



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

Minutes of the Local Union 323 Executive Board Meeting

ST. PAUL, MN

September 26, 2024

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 10:17 A.M.

Recording Secretary Aaron Kobes took the roll call.

Review of the Previous Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting on March 28, 2024. ND SEBM Brock Engstrom made a motion to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded by Vice President Dean Abatte, the motion carried.

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

- Local 323 Compliment
- Local activities
 - 2024 Organizing Drive
 - 2025 National Agreement
 - Promotion Pay Anomaly Settlement
 - Upcoming Change to Postal Service Health Benefit Program and Mail Handlers Benefit Plan (MHBP)
 - Arbitration and Pre-Arbitration Activity

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

- Branch Activities

Upcoming Events

- Metro Area MHBP Seminar Preparation Meeting – October 8th
- MHBP Open Seminar – October 11th & 12th
- St. Paul Branch Meeting – October 19th
- NDC Branch Meeting – October 26th
- FEFA Retirement Seminar – November 3rd & 5th
- SAMLU – November 4th – 6th
- FEHBP/PSHBP Open Season – November 11th – December 9th
- 2024 Steward Dinner – November 30th
- Local Executive Board – December 27th

Local President's Expense Report

Local President Jeff Larsen submitted for review his Expense Report. Vice President Dean Abatte motioned to authorize the Local President's expenses for the time frame given and was seconded by ND SEBM Brock Engstrom. The motion carried.

Local President's Agenda Items

- Mileage rate
 - Local President Jeff Larsen made a motion to change the auto mileage amount from \$0.50/mile to \$0.67/mile, noting that both the rate has not been increased

Treasurer's Report

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

Executive Officer's Report

- Vice President Abatte reporting as Minneapolis Branch President stated that there is a now a dispute regarding the FPARS, as there is currently no inventory. This filing occurred after an influx of FPARS has been coming in, to the point of it being delayed two - three weeks. Currently, Mail Handlers are consolidating and staging it; the Minneapolis Branch is filing Cross-Craft violations when Clerks are sorting after two passes through the machine. The APWU has failed to appear at RI399 meetings, with the latest one being September 25, 2024. Additionally, Vice President Abatte reported that Minneapolis is below Mail Handler compliment by Postal figures, the facility has been approved for a high-speed tray sorter with an expected arrival of January 2025, and there is an increased probability of singulators coming in on both ADUS and APBS machines which would eliminate the keying and feeding feature currently done by Clerk Craft employees.

- MNSEBM Ryden noted that there are two large grievances for filling residual bid vacancies with no MHAs in both the Saint Cloud and Mankato facilities. MNSEBM Ryden went on to note that there has been a trend noticed where the Postal Service will put up a posting for a job on Friday and have it come down on Monday, leading to issues with hiring.
- Recording Secretary Kobes reporting as Minneapolis/St. Paul NDC Branch President reported on the ongoing trend of problematic supervisors; yelling on the floor, aggressive attitudes towards Craft employees and intimidation. The NDC is actively working in the grievance procedure to address this issue. Additionally, there has been an increase of Article 1.6 violation filings within the grievance procedure, as the NDC Branch is seeing an increase of Craft employee participation in writing statements of violations witnessed.

Open Discussion

ND SEBM Brock Engstrom motioned to adjourn the Local Executive Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Jarred Hoover. The motion was carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Aaron Kobes

Recording Secretary Local 323

National Postal Mail Handlers Union

cc: All Branches

File



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Local President's Report Local Executive Board

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Local 323 Complement:

The Local 323 bargaining unit complement as of Pay Period 19-24 is 748 (683 MN & 65 ND). Membership is 735.

Local Activities:

- **2024 Organizing Drive**

The 2024 Local 323 Organizing Drive will conclude at the end of September. During this year's drive 13 non-members were enrolled into the Union. The Local Union continues to provide a monetary incentive for Members who sign up non-members; and the Local Union Council recently amended our Bylaws to increase the regular enrollment incentive from \$25.00 to \$50.00. The 1187 Forms needed to enroll non-members into the Union as well as a list of the non-members in your Branch remain available in the Branch Union offices.

Will there be a 2025 organizing drive? If there are non-members, I don't see why there wouldn't be. The specifics of a 2025 organizing drive will be discussed at a future meeting of the Local Executive Board.

- **2025 National Agreement**

The 2022 National Agreement will expire on September 20, 2025. On September 9th, the National Union issued a nation-wide call for bargaining proposals from Members and Local Unions. This provides every Member with a voice on the terms of our next contract. All proposals must be submitted by January 31, 2025. Formal bargaining will begin in June of 2025. It should be noted that one general wage increase (1.3% - Effective November 16, 2024) and one Cost of Living Adjustment (the second full pay period after the release of the January 2025 Index) are still forthcoming under the 2022 National Agreement.

A copy of the proposal form is available on the National Union's website and will be placed on the front page of our website soon (probably this weekend). The topic of contract proposals will be covered in my next web column.

- **Promotion Pay Anomaly Settlement**

Several Mail Handlers within Local 323 are seeing adjustments made to their pay rates as the result of a National Level settlement. The promotional pay anomaly and the "hold in place" rule has been the subject of a National grievance for several years. The long-anticipated resolution of this matter is currently placing impacted Mail Handlers into the appropriate Step of the pay scale. Some are seeing significant amounts of back pay. I would like to thank all impacted Mail Handlers for their patience. This was a tough one.

- **Upcoming Change to Postal Service Health Benefit Program and Mail Handlers Benefit Plan (MHBP)**

As everyone is aware, effective January 1, 2025, Postal Employees and Annuitants will be transitioning to a separate subset of the Federal Employees Health Benefit (FEHB) program known as the Postal Service Health Benefits Program (PSHBP). Enrollees will be "default mapped" to a corresponding plan and may make changes during open season. The Postal Service will mail employees the default mapping for their plan. All three MHBP coverage options will exist in both the FEHB and the PSHBP.

Preparations for this transition have long been underway. As previously reported, the Committee of the Future recommended that each Local President identify Key Contacts within their Local Union to gain working knowledge of the PSHBP. In this regard, I designated myself, Vice President Dean Abatte, and Fargo Branch Representative Brian Blatchford, as the Key Contacts for Local 323. Over the last few months, Key Contacts have been participating in virtual training sessions to educate them about the PSHBP and inform them of available resources. These virtual meetings continue to be scheduled.

The Local 323 marketing team will be attending the MHBP Open Season Seminar in October, and a meeting of the metro area health insurance representatives has been scheduled immediately prior to the Seminar. The purpose of this meeting is to identify any issues for which we will need answers at the Seminar.

- **Arbitration and Pre-Arbitration Activity**

A Regular Regional Arbitration hearing was scheduled for July 22, 2024, in the St. Paul Branch. The primary grievance and the backup grievance involved first offense removals issued to the Grievant's which resulted from a physical altercation on the workroom floor. One of the grievances was resolved with a Last Chance Agreement which returned the Grievant to work. The other grievance was resolved with the Grievant being provided a financial incentive to resign. Each of these Grievants had previously

received several thousand dollars in compensation as a resolution of emergency placement grievances.

The Local Union currently has three first offense removals pending on the arbitration docket which involve an allegation of some type of physical contact; and, I anticipate that one of these grievances will be scheduled in November.

Branch Activities

In early and mid-July, I attended and participated in several meetings regarding the sectional excessing occurring in the St. Paul Branch. Specifically, management deemed it necessary to abolish duty assignments in the sections (tours) at the Twin Cities L&DC and excess junior employees to the St. Paul P&DC. While suffice it to say that the people being sent to the St. Paul P&DC were unhappy, the expedited selection process and subsequent reassignments followed the order required by the National Agreement. We are now turning our attention to the implementation of retreat rights and the first retreat is currently underway.

On July 25th, a joint training session was held with the Representatives of the St. Paul and NDC Branches. The purpose of this training was to formulate a uniform approach to the enforcement of the MOA regarding the transportation of mail and equipment between those two installations. The session consisted of a review of the Agreement, management's obligation, and a discussion of ideas that would help better enforce the terms. This remains an ongoing effort in both Branches.

As always, I continue to assist Representatives with appeals, computer issues, and whatever else arises. I have attended several Labor – Management meetings in the St. Paul and NDC Branches. In addition, I've visited all the metro area facilities on numerous occasions since the last meeting of the Local Executive Board.

Upcoming Events:

Metro Area MHBP Seminar Preparation Meeting – October 8th

MHBP Open Season Seminar – October 11th & 12th

St. Paul Branch Meeting – October 19th

NDC Branch Meeting – October 26th

FEFA Retirement Seminar – November 3rd & 5th

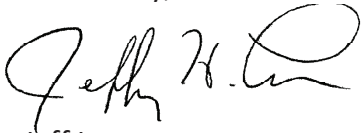
SAMLU – November 4th – 6th

FEHBP Open Season – November 11th – December 9th

2024 Steward Dinner – November 30th

Local Executive Board – December 27, 2024

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