a door prize for all and gave out lots of wine as well. **Lou Lucarelli** and band entertained and encouraged those in attendance to sit in where appropriate! I'm pretty safe in saying that every one had a good time.

I don't mean to do MPTF to death in the journal but we are experiencing success beyond anything I ever dreamed of when we started promoting this more as dollars

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QUARTERLY DUES

4TH QUARTER DUES ARE NOW DUE

REGULAR MEMBER \$45.00

HONORARY LIFE \$25.00

PLEASE TRY TO BE ON TIME TO AVOID LATE FEES
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO PAY THEM AND WE
TRULY HATE TO ASK YOU TO DO SO!

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

MONDAY, OCTOBER 7th, 2024
GAETANO'S ON BANKSVILLE RD.

7:00PM
7:30PM
8:15PM

SOCIAL
DINNER
MEETING

AGENDA

APPROVE MINUTES FROM MAY MEETING
SHORT DISCUSSION OF CBA'S
ENJOY A GOOD MEAL WITH COLLEAGUES

Please call 412-855-5137 to make your dinner reservation
by Thursday, October 3rd or you may e-mail
president@afmpittsburgh.com

'BURGSOUNDS

PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY

As mentioned in the previous newsletter during negotiations with management, we were indeed hopeful of attaining a proposal worthy of our great orchestra to present to the bargaining unit for a ratification vote. On Saturday, August 10th, we came to a tentative agreement with the PSI (Pgh. Symphony Inc.). There are a multitude of moving parts to this CBA including health care, string relief, parental leave, touring language, orchestra size, sabbatical pay, audition committee pay, and, of course, wages. While these are all important, I have always believed that the wage scale leaps off the page more so than any other one facet of a proposal. The orchestra, as you may remember, took a substantial cut in pay during the negotiations of eight years ago leading to the strike that ensued. It has been a long road back, and while we are not near where we should be in terms of musicians' salaries, this contract represents a solid leap forward in that direction. The orchestra ratified a three year deal which includes raises in all three years totaling around 12.35% with compounded interest. Also contains



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OVERTURE

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increased Of course MPTF had one foot in the grave if you go back about 8 years or so. I recall wrestling with this issue back during the 2016-17 PSO strike. Really not all that long ago if you think about it. MPTF, with great help from then President Ray Hair, turned things around and came up with more funding. All the Local's have benefitted, at least those who promote MPTF in their jurisdiction. We certainly do and will continue to do so hopefully into the future even when I'm not around to do it. It does require some extra work and some determination but it's all well worth it. We are on the way to breaking our existing record here in the Local and that's good news for all who participate in MPTF. Again, if you have any questions regarding how to apply for funding and the do's and don'ts involved, please call or e-mail and I will gladly walk you through the entire process.

Please don't forget the October 7th General Membership Meeting to be held at Gaetano's on Banksville. This meeting is the third of three scheduled meetings during the year. We hold these meetings on the first Monday in the months of February, May, and October. There is a buffet dinner served with beer and wine on the house as well.

See you here in the next newsletter scheduled for January of 2025. Please take care. Don't forget that you are all we've got!!

George

(Continued from page 1)
'BURGSOUNDS'

improvements to parental leave and various other working conditions along with improved audition pay. It was very difficult to get the PSI to even agree to a three year deal as they were initiating a new capital campaign and really were not too certain what year three would bring. The Union ultimately convinced management that a 3 year deal would exhibit confidence in their ability to make good on the campaign. The result is a monetary increase that, while it doesn't get the orchestra to where it needs to be, shows that management is working hard to move in that direction. This coming just before the orchestra departs on an extensive European tour which is vital to keeping the PSO in the forefront of the orchestra world's eyes. More about the tour later in the journal. My heartfelt thanks to the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra Committee made up of Committee Chair **Brandon McLean**, along with **Jeremy Black**, **Rhian Kenny**, **Alexandra Lee**, **Nick Meyers**, **Dylan Naroff**, and **David Sogg**. This was a good mix of older, more experienced, battle tested members along with some younger and extremely enthusiastic folks as well. Without their hard work and dedication, this contract would not have been possible. I don't believe that I've ever seen a more aggressive, persistent, and determined group! I truly appreciate these people more than I can say. Also a special thanks to our attorney **Kevin Case**, a labor attorney who knows the music busi-

QUESTIONS ABOUT DUES

Office Manager, Miriam Lesikiewicz, has asked that I place an announcement in the newsletter about any questions regarding membership dues and the payment of those dues. Miriam would like all dues questions directed to her and invites members to call her at (412)-215-9545 to inquire as to the amount that you may owe or to make a payment. I may not always have the most up to date info regarding your dues payments but Miriam will always be able to help you with this.

Thank you.

George

ness and especially the orchestra world better than anyone in the legal profession that I've ever met or employed here at the Local. He's also an excellent violinist graduating from the Eastman School of Music and having served as concertmaster with Grant Park in Chicago, the Memphis Symphony and Dallas Opera and performed with the Chicago Symphony and Lyric Opera among others. We are most fortunate to have Kevin on board, not only for the PSO contract negotiations, but also for other of our Local's CBA's which Kevin has been an immense help with, often behind the scenes. My congratulations to all who made this new contract possible including Marty Bates, Executive Vice-president and COO of the PSI. Unlike in times past, I felt that we had someone on the management side who actually listened and pretty much got it! Without his help, the contract would definitely be less than it came to be. Now, let's do it all over again in three years!!

AFM-EPF

Let's talk a bit about the AFM-EPF otherwise known to most as the AFM Pension Fund. I don't have to tell you that the Fund has been in serious trouble and suffered severe loss of dollars over the better part of the last decade. I have had more calls to the office about the pension than just about anything else. BTW- as a local officer I have no more info than any of our members regarding any aspect of the Fund. At any rate, if you have been reading about and keeping up with the Fund, you surely are aware of the change of fortune coming about mostly due to a government bailout. Now, I'm not too keen on the government spending billions on everything that comes along as happens way too often IMO. However, having just written what I wrote, I couldn't be happier about the current turn of events since it does affect quite a number of our members who are quite heavily invested in the Pension Fund and have much to lose if things go south. So when the latest communication came to my inbox from the Fund, I was elated for all of us. Essentially, the AFM-EPF tells us that they have received approxi-

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mately \$1.5 billion in Special Financial Assistance. As required, these funds are to be kept separate from the other Fund assets and are to be used only to pay benefits and expenses. The Special Financial Assistance greatly increases the financial security of the Fund. In fact, the dollars are projected to go much farther than the original target of 2051. Based on assumptions used by the Fund actuary, the Fund is currently projected to pay benefits well beyond that date—actually indefinitely according to reports. Of course market performance and amount of contributions to the Fund are difficult to predict so there is certainly room for underperformance but all in all, this is the best news that we could have hoped for. You can go to www.afm-epf.org for all the latest information on our pension plan. Now if I can just get, say, 20 more years of pension contributions I'll be just fine!! LOL!

FROM THE AFL-CIO

U.S. Rep. Seth Magaziner of Rhode Island held a press conference last week to announce that he will introduce a bill to make wage theft a felony nationwide when Congress reconvenes in September. The Don't Stand for Taking Employed American's Livings (Don't STEAL) Act updates the legal framework for wage theft violations to be comparable with other forms of criminal theft under federal law. Currently, employers who steal worker tips, pay workers less than promised or deny them overtime, at most, face a misdemeanor or a fine under \$10,000. Wage theft is already a felony in Rhode Island thanks to legislation passed by the General Assembly last year. The local labor movement is applauding Magaziner for building on this success by taking the fight to the federal level. "This legislation is a critical step forward in protecting workers rights and our entire econo-

my," said George Nee, president of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO. "Wage theft is insidious, pervasive, and comes in many forms from failing to pay for overtime to distributing pooled tips to an employer or supervisor. This is a rampant problem that needs to be fixed at the federal level, and I applaud Representative Magaziner's proposed legislation. It will provide a deterrence to unscrupulous employers exploiting workers so that law-abiding businesses can fairly compete and that workers can get the wages that they have duly earned." BTW- It is estimated that U.S. employers steal around \$50 billion from workers in the form of wage theft every year, more than all robberies, burglaries, and motor vehicle thefts combined. The preceding from the Daily Brief published by the AFL-CIO.

One more note from the AFL-CIO's Daily Brief. The Non-Profit Professional Employees Union (NPEU) is celebrating a huge win after the NLRB ruled that the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) acted illegally when it terminated a worker who was punished for raising concerns about poor working conditions at the non-profit. NPEU, a local of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers represents professionals employed at more than 50 nonprofit organizations. An administrative law judge for the agency found that the ACLU did in fact violate the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) by denying member Kate Oh a transfer and discharging her in retaliation for exercising her right to engage in protected concerted activities. As a remedy, the judge ordered the ACLU to offer her reinstatement and to make her whole for any loss of earnings and other benefits. "This decision sends a clear message. No one is above the law, including and especially powerful management officials claiming to champion civil liberties with their words while illegally doing the opposite with their actions," said Oh.

A new Gallup Poll shows that 70% of Americans approve of unions which is up from recent years. Even those folks who work in a non-union environment have the labor movement to thank for such things as an eight hour work day, a five day work week, sick leave, overtime pay, a pension, paid vacation, and more. I really am amazed at how often I get a call at the office asking what Union scale is for a particular engagement. Then I come to find out that the caller is not a Union musician at all. Just wanted to know what he should be charging based on our local scale. Interesting. We don't ever want to lose the ability to organize and advance the cause of the American worker. It helps everyone!

OLDTIMERS PARTY

We already touched on this in the *OVERTURE* column, but wanted to give the Old-Timers party a mention in the 'BURGSOUNDS' column as well. You know, this party came very close to being permanently cancelled due to a perceived lack of interest on the part of our membership. Now we are aware that Monday's are not good for everyone. We choose Mondays for General Membership Meetings and

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'BURG SCENES



PSO members getting word of the new trade agreement between the PSI and Local 60-471 just prior to leaving on tour. Manfred Honeck conducting the Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto. Part of the huge crowd at the "send off" concert at Heinz Hall just prior to tour departure. Finally, Yefim Bronfman taking a bow at the Salzburg Festival. Honeck conducting the world famous Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

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other functions due to the fact that Mondays are generally dark as far as gigs go. There are far fewer work opportunities on Mondays than any other day of the week. We do recognize that, for this very reason, Mondays are good days to schedule students and other activities that don't fit into schedules other days of the week. All we can do is try our best to make meetings and other activities as accessible as possible for the majority of our members. At any rate, our Executive Board does believe that the party is something that should continue for as long as viable and that the Local should make every attempt to promote it via the newsletter and even mailings which we tried this time around. At any rate, the party, held once again at Gaetano's Restaurant on Banksville Road, was way better attended than last year and those present had a good time. It's always good to get together with fellow musicians and enjoy a good meal and each other's company. As we mentioned, there were door prizes (candy assortment) and lots of wine was given away as well. Everyone received a bottle who wanted one. The **Lou Lucarelli** band performed during the cocktail hour and

featured **Andy Yalch** (the Vice-Prez) on keyboard, **Bob Patterson** on bass, **Bob Breen** on drums, **Don Aliquo** on sax, and Lou on vibes. After dinner pianist **Ron Bickel** sat in and we were regaled with more good music. I do want to mention that Mr. Aliquo is well into his nineties but listening to him weave those intricate, snake like lines makes me wonder if he hasn't found the fountain of youth somewhere along the way. Just have to hang around Don more and maybe some of that will rub off. Our buffet dinner was excellent as always and offered something for everyone. Drinks were on the Local and included all adult beverages. I think it's safe to say that all in attendance enjoyed themselves. If you didn't make it this year, I hope to see you at the next one.

MPTF

Just a bit more regarding the Music Performance Trust Fund. In a little over 4 months of MPTF's fiscal year, May 1 to April 30, our Local has scheduled over 60 projects! These include those that have played since May 1 of this

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year and those yet to be performed. This puts us ahead of last fiscal year's record setting year of almost 60 projects played resulting in almost \$65,000.00 in scale wages distributed to our Pittsburgh musicians. Again, I would invite all those interested to give us a call (412-855-5137 cell) or to shoot me an e-mail at president@afmpittsburgh.com. I will be more than happy to explain the "ins and outs" of the program. Please be aware that there are only so many dollars allocated to our Local by MPTF. This fiscal year that number is about \$34,000. We've probably gone through at least \$30,000 to date so don't delay until there is no money available. According to Dan Beck, MPTF Trustee, "The future path to effectively and strategically grow MPTF support is through grants with 50/50 matching funds. Using our funds to leverage local co-sponsorship has been a successful model for locals throughout MPTF's 75 year history. We see this growing and we applaud the locals pursuing this path to growth." The Local does intend to focus much more on this approach to grant dollars moving forward. We will be looking to keep educational projects at a 50/50 split wherever possible. This will also apply to promotions like Black History Month, Jazz Appreciation Month, and Women's History Month. There is yet another issue to consider. That is the number of projects awarded to a single leader. We are taking a good, hard look at this and, of course, will know more at the close of MPTF's fiscal year on April 31. We do know that we will only be able to do a limited number of big band gigs. What that number may be per leader is not clear at this time but if I were to speculate, I would think we might be talking about 2 such projects per leader. Size really does matter and will be taken into consideration. MPTF will be on a future Executive Board agenda. We will take a look at all the projects played by all Union leaders and set a cap on the total number of projects

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"You're not cool enough to play the Guitar Hero video game, so I bought you a copy of Accordion Hero."

awarded to leaders. It may be necessary to cap those at around 10 even though some may be solo, duo, or trio gigs. It's all speculation at this point but it is a fact that will have to be taken to spread the dollars around as more and more members are taking advantage of what MPTF has to offer. Again, there are more and more Local 60-471 members clamoring for MPTF projects and have co-sponsorship in place for them. It's a great program for this Local and we are attempting to take full advantage of these dollars and put as many different musicians performing in the widest variety of musical styles to work as we possibly can. We will keep you posted as it plays out.

PSO TOUR

As mentioned earlier, a few days after the contract ratification vote, the members of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra boarded a plane and departed for Munich, Germany on the first leg of their European tour. From August 22 through September 7 the PSO toured nine cities in Austria, Italy, and Germany beginning with the Salzburg Festival in Austria. The tour's programs featured, among other selections, Mahler's First and Fifth Symphonies, Anne-Sophie Mutter performing Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, and Yefim Bronfman performing Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto. The final day of the ratification vote coincided with the huge Sendoff concert for the orchestra at Heinz Hall. I was present, but backstage in the green room manning the ballot box. Voting would continue during intermission. I was able to hear the concert through the sound system in the room and also a bit more live as I ventured to a backstage area as well. On the program was Concerto No.3 in D minor for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 30 by Rachmaninoff performed by internationally recognized pianist Yefim Bronfman. I must admit that I was not familiar with this gentleman, SHAME ON ME, but was literally blown away by his artistry and musicianship. I do not care what your favorite brand of music may be. Someone once said that the only two kinds of music are good music and bad music. I guess it's up to us to make the determination but really whether you enjoy the symphony, jazz, blues, opera, Broadway, or what have you, it's easy to recognize quality when you hear it. I certainly heard it from Mr. Bronfman on that evening. This piece constituted the first half then on the second half of the concert, Maestro Honeck led the orchestra through a stirring performance of Mahler 5, Symphony No. 5 in C-sharp minor to be 100% accurate. If you didn't get chills up and down your spine during that entire performance, you probably flat-lined somewhere along the way. Anyway, at the conclusion of Mahler, the audience erupted in a sustained applause that seemed to go on forever. That this orchestra serves as an ambassador from our city of Pittsburgh to the world is undeniable. Also that this orchestra is truly one of the great orchestras of the world is just as undeniable!. I'm always honored to think that I get to represent

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these great musicians. It really is an honor that I don't take lightly! If you have not been a regular attendee of the PSO, I urge you to consider a subscription or at the very least to take in a performance of this remarkable orchestra. People praise this orchestra all over Europe and here we have them in our back yard to hear on a weekly basis during much of the year.

I do wish to take just a moment to touch on the upcoming national presidential election this coming November. We do receive inquiries here at Local 60-471 regarding endorsements of various candidates. The Executive Board has adopted a long standing policy of making no such recommendations to our membership. It is believed that our members are informed enough and engaged enough to make such a decision on their own. You might take a look at the AFM and its candidate endorsements. Check out the August edition of the *International Musician* and you will clearly see the candidates endorsed by the Federation. You may also go to the Allegheny County Labor Council website for further information on the election. Keep in mind that we are a labor union and there are candidates who support labor much more so than do others. It's up to you to make those choices.

The Pittsburgh Festival Opera presented a great performance of Adriana Lecouvreur, a lesser known opera, at least by me! The opera is in four acts, written by Francesco Cilea and was first performed on November 6 1902 at the Teatro Lirico in Milan. Editor's note: I'm totally unfamiliar with the composer as well. BTW, Enrico Caruso was featured in the Milan performance and I've heard of him! One thing I do know for certain and that is that this is an entertaining opera and should be heard by more folks. Speaking of which, there was a good crowd on hand for this performance held at Oakland's Carnegie Music Hall. The 50 plus piece orchestra was contracted by **Jeff Mangone** and utilized many musicians who perform with the Pittsburgh Opera Orchestra. That is to say that the orchestra was truly excellent. This is another group of musicians that I'm truly proud to represent as an officer of Local 60-471. As for the opera itself, it was first performed in the United States in New Orleans on January 5, 1907 at the French Opera House. It gained its Metropolitan Opera premiere on November 18, 1907 with Caruso once again. It had a run of only three performances due to Enrico's ill health. This opera was not performed again at the Met until 1963! I'm not going to attempt a synopsis of the opera here, (someone dies of course!) but I was very happy to be in attendance and enjoyed the production immensely. I've admitted to not being a fan of opera before I became an officer in this Local but now I confess to enjoying opera as much as I do the PSO which is saying a lot. I would encourage those who may have not had the opportunity to attend an opera to try one on for size and see if it doesn't fit! Hope

to see you at the PSO, Pgh. Opera, Pgh. Ballet Theater, River City Brass, Pgh. Festival Opera, Pgh. CLO, Pgh. Musical Theater, Pgh. Public Theater, Latshaw Productions, Pgh. Playhouse, or any LIVE MUSIC performance featuring our outstanding musicians here in the 'Burg. BTW there was a very nice reception with food after the performance which I didn't miss either!

As I write this column, the Local is entering contract negotiations with Pittsburgh Ballet Theater. This is our first negotiation with the current management in place and looking forward to the opportunity to sit down with them and discuss a successor PBT agreement. The OC for this orchestra is comprised of **Andy Kohn**, chair, **Rochelle Agnew**, **Cindy Anderson**, **Jennifer Madge**, and **Paula Tuttle**. As you may remember if you've been around for awhile, the PBT has performed the Nutcracker to canned music for about 2 decades. Back when this happened along with a general lockout of the orchestra, the Local held a mass demonstration in the street outside the Benedum protesting this action by the Ballet. The very next year the orchestra returned to the pit but in a more limited role and no Nutcracker in sight. While the services have nominally increased since the original lockout, we are hoping to see the return of the orchestra for the Nutcracker as part of an increased presence in the orchestra pit. And we hope soon! We will see what transpires during these talks. I'll keep you updated.

Let me end this edition of the newsletter with the following. I've been privileged to have been able to represent all of you over more years than I ever anticipated. It has truly been a labor of love. I really think of you as my extended family more than rank and file members of a Union. However, to be effective as a Union, we all need to stick together and support one another to the fullest extent like family. Let's remember that, in the end, what we have is each other. Take care of yourselves.

George



"Has morale picked up since I put in elevator music?"

Pittsburgh Musicians' Union Board Meeting
June 25, 2024
Via Zoom

Meeting called to order at 5:15pm

In attendance: President/Secretary George Clewer, Tom Evans, Joe Herndon, Elliott Ratliff, MaryBeth Schotting, Stephanie Tretick. Vice President Andy Yalch absent.

Minutes from the May 28, 2024 Board Meeting were reviewed. Motion to accept the Minutes made by Evans & seconded by Ratliff. The Motion carried unanimously.

The Financial Report was reviewed. The Board agreed that President/Secretary Clewer may pick up the tab for the PSO negotiating committee. This gesture has occurred in past negotiations but there has not yet been an opportunity this summer.

President/Secretary's Report:

New Members (2).

Martin J. Mann Student) --06/20/2024, French Horn

Heather M. MacDonald--06/20/2024, Oboe, English Horn, Piano, Ukulele, Guitar

Motion to accept the new Members made by Tretick & seconded by Evans. The Motion carried unanimously.

Reinstatements (1).

Motion to accept the reinstated Member made by Ratliff & seconded by Herndon. The Motion carried unanimously.

Resignations (1).

Jason E. Hohn--effective June 30, 2024

Motion to accept the resignation, with regrets made by Schotting & seconded by Herndon. The Motion carried unanimously.

CBA negotiations:

The Musical Theater CBA has been ratified. Clewer thanked Herndon for his help during these negotiations.

The PSO CBA negotiations are ongoing, meetings to resume in July.

The Pittsburgh Festival Opera CBA: Clewer does not anticipate barriers to successful finalization.

Oldtimers' Party: The venue will be Gaetano's on Banksville Road, September 9, 2024, 6:30 – 9pm. Reminder postcards will be sent out to eligible Members.

Dan Heasley:

In light of Dan's severe hand accident, the Board agreed to send \$200 directly to him to defray his Union Dues this year, along with all wishes for a successful recovery. Tretick will put a notice on the PMU website regarding Dan's GoFundMe page so that PMU Members who wish to do so may contribute to that effort.

The next Board meeting will be July 8, 2024 at 3:00pm via Zoom.

A Motion was made to adjourn by Ratliff & seconded by Schotting. The Motion carried unanimously.

The Meeting adjourned at 5:47pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephanie Tretick, Board Member

**Pittsburgh Musicians Union
Executive Board Meeting
7/8/24
Called to order 3:03 pm
Via Zoom Internet**

Attendance-All board members were present.

Minutes read from previous meeting. Motion to accept as amended by Mary Beth Schotting and seconded by Joe Herndon. Motion carried-unanimous.

Financial statements were reviewed.

New Members-There were no new members

Resignations-There were no resignations.

Deaths-There were no deaths.

Old Timers Party- The party will be held at Geatanos Restaurant on Monday September 9th at 6:00 pm.

PSO-Contract negotiations are ongoing.

General Meeting-The next general meeting will be held at Gaetanos Restaurant on 10/7/24 at 6 pm.

Motion to adjourn-Stephanie Tretick and seconded by Elliot Ratliff- Motion carried-unanimous

Meeting adjourned 4:51 pm

Next meeting 8/05/24- 3:00 pm

Respectfully submitted by Andy Yalch-Vice President

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Pittsburgh Musician

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of the Pittsburgh Musicians' Union.

George A. Clewer.....Editor

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