



Mail Handlers Local Union No. 323

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Minutes of the Local Union 323 Executive Board Meeting ST. PAUL, MN March 27, 2025

Jeff Larsen

Local President

Dean Abatte

Vice President

Aaron Kobes

Recording Secretary

Jarred Hoover

Treasurer

State Executive

Board Members

Shane Ryden

Minnesota

Brock Engstrom

North Dakota

Branch Presidents

Dean Abatte

Minneapolis

Edward Yun

St. Paul

Aaron Kobes

NDC

Brock Engstrom

Fargo

IN ATTENDANCE:

Local President: Jeff Larsen

Vice President: Dean Abatte

Treasurer: Jarred Hoover

MN SEBM Representative: Shane Ryden

ND SEBM Representative: Brock Engstrom

Recording Secretary: Aaron Kobes

Local President Jeff Larsen called the meeting to order at 10:09 A.M.
Recording Secretary Aaron Kobes took the roll call.

Review of the Previous Minutes

ND SEBM Brock Engstrom made a motion to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded by MN SEBM Shane Ryden, the motion carried.

Local President's Report (see attached for full report)

- Local 323 Compliment
 - Internal calculations put Membership at 99.2%
- Local activities
 - Fiscal Year Change
 - Annual Audit
 - 2025 National Negotiations
 - Arbitration Activity
 - Financial Management Seminar
 - Pending Legislation and Issues
 - Organizing Efforts
 - Voluntary Early Retirement (VER)

Branch Activities

January 16th – St. Paul Labor – Management Meeting

January 29th – Meeting with Minneapolis Branch Grievant Re: arbitration award

January 30th – St. Paul Labor – Management Meeting

February 10th – Meeting on Step 3 NDC Branch

February 25th – Meeting with St. Paul LDRC Representative
February 27th – St. Paul Labor – Management Meeting
March 14th – Meeting with Labor Relations Re: NDC grievance pending arbitration
March 19th – NDC Branch Steward Training

Upcoming Events

- SAMLU – April 7th through 9th
- NPMHU Legislative Conference – May 13th and 14th
- Local Executive Board – June 26th
- Metro Area Picnic – July 13th

Local President's Expense Report

Local President Jeff Larsen submitted for review his Expense Report. Recording Secretary Aaron Kobes motioned to authorize the Local President's expenses for the time frame given and was seconded by Vice President Dean Abatte. The motion carried.

Local President's Agenda Items

- Organizing Drive
 - Local President Jeff Larsen put forth a motion to provide a temporary additional supplement, \$50, for any Mail Handler who signs up another Mail Handler into Local 323 for the duration of the Drive. The motion was seconded by Vice President Dean Abatte. The motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Local Treasurer Jarred Hoover submitted the Local's Expenses and Profit and Loss Statements. ND SEBM Brock Engstrom moves to authorize expense account for time given by Treasurer. The motion was seconded by Vice President Dean Abatte, the motion carried.

Executive Officer's Report

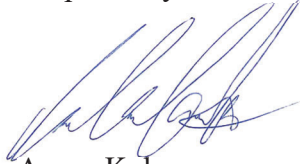
- Recording Secretary Aaron Kobes reporting as NDC Branch President stated that Plant Manager Gregory Tate returned to the NDC. Additionally, the Linear Spider has been broken down and is currently being stored in a trailer at the NDC to make way for additional staging lanes for the STC mail coming from the St. Paul P&DC.
- MN SEBM Ryden reported that discipline has increased in outstate facilities. Additionally, there is an effort to convert the MHAs; currently Mankato has nine (9) MHAs and St. Cloud is experiencing a retention deficit, though management in this facility has elected to leave the posting for available MHA positions up for longer periods of time than they had previously been doing. Finally, the SIPS machine in the Duluth facility was brought in without proper notification, however, there is no dispute in place due to a signed inventory.

- Vice President Dean Abatte reporting as Minneapolis Branch President stated that they were still awaiting a high-speed tray sorter, which management informed was due to be installed in February. There is also new equipment being brought in for the banding, palletizing and staging of Postal Packs, which the Vice President has argued is the sole province of Mail Handlers. Vice President Abatte went on to detail how the LDRC meetings in both the St. Paul and Minneapolis facilities have reached a stand still due to the issues of the APWU either not showing up or sending representatives that are not LDRC certified. Finally, the noted grievance activity in Minneapolis concerned six (6) reversions, three (3) of which were reposted through grievance settlements, in addition to two (2) NOR's, one (1) of which has been successfully returned to work, while the other is still being adjudicated through the grievance-arbitration procedure.

Open Discussion

ND SEBM Brock Engstrom motioned to adjourn the Local Executive Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by Vice President Dean Abatte. The motion was carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:31 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Kobes', is written over a horizontal line.

Aaron Kobes
Recording Secretary Local 323
National Postal Mail Handlers Union



- **Annual Audit**

The annual audit was conducted by Legacy Professional on February 18th and 19th. The audit went smoothly and provided us with an opportunity to discuss future transitions.

The Local Union's annual filing of Form LM-2 with the Department of Labor is due by the end of the month. A copy of this filing was emailed to all Members of the Local Executive Board for their review and/or comments on March 17th.

Forms 990, 990-T, as well as the tax filings with the States of Minnesota and North Dakota are not due until May 15th. Copies will be provided to Members of the Local Executive Board for their review and/or comments prior to submission.

Following customary practice, Legacy Professionals will be invited to attend the next meeting of the Local Executive Board to review and discuss the audit results.

- **2025 National Negotiations**

The 2022 National Agreement will expire on September 20, 2025. A Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) effective March 8th (PP-07-25) was recently received and one COLA remains under the terms of the 2022 National Agreement (the second full pay period after the release of the July 2025 Index). Formal bargaining over the term of what will become known at the 2025 National Agreement will begin in June.

In preparations for national negotiations, I was in Washington, DC the week of February 3rd serving as a member of the Field Negotiating Committee. More than 450 proposals submitted by Members, Representatives, and Local Unions from all over the country were reviewed and debated. Of course, at the forefront were proposals to increase both MHA and Mail Handlers wages.

Among the economic proposals submitted, was a proposal from Local 323 which concerned the proportional COLA. This proposal represented a joint effort by NDC Branch President Aaron Kobes and St. Paul Branch President Edward Yun to which more than 200 Members of the NDC and St. Paul Branches added their signatures. I would like to thank every Member who supported our efforts at correcting the proportional COLA problem. I felt like I had 200 Members of Local 323 sitting with me at the table.

Another proposal submitted by Treasurer Jarred Hoover was particularly well received. This proposal was to add language to Article 21 which guaranteed access to Postal facilities during an open season health fair.

The Field Negotiating Committee will meet to further discuss our proposals at the Semi-Annual Meeting of the Local Unions next month.

- **Arbitration Activity**

As previously reported, on December 12th I appeared on behalf of the Minneapolis Branch in Regular Regional Arbitration. The grievances involved the emergency placement and first offense removal of a Mail Handler for an alleged violation of the “zero tolerance” policy regarding violence in the workplace. The hearing was completed, and the arbitrator set January 10th as the deadline for the mailing of post hearing briefs. The arbitrator ruled quickly following the receipt of the post hearing briefs and directed the Postal Service to return the Grievant to duty. Unfortunately, the arbitrator did not award the Grievant back pay.

Regular Regional Arbitration had been scheduled to be held in the NDC Branch on January 27th. The primary cases involve the emergency placement and removal of a Mail Handler for an alleged violation of the “zero tolerance” policy regarding violence in the workplace. The backup cases involve the emergency placement and removal of a Mail Handler for an alleged violation of the “zero tolerance” policy regarding violence in the workplace. While I initially thought that there was no possibility of resolving these grievances, pre-arb discussions produced a last chance agreement for one Grievant, and a resignation with financial compensation for the other. Neither was a particularly good outcome, but I did not believe it likely that we could prevail in arbitration.

- **Financial Management Seminar**

On March 4th and 5th Treasurer Jarred Hoover and I were in Washington, DC, to attend the Financial Management Seminar conducted by the National Union. This was as much an overview of appropriate administrative practices as it was an informational exchange. The agenda was extensive and included a review of accounting methods, internal controls, record management and retention, Federal and State Filings, and Constitutional obligations. In addition, an updated version of the NPMHU Financial Practices Manual was provided to the attendees.

- **Pending Legislation and Issues**

There are several Bills and Resolutions introduced in Congress that should be of concern to Mail Handlers and Postal employees in general. All are currently being marked up, or pending mark up, in the respective committee. Among these are:

- H.R. 2174, the Paycheck Protection Act: This bill would prohibit federal agencies, including the U.S. Postal Service, from withholding union dues, fees, and political contributions from employee paychecks.
- H.R. 2193, the FEHB Protection Act of 2025: This bill would require federal agencies to verify that an employee is eligible to add a family member to their Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) health coverage plan. The

bill also directs \$80 million in audit funding be derived from the FEHBP trust fund to conduct the required audit. This ensures that the audit takes place, thus allowing for the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to provide a score of \$2.1 billion in mandatory savings over ten years. *(Note: This proposed Resolution specifically includes the Postal Service Health Benefit Program in its provisions)*

- H.R. 1295, the Reorganizing Government Act of 2025: This bill amends the Reorganization Act Amendments of 1984 to renew and extend through December 2026 the authority of the President to propose a government reorganization plan of which Congress must consider via an up or down vote on a joint resolution of approval within 90 calendar days.

- **Organizing Efforts**

On March 3rd a recruitment letter was sent to all non-members within the Local Union. This letter included a completed 1187 for their signature along with a postage paid return envelope. To date, there has been no response to this mailing.

The topic of Member recruitment and a 2025 Organizing Drive has been placed on the agenda for the current meeting of the Local Executive Board. If there was ever a time to be united it is now!

- **Voluntary Early Retirement (VER)**

An initial report indicates that twenty-five Mail Handlers within Local 323 decided to retire under the VER. Specifically, seven at the NDC, five in Minneapolis, eight in St. Paul, and five in Fargo. The Local Union thanks them for their support over the years and wishes everyone the best as they embark on this new chapter in their lives.

Branch Activities

Here are some excerpts from my calendar which involve Branch activities:

January 16th – St. Paul Labor – Management Meeting

January 29th – Meeting with Minneapolis Branch Grievant Re: arbitration award

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March 19th – NDC Branch Steward Training

Upcoming Events:

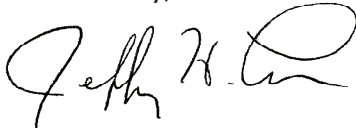
SAMLU – April 7th through 9th

NPMHU Legislative Conference – May 13th and 14th

Local Executive Board – June 26th

Metro Area Picnic – July 13th

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