



# Mail Handlers Local Union No. 323

1602 Selby Ave., Suite 5 St. Paul, MN 55104  
(651) 646-2827 Fax (651) 646-0991 [www.local323.org](http://www.local323.org)

## Minutes of the Local Union 323 Executive Board Meeting

ST. PAUL, MN

June 20, 2024

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

**Recording Secretary:** Aaron Kobes

**Treasurer:** Jarred Hoover

**MN SEBM Representative:** Shane Ryden

**ND SEBM Representative:** Brock Engstrom

Local President Jeff Larsen called the meeting to order at 10:27 A.M.

Recording Secretary Aaron Kobes took the roll call.

### Report of Annual Audit

The Local Executive Board received the results of the annual audit and reviewed the financial reports with Nick Hudek of Legacy Professionals. The Local Union had a surplus from fiscal year 2023 and our financial condition remains strong.

Following the report of Legacy Professionals, Local President Jeff Larsen made a motion to adopt a proposal concerning the accounting policy of the Local Union. Specifically, President Larsen proposed that the minutes include the following:

The Executive Board has discussed the options concerning the Local obtaining the capabilities of preparing financial statements that would not require significant changes by the auditor. The Board has decided that it would not be cost-beneficial to hire another employee to perform such a task or train current employees to be able to do so. The Board believes it is in the best interest of the Local to continue to retain the auditing firm to prepare the Local's financial statements in conjunction with the year-end audit.

This motion was seconded by MN SEBM Shane Ryden and passed unanimously.

### **Review of the Previous Minutes**

The Board reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting on March 28, 2024. MN SEBM Shane Ryden made a motion to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Jarred Hoover, the motion carried.

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

- Local 323 Compliment
- Local activities
  - 2024 Organizing Drive
  - Semi Annual Meeting of the Local Unions (SAMLU)
  - Postal Service Health Benefit Program (PSHBP) – Key Contacts
  - Mail Processing Facility Reviews – Implementation Paused
  - 2024 NPMHU National Convention
- Branch Activities
  - Fargo Branch Meeting
  - St. Paul Article 12 Event and Meetings
  - Arbitration and Pre-Arbitration Activity
  - Facility Visits and Activities

### **Upcoming Events**

- 2024 Matt Lopez Local 323 Scholarship Poll – July 1<sup>st</sup>
- Local 323 Metro Area Picnic – July 7<sup>th</sup>
- 2024 NPMHU National Convention – August 19<sup>th</sup> through August 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Local Union Council Meeting – September 5<sup>th</sup>
- Local Executive Board Meeting – September 26<sup>th</sup>
- MHBP Open Season Seminar – October 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>
- Semi Annual Meeting of the Local Unions – November 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>
- FEFA Retirement Seminars – November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>
- 2024 Recognition Dinner – TBD
- Local Executive Board – December 26<sup>th</sup>

### **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 MN SEBM Shane Ryden. The motion carried.

### **Local President's Agenda Items**

- Convention Policies – Stipend Amounts (See attached for full proposal)
  - Local President Jeff Larsen motioned to adopt a proposal that included the following policy;

- Expectations – The Local Executive Board expects all Delegates to attend all Convention sessions in their entirety.
  - Airfare, Luggage Fees and Ground Transportation – Each Delegate is responsible for arranging their own airfare and ground transportation by the most economical means and will be reimbursed upon proper submittal of a voucher with the understanding that vouchers submitted before the Convention will be subject for repayment to the Local Union if the Convention should be cancelled.
  - Lodging – The local Union will pay for up to six (6) nights of lodging beginning with Sunday, August 18, 2024, and ending with Friday, August 23, 2024. Any surplus charges, i.e. room services, movies, etc. are the responsibility of the Delegate.
  - Wages – In keeping with the posting for the Nomination Meeting, the Local Executive Board has determined that each Delegate will be compensated up to forty (40) hours at their Postal rate, to include any lost night shift differential or Sunday premium. Compensation will be made following the convention once Delegates submit a copy of their PS Form 3971.
  - Stipend for Meals – Each Delegate will receive a check in the amount of three-hundred and fifty dollars (\$350.00) ten (10) days prior to the convention as a stipend to cover the cost of meals during the Convention period.
  - Administration – If an emergency occurs during the Convention which requires that a Delegate return home and an Alternate Delegate travel to the Convention, the wages and stipends of these Delegates will be adjusted based on the circumstances.
- Delegate Meeting
    - The possibility of holding a meeting of the Delegates prior to the National Convention was discussed. However, there was no final decision made at this meeting.
  - 2024 Organizing Drive
    - Local President Jeff Larsen made a motion for the Local 323 2024 Organizing Drive to close, ending the supplemental payments on September 30, 2024. The motion was seconded by MN SEBM Shane Ryden, 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**

- Vice President Dean Abatte reporting as Minneapolis Branch President stated that the 67 combination of operations was not effective, so management has decided to separate the two operations. Vice President Abatte voiced concerns on the matter with regards to how

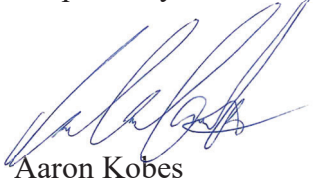
the mail will be viewed by management and erroneously giving it to the Clerks for them to work, citing past instances with this mail. Vice President Abatte also reported that there were several MHAs separated with the Postal Service claiming “lack of work”, additionally, some MHAs quite due to the reduction in hours seen across the country, and Vice President Abatte worked to get the separations back filled with the spots vacated by the MHAs who resigned. All residual vacancies have been filled, and there is a new mechanical arm coming for the ADUS that should remove the Clerks from the unit, in addition to an upcoming change in hours for the Whole Cart area from 4 A.M. to 6 A.M. Vice President Dean Abatte speaking as such, then stated that the picnic food/prize shopping was nearing completion, with the menu staying the same as the previous year and a small discussion with the rest of the Board on whether to go with a TV or a Bluetooth portable boombox as this year’s top prize, for which the Board collectively decided on the later.

- MN SEBM Shane Ryden states that management is seemingly apprehensive in issuing disciplinary action in the outstate facilities. Additionally, MN SEBM Shane Ryden reports that there has been an increase in Duluth and Mankato reporting Article 1.6 violations and other complaints of management. The outstate facilities are down to three (3) residual vacancies; one (1) in Mankato, and two (2) in St. Cloud. Duluth has lost two (2) MHAs, with one (1) quitting and the other being separated, though membership is now at 100% for the Duluth facility.
- Recording Secretary Aaron Kobes reporting as Branch President for the NDC informed the Board of the struggle with management in both the Minneapolis/St. Paul NDC and the St. Paul P&DC utilizing Mail Handlers for work in facilities that are not their home facilities. Additionally, Recording Secretary Aaron Kobes reported on an incident with management attempting to reprimand a Mail Handler for expressing breast milk.

### **Open Discussion**

Local President Jeff Larsen opened the floor for general discussion, comments, questions, and upon hearing none, ND SEBM Brock Engstrom motioned to adjourn the Local Executive Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Jarred Hoover. The motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Aaron Kobes

Recording Secretary Local 323

National Postal Mail Handlers Union



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June 20, 2024

## Local President's Report Local Executive Board

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*Local President*

Dean Abatte  
*Vice President*

Aaron Kobes  
*Recording Secretary*

Jarred Hoover  
*Treasurer*

State Executive  
Board Members

Shane Ryden  
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### Local 323 Complement:

The Local 323 bargaining unit complement as of Pay Period 12-24 is 769 (699 MN & 70 ND). Membership is 755.

### Local Activities:

- **2024 Organizing Drive**

The 2024 Local 323 organizing drive remains ongoing. During the drive any Member who enrolls a non-member will receive a \$100.00 check for promoting solidarity in their Branch. Many Members have already received checks for their recruitment efforts. Progress is being made, but there is still much work to be done. The topic of non-member recruitment remains on the agenda of all meetings when appropriate.

There is no good reason for not belonging to the Union.

- **Semi Annual Meeting of the Local Unions (SAMLU)**

From April 29<sup>th</sup> through May 1<sup>st</sup>, I was in Pittsburgh, PA, for the SAMLU. The agenda for each day was as follows:

Monday, April 29, 2024

- Report of the National President -- Paul Hogrogian
- Litigation Report -- General Counsel Matt Clash-Drexler
- Report from Legislative and Political Director -- Katie Maddocks
- NPMHU Women's Committee Report -- June Harris, Central Region Vice President

Tuesday, April 30, 2024

- Mail Handlers Benefit Plan Report -- Executive Director -- Nina Gallauresi
- Aetna Director of National Accounts -- Brad Corban/Schann Holladay
- Report of the National Secretary – Treasurer -- Kevin Tabarus
- Report from the Contract Administration Department – CAD Manager -- Teresa Harmon
- Report on Article 12 Task Force and RI399 -- National CAD Representative Tom Ruther

- **Postal Service Health Benefit Program (PSHBP) – Key Contacts**

The Committee of the Future has recommended that each Local President identify Key Contacts within their Local Union to gain working knowledge of the PSHBP. MHBP Executive Director Nina Gallauresi will schedule virtual training sessions for Key Contacts to educate them about the PSHBP and inform them of resources available. The virtual meetings will begin in June and continue if the group finds them useful.

Per the request of MHBP Executive Director Gallauresi, I have designated myself, Vice President Dean Abatte, and Fargo Branch Representative Brian Blatchford, as the Key Contacts for Local 323. Initial training sessions have been scheduled for June 23<sup>rd</sup> and July 9<sup>th</sup>.

- **Mail Processing Facility Reviews – Implementation Paused**

On May 9, 2024, Postmaster General DeJoy sent a letter to Gary Peters (D – MI), Chairman of the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, in which he agreed “... to pause the movement of processing operations associated with the Mail Processing Facility Reviews.” Postmaster General DeJoy went on to indicate “I will commit to pause any implementation of these moves at least until after January 1, 2025.” The Postmaster General has been widely criticized for declining delivery scores in areas where his 10 – Year Plan has been implemented.

This pause in implementation leaves us in limbo, at least until after January 1, 2025.

- **2024 NPMHU National Convention**

The Delegation comprised of myself, Vice President Abatte, Recording Secretary Kobes, Treasurer Hoover, ND SEBM Enstrom, and Branch President Yun, is preparing to attend the 2024 NPMHU National Convention. The Local 323 Delegation will be following one guiding principle: every decision we make, every proposal we support, every proposal we oppose, will be based on what’s in the best interest of the Members of Local 323.

## **Branch Activities:**

- **Fargo Branch Meeting**

On Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, I attended a meeting of the Fargo Branch that was held at the Holiday Inn. ND SEBM and Fargo Branch President Brock Engstrom provided a substantial agenda for discussion with the Members in attendance. Among the items discussed were:

- Staffing Issues
- Overtime Concerns - Pecking order, No Early
- "Floor" updates/Some operations to ASF/Peak Annex Plan
- Ongoing Craft jurisdictional issues/Grievances
- Annual leave calendar issues/ideas
- Empty Equipment Issues
- EAS changes/issues
- MHBP Standard Plan

There were thorough discussions regarding the issues of concern to the Members of the Fargo Branch. It is always good to see Members addressing issues which impact their workplace and have them provide input to their Union.

- **St. Paul Article 12 Event and Meetings**

By letter dated April 15, 2024, the St. Paul plant manager provided the Union with written notice of his intent to implement involuntary reassignments outside the section, but within the installation. The sections impacted by this notice are located at the Twin Cities L&DC (airport) and include all tours. Management's notice stated, "This action is due to the significant decline in our volumes at the Air Mail Facility – Local Distribution Center." The letter went on to say that the anticipated effective date of changes would be October 19, 2024.

This matter was initially discussed during a Labor – Management meeting on April 26, 2024. At that meeting, management reiterated that it had become necessary to abolish jobs at the Twin Cities L&DC and reassign Mail Handlers to the St. Paul P&DC. Management added that they may begin detailing Mail Handlers back to the plant much sooner than October. Management also indicated that they will be completely shutting down the sack sorter and only operating the Twin Cities L&DC on two tours (tour 1 and tour 3).

On May 8, 2024, the plant manager held two informational meetings at the Twin Cities L&DC, a morning session and an evening session. These meetings were open to both Union representatives and impacted employees. The morning session was attended by St. Paul Branch President Edward Yun and both Branch President Yun and I attended the

evening session. The information provided generally followed what had been previously discussed, with management adding that the Twin Cities L&DC would remain open.

Excessing outside of a section, within an installation, is the most complicated mechanism contained in Article 12. As such, I will remain personally involved with all aspects of any implementation.

- **Arbitration and Pre-Arbitration Activity**

The scheduling of arbitration hearings was significantly delayed due to difficulties in assembling arbitration panels following the ratification of the 2022 National Agreement. The National parties recently agreed to place a single arbitrator on the panel for the facilities within Local 323. This resulted in the scheduling of a grievance protesting the removal of an NDC Branch Mail Handler who received an unfavorable NACI (National Agency Check with Inquiries). The hearing was scheduled for June 17, 2024. The removal of non-probationary career Mail Handlers resulting from the receipt of an unfavorable NACI is currently the subject of a Step 4 National Level dispute. Consequently, I agreed to a pre-arbitration settlement to hold this grievance, as well as an identical case involving a different Grievant, in abeyance pending resolution of the National Level dispute.

The back up case for the June 17<sup>th</sup> hearing date was contractual grievance out of the NDC (two grievances combined) which management claimed at Step 2, and reiterated at Step 3, was untimely. That grievance was withdrawn, and the hearing date was cancelled.

An arbitration hearing is currently scheduled for July 22, 2024, for a grievance challenging the removal of a St. Paul Branch Mail Handler for unacceptable conduct. Preparations for that hearing date are underway.

- **Facility Visits and Activities**

I frequently visit the metro area Branches and attend as many Labor – Management meetings as my schedule permits. And I continue assisting Representatives, discussing issues with Members, working on computers, and helping with whatever else is needed. Helping is what I do.

### **Upcoming Events:**

2024 Matt Lopez Local 323 Scholarship Poll – July 1<sup>st</sup>

Local 323 Metro Area Picnic – July 7<sup>th</sup>

2024 NPMHU National Convention – August 19<sup>th</sup> through August 23<sup>rd</sup>



Local Union Council Meeting – September 5<sup>th</sup>

Local Executive Board Meeting – September 26<sup>th</sup>

Jarred's Birthday – September 28<sup>th</sup>

MHBP Open Season Seminar – October 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>

Semi Annual Meeting of the Local Unions - November 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>

FEFA Retirement Seminars – November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>

2024 Recognition Dinner - TBD

Local Executive Board – December 26<sup>th</sup>?

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff H. Larsen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Jeff Larsen

Local President

cc: All Branches  
File