



The Current

News from IBEW Local 1837

Fall 2020

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers - Maine & New Hampshire

Dick Rogers Retires as Business Manager of IBEW Local #1837



After a career that started as a Summer Helper at Central Maine Power in 1979 and ended with a 9-year stint as Business Manager and Financial Secretary for IBEW 1837, Dick Rogers has retired. Former IBEW 1837 Assistant Business Manager Tony Sapienza has assumed the Local Union's top job.

"We work for the members," Rogers said. "I always kept that in my mind. A number of people don't realize the time that goes into doing this job, the time and the commitment. It is a 24/7 job because we have shift workers. I tried to return all calls and be a straight shooter."

Early in his tenure at CMP, Dick realized there was something about being an active participant in the Union that appealed to him.

"In 87 or 88, I watched a Union Steward named Chuck Applebee talking to a manager, say 'Bob, we

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Contract Round-up: Members Narrowly Approve Eversource CBA; Contracts Ratified at Three Other Companies



Members voted in locations throughout New Hampshire, rejecting the contract in the first round of voting and sending negotiators back to the bargaining table. The contract passed in the second round of voting but some members were unhappy with the outcome.

The Eversource NH collective bargaining agreement has been ratified by a razor thin majority of Union members at the Company. It is the policy of IBEW Local 1837 to not release the ballot totals but turnout was strong among union members at New Hampshire's largest electric utility.

In September, members rejected an earlier tentative contract agreement. Union and Company officials then agreed on a contract extension while they returned to the bargaining table. The IBEW negotiating team and Union leadership worked very hard with Eversource NH senior management to renegotiate a second agreement. Those renegotiations focused on the three issues the negotiating team heard most about from the membership: Forced stand-by, FSR second shift and Troubleshooter coverage area. Renegotiations are typically limited in scope to addressing the biggest issues with the dual goals of reaching agreement and avoiding a job action.

"There's tremendous concern among many members about the forced standby provision in the new contract," IBEW 1837 Business Manager Tony Sapienza said.

The contract includes 3% wage increases for all members in each of the three years and wage adjustments for lineworkers prior to those increases.

Other improvements include 100% pay for 12 weeks of short term disability (previously 6 weeks), although it doesn't extend the overall period of STD payments (total 25 weeks). The premium paid when working away from home for an entire workweek doing their normal function was improved by an

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Contracts Ratified by IBEW 1837 Members

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additional \$30 and major meal reimbursements were capped at \$25.

Starting in January, the Company may assign additional standby crews “when anticipated (verifiable) weather conditions require coverage. Such employees shall receive four (4) hours straight time pay per day. Previously approved time off will be honored.” Changes were also made in wages and schedules for the Troubleshooter classification as the Company seeks to fill more of those positions.

“I want to thank the volunteer members of the negotiating committee: Kitty Kilroy, Jeff Huckins, Adam Baker, Tim Perozzi, Chris Guimarra, and Jake Cote as well as Mark Penny and Pat Moran for all their hard work, dedication and time spent on behalf of all union members,” Sapienza said. “I also want to thank outgoing IBEW 1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers and IBEW 2nd District International Representative Tiler Eaton for assisting in the renegotiations.”

IBEW 1837 represents 300 workers at Eversource NH, whose service territory includes 211 towns and 5,628 square miles according to their website.

Central Rivers Power

IBEW 1837 members working at Central Rivers Power have ratified a new contract running from September 1, 2020 through March 1, 2024, including raises every year.

“The biggest concern going into negotiations was losing legacy benefits that the large utility company (Eversource) was able to provide,” IBEW 1837 Business Manager Tony Sapienza said, “with pension and insurance being the biggest concerns.”

The legacy defined benefit pension plan has ended but there were no changes to the defined contribution plan that has been in effect since 2006. Though it is impossible for a smaller company to match a large self-funded health plan, our members are satisfied with the health benefit that includes a PPO plan and a high deductible plan with the company funding the full deductible for both plans.

Members will have 11 holidays and two floating holidays, which is an increase of one holiday. When conditions warrant, with mutual agreement, employees can be put on standby status and will promptly respond to emergency call-ins. Represented employees to be included in Company cell phone reimbursement policy and a Fire Retardant Clothing Allowance will be included in the contract.

In addition, the contract will be edited by both parties for content that only applied to large fossil fuel plants that are no longer part of this company.

Central Rivers Power owns and operates 45 hydroelectric power plants including nine in New Hampshire with a combined installed capacity of 340 MW across the United States.

Granite Ridge

IBEW 1837 members at Granite Ridge have approved a three-year contract extension with raises in each year and without any concessions.

Members voted on Friday, September 18, 2020 to approve the contract extension offer. That offer was the result of several phone conversations between IBEW 1837 Assistant Business Manager Tony Sapienza and Calpine North Central Regional Operations Vice President Chris Jones. Mr. Jones insisted this was the Company’s best offer at this time.

The approved extension runs from September 28, 2020 to September 27, 2023. It includes a 2.25% wage increase for each year starting March 27, 2021, March 27, 2022, and March 27, 2023. Granite Ridge employees will be included in an employee referral bonus program. All other provisions of the collective bargaining agreement will remain unchanged.

“I’d like to thank all those who participated (in the vote) and special thanks to the volunteer bargaining committee members, Rick Davis and Brandon Carroll,” Sapienza said.

It’s the third contract for IBEW Local #1837 with Calpine Corporation, a Houston-based generator of electricity from natural gas and geothermal resources with 77 power plants in operation or under construction.

The Union represents all 19 maintenance and operations personnel at the Londonderry, New Hampshire, gas-fired plant. The plant was organized into the Union by IBEW Local #1837 in 2006.

Granite Shore Power

IBEW 1837 members at Granite Shore Power ratified a new contract in June after difficult negotiations during which the Company insisted on scrapping the previous agreement altogether. The agreement runs through May 31, 2023.

At the time of the negotiation, IBEW Local 1837 represented a total of 80 members at Schiller, Newington and Merrimack Generating Stations in New Hampshire. These fossil fuel power stations were acquired by Granite Shore Power from Eversource NH as part of the legislatively-mandated divestiture agreement. Prior to the start of the negotiations, the Company notified the Union that they intended to cease operations at Schiller and layoff all of our members there. (See story on page 4.)

While it is a completely new collective bargaining agreement, the Union negotiating committee worked very hard to maintain as many of the rights and benefits from the existing contract in the new agreement as it possibly could. The Union negotiating committee was able to offer a union-sponsored health insurance plan that costs considerably less and offers a much higher level of benefits and it is part of the new contract. The three-year agreement includes wage increases of 2.75%, 2.5% and 2.75%. The Union Committee worked hard to preserve double time on Sundays or second day off. There are some small increases to other premiums like working over 16 or 18 hours and minimum call-in pay. The Company's 401(k) match increases to 4%.

Unfortunately, although the Union worked hard to include service prior to GSP ownership and all service will be recognized, there is still a significant reduction in termination pay. This had an immediate impact on approximately 30 members working at Schiller Station, which was closed as the markets for generating electricity have been seeing dramatic realignment. The Union negotiating team worked hard on getting whatever they could for the members at Schiller Station. A separate agreement on a separation package was negotiated for the Schiller Station employees. When people chose to take termination pay, they no longer have call back rights should a job open up.

Maine and New Hampshire AFL-CIO's Make Candidate Endorsements

How you vote is a personal decision and nobody has a right to tell you how to cast your ballot.

"We don't live to do politics but we have to do politics to live" is one way of putting it. In Washington, D.C., Augusta, Maine and Concord, New Hampshire, corporate special interests and anti-union politicians continue their attacks on working people and the labor movement.

During the last four years, appointments to seats on the National Labor Relations Board and the Supreme Court have consistently undermined the rights of Unions. In many cases, they have overturned legal precedents going back several decades and damaged our right to collectively bargain.

Although none of the candidates are perfect, some have advanced legislation and supported policies which make things better for us, our families and our communities.

All candidates considered for endorsement by our State Labor Federations underwent a vetting process and completed a questionnaire about their views on issues affecting working people and their unions. Any candidate who declined to fill out a questionnaire was not considered for an endorsement. The voting records of the candidates were also considered as part of the endorsement process. Positions on social issues are not taken into account.

IBEW Local #1837 shares this list of endorsements from the Maine AFL-CIO and New Hampshire AFL-CIO as the best candidate choices on those issues affecting our ability to improve your wages, benefits and working conditions.

Whoever you support, please vote on Tuesday, November 3.

Maine U.S. Senate: **Sara Gideon**

Maine U.S. House CD 1: **Chellie Pingree**

Maine U.S. House CD 2: **Jared Golden**

You can download a complete list of Maine AFL-CIO endorsements including candidates for the Maine House and Senate at:

www.ibew1837.org/ME2020endorse.

New Hampshire Governor: **Dan Felt**

NH U.S. Senate: **Jeanne Shaheen**

NH U.S. House CD 1: **Chris Pappas**

NH U.S. House CD 2: **Ann McLane Kuster**

You can download a complete list of New Hampshire AFL-CIO endorsements including candidates for the New Hampshire House and Senate at:

www.ibew1837.org/NH2020endorse.

VOTE!

Schiller Station in Portsmouth Ceases Operations

The long-term and likely permanent closure of Schiller Station in Portsmouth in June not only marked the end of 70 years generating electricity for the Granite State, it was also the end of the bargaining unit that played a pivotal role in the history of IBEW Local #1837.

Local 1837 was first established at Schiller in 1953 as the framed charter hanging in the Union's Dover office helps to memorialize. Richard Pray is credited with organizing the union at the power plant and his name is one of 24 on that historic charter document. Brother Pray would become Local 1837's first Business Manager. Twenty years later in 1973, the International Union would consolidate 11 Locals representing electric utilities in New Hampshire and Maine, but keep "1837" as the designation for all of them.

Schiller Station has been owned by Granite Shore Power since it was purchased from Eversource NH (formerly Public Service

Company of New Hampshire) in January 2018. The purchase was part of the divestiture of Eversource NH's generation assets mandated by the New Hampshire Legislature. Previous attempts to deregulate the utility were opposed by PSNH and union members joined the company in providing compelling testimony against the move. However, Eversource NH supported the 2018 divestiture plan and the Union negotiated to minimize any negative effects on members. GSP continues to operate Newington Station right next door to Schiller and Merrimack Station in Bow.

"GSP informed us this spring that they would begin an extended outage at Schiller in June with no end date and they have no intention of running it in the future," IBEW 1837 Business Manager Tony Sapienza said. "They've laid off the entire workforce."

A visitor to Schiller in early July found the gate on the chain link fence padlocked, a large pile of coal clearly visible in the yard, and just a couple of cars in the parking lot. The once proud and productive power plant on the Piscataqua River was eerily quiet, in stark contrast to the bustle and hum of seven decades of generating electricity by burning oil, coal, and more recently, wood chips and even cocoa shells. When operations began, the plant boasted about being "the world's first integrated mercury-steam power plant."

Although the plant used to run almost non-stop, in recent years Schiller mostly ran when demand was peaking and the ability of other generation stations was limited by the availability of natural gas. Schiller was dogged by controversy as environmentalists sought to shut it down. Ultimately, though, it was lower cost sources of power elsewhere and a loss of capacity payments that hastened its demise.

Schiller Station began operations in 1949 and was named after Avery R. Schiller, President of PSNH. Schiller was a Vice President when PSNH was formed in the late 20's, was promoted to President in 1942, became Chairman in 1965, and retired in 1970 after 46 years with the Company.

Over the years, changes in technology and operations led to significant changes in staffing levels. Whereas Schiller Station once employed 150 people from its startup all the way into the late 80's, by the time it closed in June there were only 38 workers at Schiller with 30 of them being union-represented positions. When they stopped running, there were three units with a combined total output of 155 MW

Tom Clements started work at Schiller in 1977 after a stint in Vietnam and worked shoulder-to-shoulder with some of the crew from the early days of the plant. "It didn't have the automation back then and each unit had about 10 people assigned to it and 5 shifts," Brother Clements recalled. "(Working in operations) you would go in and make sure everything was running right. You made rounds every hour and would check the temperature on the turbine in five or six places."

Although the binary mercury boilers had been retired before he started working there, some of the old timers would still recount stories about it.

"There was a time when people couldn't keep in the fillings in their teeth because the mercury would attack the silver," Clements said.



Schiller Station was once a prized asset of Public Service Company of New Hampshire but changes in the electricity markets ultimately led to its closure.

Maine Labor Historian and Activist Peter Kellman wasn't in IBEW but as a member of IUPAT (Painters' Union) he spent time working at Schiller in the early 80's and also heard stories about the mercury.

"Guys sat on blocks of mercury with their feet hanging over the edge and ate their lunch," Brother Kellman said he was told. "People who worked there still saw mercury in the traps. There was also plenty of asbestos that OSHA termed 'nuisance dust.'"

Becky Johnson was hired in 1987 right out of school in North Dakota and worked her way up to Control Room Operator, the top-paying union job in the plant. That's where she stayed until Schiller ceased operations in June. As a single mother trying to find her way in the world, a good Union job at a major electric utility was her ticket to economic security. It was also an economic benefit for the surrounding community.

"It was a great place to work, it was a good strong union force" Sister Johnson said. "We made a lot of money for the companies. Schiller used to run all the time. We paid a lot of taxes."

Tom Ryan started working there in 1990 as a Certified Welder Mechanic 3rd class and worked his way up to 1st class before leaving Schiller to become IBEW 1837 Assistant Business Manager. "It was a good place to work and people made good money there," Ryan said. "It was dirty work but not as dirty as some coal plants. Schiller had a negative draft which would suck everything into the boiler."

Over time, there were changes in responsibilities and shifts that affected workers in the bargaining unit.

"In the 90's they moved to a 12-hour shift which was originally contentious but ultimately proved popular," Brother Ryan said. "They were trying to save jobs."

Tom Clements remembers being told by one member: "I love working the 3 – 11 shift because nobody bothers me when I get home." Some Schiller employees worked two jobs at that time because they were 8-hour shifts.

Larry Lee started at Schiller in 1979 as a pump room trainee and worked his way through various equipment jobs and the control room before opting for a job in the warehouse. "Occasionally modifications were made in the various steps of the training process," Lee said. "Also there were job reclassifications sometimes adding more work or combining steps which were previously separate or under a different job classification."

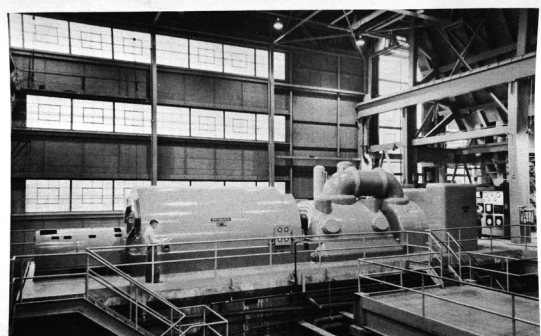
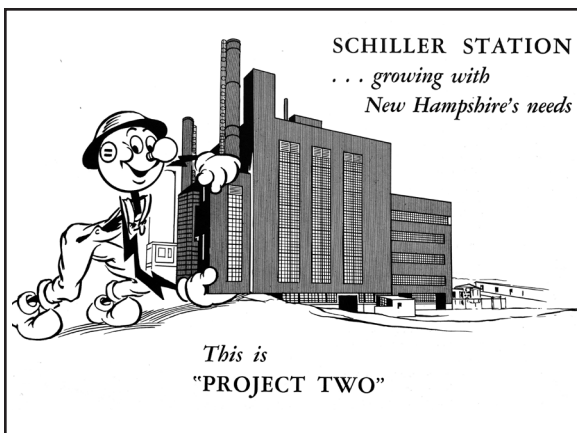
In addition to employing hundreds of IBEW members during its years of service, Schiller Station employed many local workers and union members from various trades building and maintaining the power plant. IBEW 1837 always used its leverage to try to make sure unionized contractors were hired when outside expertise was necessary.

Of course, the top priority was always making sure members of IBEW 1837 were treated fairly and protected by the union contract. Perhaps the most sensational case was when a member was fired for taking lobsters from the plant water intake for personal use. Ultimately, the Union took the case to arbitration and was successful in getting his job back.

"Schiller was great and had lots of character and lots of good characters," Sister Johnson continued. "It didn't matter which company owned us, it was still a great place to work."



The final day of Schiller Control Room's C-Shift. From left standing, Edward Dubaniewicz and Robert Amos. Seated from left, Rebecca Johnson and Mark Hitchko.

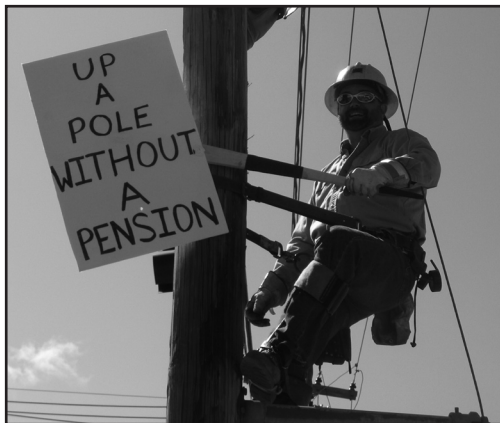


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Special thanks to Rebecca Johnson for providing archival materials for this story including this 1950's brochure heralding the new boilers of "Project Two" and featuring Ready Kilowatt.

Dick Rogers Retires as Business Manager of IBEW 1837

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In 2009 while still working at CMP, Rogers climbed a pole in Augusta to protest a company contract proposal.

have a right to bitch.' I knew right then that it was a job for me," Rogers said. He was appointed to be a Union Steward in the early 90's.

During his three 3-year terms as Business Manager, Rogers was a skilled negotiator of collective bargaining agreements and grievance settlements. Not surprisingly, that's the part of the job that he liked best.

"I was lucky to have people around to give me good advice," Rogers continued, "especially Bill Dunn, International Representatives Ed Collins, Dick Deering, Tyler Eaton, our Stewards, E-Board and staff including Debbie and Laurie in the office, as well as the AFL-CIO. Also our attorneys Jon Beal and Jeff Young. I will never forget how supportive 2nd District VP Mike Monahan has been. That's a fact. The support of my wife was huge . . ." he said as his voice trailed off.

Rogers lost his beloved wife Jackie this past summer after her brave fight with cancer. They had been high school sweethearts and together ever since.

"It has been great working with Dick during his time as Business Manager and prior to that as a fellow Chief Steward," said IBEW 1837 President Michelle Crocker. "His dedication to the membership has always been his first priority. Dick has worked hard during his time as Business Manager, helping to further develop and improve the policies and procedures to keep our Local running efficiently."

"I'd like to thank Dick for all he has done for the Local," incoming Business Manager Tony Sapienza said. "I also want to personally thank him for all he has done for me and especially for the confidence he has given me going forward. It has been a great pleasure to serve on his team."

Rogers will continue to consult with the Union for the time being and plans to help with some upcoming contract negotiations. When he's not doing that, he looks forward to spending more time in the North Woods and with his family.



Rogers spoke to members daily during the 2018 strike at the NH Electric Cooperative, which the Union ultimately won.

Quick Notes and Announcements

Unit Meetings Schedule Revised and Some Locations Changed Due to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the relocation, postponement or cancellation of some meetings. While we try to find safe places where we can meet, please contact your steward, the union office, or log on to www.ibew1837.org and check our website calendar before driving. IBEW 1837 is exploring other options for Units that have lost their meeting locations. Union staff is available to meet on an as-needed basis where meetings are cancelled. Please wear a mask when meeting at indoor locations. You can view and download an updated schedule at ibew1837.org/meetings.

Workers at Kittery Water District Join IBEW 1837

First contract negotiations are underway for 16 workers at the Kittery Water District including office staff, filtration plant workers, laborers, meter readers, service technicians and others.

"We're proud that the workers at Kittery Water District asked us to help them form a Union and negotiate a collective bargaining agreement," said IBEW 1837 Organizer and Business Representative Matt Beck. "Even though they like where they work, they understand that having a union contract gives them the ability to protect what they already have and negotiate to make things even better for themselves and their families."

Please Keep Your Union Info Up-to-Date

New mailing address, email address or phone number? Please contact the union office with any updates: 207-623-1030.

Changes in Union Leadership



Tony Sapienza took over as the Business Manager/Financial Secretary with the retirement of Dick Rogers, effective October 1, 2020. He was unopposed in the Union election held this summer. Brother Sapienza had served as Assistant Business Manager for New Hampshire the previous two years. He realizes that taking over from Dick Rogers will be a tough act to follow.

“Dick left some big shoes to fill and I’m glad that he has offered to continue to work with us and provide advice when we need it,” Sapienza said. “I’m grateful for the mentoring and confidence he has provided me.

Tony is on a leave of absence from Eversource NH, where he began work as a System Electrician for Public Service Company of New Hampshire (PSNH) nearly 35 years ago. Brother Sapienza has also served his union as an E-Board member, a Chief Steward and as Unit 2 (Manchester) Recording Secretary for over 20 years. He has also served as an Alderman for the City of Manchester since 2015.

“I’ve always been grateful to my union for the wages that allowed me to raise four kids,” Tony said. “The union paycheck made a big difference to my family.”

When he’s not working for our members, Tony and his wife Shirley enjoy Maine beaches, good food, family and friends.

Renee Gilman has been appointed as the new Assistant Business Manager for IBEW Local #1837 by Business Manager Tony Sapienza after serving for five years as a Business Representative for the Union under Dick Rogers.

Before taking a position on the Union’s staff, Sister Gilman worked for 20 years in Customer Service at Bangor Hydro and Emera Maine, which is now Versant. She helped negotiate contracts under three IBEW Business Managers while there and served as a Steward and Recording Secretary for Unit 10. Renee grew up in a Union family and says being Union is a core value for her, and it’s how she’s raised her kids.

“My husband Aaron is a Lead Working Mechanic at Versant, and he’s been a Steward for years,” Renee said. “I think it’s crucial for all of us to make sure our families and our young people, understand the importance of Unions, especially in the



midst of this pandemic. If there’s any doubt, just look at who became “essential employees” when everything else shut down.”

When not working, Renee and her husband Aaron (seen here) enjoy fishing, snowsledding, and being in the woods.

New IBEW 1837 E-Board

Nominations for the election of Local Union 1837 Officers were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic until August. In conformity with the laws of the United States, the Constitution of the IBEW, and the Bylaws of Local 1837, there were not any contested offices which would have required us to proceed to a balloted election. (Please note that our Bylaws explicitly prohibit write-ins.)

At a meeting of the Local Union 1837 Executive Board on Friday, September 11, 2020, it was motioned, seconded and unanimously approved that the unopposed slate of candidates be elected to serve 3-year terms. Congratulations to the following IBEW 1837 members on their continued and upcoming service to our Local:

President: **Michelle Crocker**

Vice President: **Bob McNeff**

Business Manager: **Tony Sapienza**

Treasurer: **Donna Raymond**

E-Board Unit #1-Dover, NH: **Mark Penney**

E-Board Unit #2-Manchester, NH: **Kitty Kilroy**

E-Board Unit #3-Laconia, NH: **Artie Cornelissen**

E-Board Unit #4-Berlin, NH: **Jake Cote**

E-Board Unit #5-Keene, NH: **Tom Eaton**

E-Board Unit #6-Portland, ME: **John Heald**

E-Board Unit #7-Lewiston, ME: **Julie Goodell**

E-Board Unit #8- Augusta, ME: **Greg Fortin**

E-Board Unit #9-Waterville, ME: **Anita Libby**

E-Board Unit #10-Bangor, ME: **Brent Drake**

E-Board Unit #11-Presque Isle, ME: **Bruce Ayotte**

In addition, **Dyan Dubord** has accepted an appointment as Recording Secretary.



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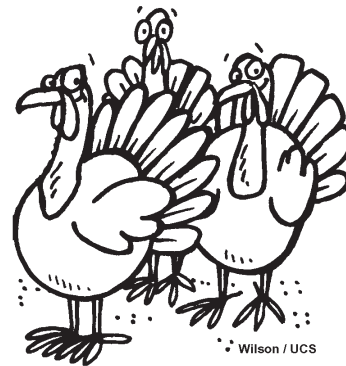
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Thanksgiving!



The Current

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President - Michelle Crocker
Vice President - Bob McNeff
Recording Secretary - Dyan Dubord
Treasurer - Donna Raymond
Business Manager - Tony Sapienza
Assistant Business Manager - Renee Gilman
Business Rep. / Current Editor - Matt Beck

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