



# Mail Handlers Local Union No. 323

1602 Selby Ave., Suite 5 St. Paul, MN 55104  
(651) 646-2827 Fax (651) 646-0991 LocalOffice@Local323.org

## Minutes of the Local Union 323 Executive Board Meeting ST. PAUL, MN September 28, 2012

Jeff Larsen

*Local President*

Kathy Schultz

*Vice President*

Dean Abatte

*Recording Secretary*

John Frey

*Treasurer*

State Executive

Board Members

Shane Ryden

*Minnesota*

Brock Engstrom

*North Dakota*

Branch Presidents

Dean Abatte

*Minneapolis*

Douglas Vitek

*St. Paul*

Mike Straiton

*BMC*

Gary Tollefsrud

*Fargo*

Local President Jeff Larsen called the Executive Board to order at 09:00 a.m. Roll call was taken by Recording Secretary Dean Abatte.

### IN ATTENDANCE:

**Local President:** Jeff Larsen

**Vice President:** Kathleen Schultz

**Recording Secretary:** Dean Abatte

**Treasurer:** John Frey

**MN State Representative:** Shane Ryden

**ND State Representative:** Brock Engstrom

The Local Executive Board reviewed the previous meeting minutes. Treasurer John Frey motioned to accept the minutes and this motion was seconded by MN State Rep. Shane Ryden. There were no objections and the motion carried unanimously.

### Local President Jeff Larsen reports: (see attached for full report)

- Northland District Labor Management meeting
- NALC Convention
- 2012 National Convention
- Political Activity
- Open Season Preparations
- Local 323 Dental Program
- Voluntary Early Retirement (VERA)
- National Agreement Status

### Branch Activities

- Labor Management Meetings
- Current Status of Proposed Consolidations
- Staffing Issues

Local President Jeff Larsen submitted for review his Expense Report and Time Sheet. Vice President Kathleen Schultz moved to authorize the Local Presidents expenses for the time frame reported. ND State Rep Brock Engstrom seconded

and the motion carried unanimously.

The complaint submitted to the National office by Mail Handler Mohamed Iise was reviewed and discussed. Local President Jeff Larsen addressed the issue with Mr. Iise.

**Treasurer John Frey reports:**

Treasurer John Frey submitted for review the Local's Profit and Loss Statement. ND State Rep. Brock Engstrom motioned to authorize the expenses of the Local for the time frame enumerated. The motion was seconded by Local Vice President Kathy Schultz, motion carried.

President Larsen opens the floor for general discussion, comments, and questions. Hearing none, ND State Rep. Brock Engstrom motions to adjourn the Local Executive Meeting.

VP Kathy Schultz second, Motion carries meeting adjourns at 10:57 am.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dean Abatte  
Recording Secretary Local 323  
National Postal Mail Handlers Union

cc: **Local Union Council**  
**Branch Leaders**  
**File**



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September 28, 2012

## Local President's Report

### Local 323 Complement:

The current Local 323 career complement as of PP-19-12 is 633 (572 MN & 61 ND) with Membership at 619.

### Local Activities:

- **Northland District Labor Management Meeting**

On July 19<sup>th</sup> I was in Minneapolis to join with Vice President Kathy Schultz and Recording Secretary Dean Abatte in attending the Northland District Semi-Annual Labor Management meeting. Topics included potential service standard changes, network rationalization, scanning, financial overviews, complement, PEER, and Postplan. This meeting was very informative and it provided us with information which can be relied upon in looking out for the best interest of our Membership.

- **NALC Convention**

Those of you who watch the events of the Postal world know that the National Association of Letter Carriers held their National Convention in Minneapolis during late July. I was lucky enough to spend part of a day as a guest accompanying National President John Hegarty. The NALC put together an impressive event and National President Hegarty addressed the Delegates to convey a message of solidarity on Postal as well as political issues.

- **2012 National Convention**

Treasurer John Frey, St. Paul Branch President Doug Vitek, and I served as Local 323's Delegates to the 2012 National Convention. This event was held in Portland, Oregon from August 6<sup>th</sup> through the 11<sup>th</sup>. The Convention proceeded in an orderly fashion and the Delegates heard from many speakers.

Jeff Larsen

*Local President*

Kathy Schultz

*Vice President*

Dean Abatte

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Mike Straiton

*BMC*

Gary Tollefsrud

*Fargo*



The Delegates addressed numerous proposals to amend the Constitution. Of particular significance in this regard was the Delegates' approval of a change in the amount and the manner in which dues increases will be handled. First, in changing the amount of the dues increase following a general wage increase from \$0.50 to \$1.00 per pay period; and second, to provide a \$1.00 per pay period dues increase in years where a COLA or cumulative COLAs increase the base pay by more than \$500.00 per year during a year without a general wage increase. The change from \$0.50 to \$1.00 per pay period reflects the necessities of the economic times. This rate hasn't been adjusted for several decades.

The decision to base a dues increase on COLAs was somewhat more controversial. Having served as a Member of the Constitution committee I cannot hesitate to recognize that this resulted from seeking the middle ground in a manner consistent with our organizational values. Proposals had been submitted to immediately institute a dues increase without regard to wage increases, but these proposals were rejected by the committee. Our organizational values, or our philosophy, have always been that dues increases must be tied to a real increase in Mail Handler wages. That philosophy remains in place. In addition, the prohibition against more than one dues increase per year remains intact. It doesn't matter if there is more than one general wage increase per year or a combination of a general wage increase and COLAs, dues increases remain limited to one a year.

The National Convention also serves as the political primary for candidates seeking National Office. In this regard, National President John Hegarty, National Secretary Treasurer Mark Gardner, Central Regional Vice President Jeff Peppers, and Northeastern Regional Vice President Paul Hogrogian were re-elected by acclamation. Western Regional Vice President Rudy Santos faced an election but the challenger was recently disqualified by the National Judges of Election. Current Eastern Regional Vice President Sam D'Ambrosio and current Southern Regional Vice President Bruce Miller have announced their retirements; so, elections for those positions are currently underway.

- **Political Activity**

On August 22<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Kathy Schultz and I participated in a conference call with LIUNA General President Terry O'Sullivan concerning election strategy. The Presidential and Senate races as well as the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> District Congressional races appear to be going in a positive direction for the candidates most favorable to our interests. To the extent that the labor movement deems it appropriate to contact our Membership in regard to these or other races, the National Union has provided the Minnesota State AFL-CIO with access to our mailing list. The State AFL-CIO may in certain races send a mailing to our Members with specific information designed to provide insight into where candidates stand on labor related issues. No dues money will be utilized for this purpose.

- **Open Season Preparations**

Local 323 is once again gearing up for another open season marketing the Mail Handlers Benefit Plan. In order to be well versed in the changes to rates and benefits the members of the Local 323 marketing team will be in attendance at this year's MHBP seminar.

This year's open season brings with it a new reimbursement program which has been instituted by the National Office. This program is designed to lessen the financial burden placed on the Local Union's by partially reimbursing some of the costs associated with health fair attendance. On August 29<sup>th</sup>, Vice President Kathy Schultz and I participated in a teleconference with the National Office in this regard and the extent to which Local 323 will rely on this program remains to be determined. At first glance the financial benefits of this program seem readily apparent, however, consideration must be given to the fact that the reimbursement of these expenses will reduce deductions related to our taxable income. The Local Executive Board will be evaluating this situation and discussing what would be the most prudent course of action.

- **Local 323 Dental Program**

In addition to the Mail Handlers Benefit Plan, Local 323 will be offering our Dental Program to the Regular Membership as well as Postal and Federal employees who chose to affiliate as Associate Members. This year's plan will be offered without an increase in premiums. Postings will be provided to the Branches and materials will be available on the web site prior to open season.

- **Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA)**

I'd like to offer my congratulations to the numerous Mail Handlers who chose to avail themselves of the recent retirement initiative. Retirement is the ultimate goal we all seek to achieve and it is always encouraging to see our fellow Mail Handlers cross the goal line.

- **National Agreement Status**

The National Union recently announced the appointment of Herbert Fishgold to serve as the neutral arbitrator concerning the impasse over the terms of the 2011 National Agreement. No schedule for conducting hearings has been released as of this date. Keep an eye on the bulletin boards and web sites for further information.

## **Branch Activities:**

- **Labor-Management Meetings**

I have continued to attend Labor-Management meetings in the Minneapolis, the NDC, and St. Paul Branches as my schedule permits.

- **Current Status of Proposed Consolidations**

Not much has changed with respect to potential future consolidations since my last report. Currently, it appears that no action will be taken with respect to the consolidations until sometime in early 2013.

- **Staffing Issues**

The recent retirements have brought staffing in many facilities down to the bare bones. This is requiring many Mail Handlers to work numerous and often unwelcome hours of overtime. The Local Union has been working with the National Union in an effort to alleviate many of these situations to the extent possible. Recently, the Article 12 Committee at the national level signed off on an agreement which provided Mail Handlers excessed from Minneapolis to the Des Moines NDC with an opportunity for reassignment to our NDC. The people who accepted this opportunity will be reporting to the NDC during October.

Similar discussions have been concluded with respect to Mail Handlers excessed into Northland district facilities in the States of Minnesota and Wisconsin. The Union has already approved this agreement; but, management is having trouble securing permission from their superiors. The National Union is attempting to facilitate resolution of this matter.

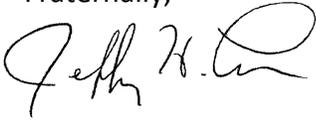
The Saint Paul Branch is having clerks reassigned within the installation to the Mail Handlers craft. It is unknown at this time how long these clerks will remain in the Mail Handler Craft as management is obligated by contract to return them to the clerk craft at the first available opportunity.

The facilities of Grand Forks and Fargo are currently being hit hard as the result of inadequate staffing and I'm currently discussion options for addressing these issues with the representatives from North Dakota.

**Upcoming Events:**

General Membership Meeting – October (pending)

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff H. Larsen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeff" being the most prominent.

Jeff Larsen  
Local President

cc: All Branches  
File