



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 June 28, 2021

Jeff Larsen

Local President

Dean Abatte

Vice President

Brian Newhouse

Recording Secretary

John Frey

Treasurer

State Executive

Board Members

Shane Ryden

Minnesota

Brock Engstrom

North Dakota

Branch Presidents

Dean Abatte

Minneapolis

Edward Yun

St. Paul

Mike Straiton

BMC

Brock Engstrom

Fargo

IN ATTENDANCE:

Local President: Jeff Larsen

Vice President: Dean Abatte

Recording Secretary: Brian Newhouse

Treasurer: John Frey

MN SEBM: Shane Ryden (via phone)

ND SEBM: Brock Engstrom

Local President Jeff Larsen called the meeting to order at 10:38 a.m.

Recording Secretary Brian Newhouse took the roll call.

Branch Presidents Edward Yun from St. Paul and Mike Straiton from the NDC were in attendance as guests.

Review of the Previous Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes from previous meeting on March 25, 2021. ND SEBM Engstrom made a motion to accept the minutes. That motion was seconded by Treasurer Frey, motion carried.

Motion made by President Larsen to accept that the Local Union continue the policy of using an external auditor to prepare financial statements. Seconded by ND SEBM Engstrom. Motion carried.

Discussion and Review of Annual Audit

Larry Wood from the accounting firm of Legacy Professionals attended the meeting to provide an overview of the annual audit and the Local Union's financial position. The Board had been previously provided with the audit documents and were afforded an opportunity to ask questions during the meeting.

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

- 323 Compliment
- Career Conversions

- Covid -19 Emergency Federal Employee Leave
- Legislative Issues – Current Status of Postal Reform
- Arbitration Activity
- Local Website
- Matt Lopez – Local 323 Scholarship
- 2021 LIUNA Convention Delegate Election

Upcoming Events

- LIUNA Delegate Election Ballot Count – Jun 28th
- Semi-Annual Meeting of the Local Unions – August 2 – 4, 2021
- Virtual LIUNA convention – September 21st and 22nd

President’s Expense Report

Local President Jeff Larsen submitted for review his Expense Report. ND SEBM Engstrom moved to authorize the Local President’s expenses and was seconded by Vice President Abatte. The motion carried.

Local President’s Agenda Items

- Membership Review
- NDC Annex
- Mail Handler Benefit Plan – Open Season seminar October 8 – 9, 2021
- 2020 National Convention Per Diem

Treasurer’s Report

Local Treasurer John Frey submitted the Local's Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Statements. MN SEBM Engstrom motioned to authorize the expenses of the Local Union for the time frame. The motion was seconded by MN SEBM Ryden. The motion carried.

Executive Officer’s Report

- MN SEBM Ryden discussed St. Cloud issues.
- Minneapolis Branch President Abatte spoke about RI-399 issues and the ADUS machine.

Adjournment

ND SEBM Engstrom made a motion to adjourn the Local Executive Board Meeting. That motion was seconded by President Larsen. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian Newhouse
Recording Secretary Local 323
National Postal Mail Handlers Union

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



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June 28, 2021

Local President's Report Local Executive Board

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Local President

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State Executive
Board Members

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Minnesota

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Edward Yun
St. Paul

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Local 323 Complement:

The Local 323 career complement as of Pay Period 12-21 is 672 (584 MN & 88 ND) and the MHA complement is 120 (102 MN & 18 ND). Combined Membership is 709.

- **Career Conversions**

On June 21st, the National Union secured a MOU which provides for the conversion of 6,596 Mail Handler Assistants to career Mail Handlers. When added to the previous MOU, this represents more than 12,000 Mail Handler Assistants being converted nation-wide this year. Specific conversions within Local 323 are:

Minneapolis/St. Paul NDC	50
St. Paul P&DC	39
Minneapolis P&DC	35
Twin Cities L&DC	5
St. Cloud P&DC	5
Duluth P&DC	1
Bismarck P&DF	4
Grand Forks MPF	6
Fargo P&DF	1
Total:	146

The current MOU will be administered identically to the one from earlier this year. Career conversion must be completed no later than August 14th and duty assignments equal to the number of conversions must be posted for installation-wide bidding.

We must again make sure that newly converted career Mail Handlers are informed that they have 60 days from the date of their career appointment to enroll in a Federal Employee Health Benefit (FEHB)

insurance plan. If they don't make a selection in this 60-day window, they will be considered to have declined coverage, and must wait to enroll until the next Open Season or Qualifying Life Event.

- **COVID-19 – Emergency Federal Employee Leave**

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) became effective on March 11, 2021 . This Act included the Emergency Federal Employee Leave (EFEL) benefit which provides for the payment of up to 600 hours of leave (15 weeks) under specific circumstances when an employee is unable to work because of the COVID-19 virus. EFEL benefits remain available to both Mail Handlers and MHAs. These benefits will continue through September 30, 2021, if funding remains available. EFEL is funded by a \$570 million Emergency Federal Employee Leave Fund that is administered by the Office of Personnel Management. As of June 23rd, approximately \$491.5 million of the \$570 million remains in the fund.

As reported during last month's meeting of the Local Union Council, the Local Office and the Branch Offices have been deeply involved in issues related to EFEL.

- **Legislative Issues – Current Status of Postal Reform**

Postal Service Reform Act of 2021 (H.R. 3076):

05/11/2021	Introduced in House Action By: House of Representatives
05/11/2021	Referred to the Committee on Oversight and Reform, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned. Action By: House of Representatives
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05/13/2021	Committee Consideration and Mark-up Session Held. Action By: Committee on Oversight and Reform

05/13/2021 Ordered to be Reported in the Nature of a Substitute (Amended) by Voice Vote.
Action By: Committee on Oversight and Reform

Postal Service Improvement Act of 2021 (H.R. 3077):

05/11/2021 Introduced in House
Action By: House of Representatives

05/11/2021 Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform.
Action By: House of Representatives

05/13/2021 Committee Consideration and Mark-up Session Held.
Action By: Committee on Oversight and Reform

05/13/2021 Ordered to be Reported in the Nature of a Substitute (Amended) by the
Yeas and Nays: 23 - 17.
Action By: Committee on Oversight and Reform

Postal Service Reform Act (S. 1720):

05/19/2021 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs.
Action By: Senate

While the prospect of Postal reform being passed by the 117th Congress remains good, this legislation appears to currently be “parked.”

- **Arbitration Activity**

Arbitration had been scheduled for the NDC Branch on July 16th. The grievance involved the alleged violation of a Last Change Agreement by an NDC Branch Mail Handler. I met with and discussed this grievance with Vice President Dean Abatte and NDC Branch President Mike Straiton on several occasions. Vice President Dean Abatte served as our advocate for this hearing date, and he secured a settlement which allowed the Grievant to return to duty.

Arbitration is currently scheduled for the NDC Branch on August 17th. This grievance similarly involves the alleged violation of a Last Change Agreement by an NDC Branch Mail Handler. Vice President Dean Abatte is serving as our advocate for this hearing date as well and discussions with management have begun.

Several additional attendance related removals remain pending on the arbitration docket or in the grievance procedure.

- **Local Web Site**

The process of adding materials to the “Training and Reference” section of the Steward’s database is continuing. These materials may be used by Stewards for individual research or Branch leaders for group training. The overall goal is to build a corps of well-prepared Stewards by providing easy access to information useful to contract administration and grievance processing. The focus is currently to provide information useful to Stewards processing grievances at step 1. I would guesstimate that this part is nearing 50% completion. A second phase is likely to follow for Stewards processing grievance at step 2. This would likely involve filing the initial appeal, constructing contentions, and making rebuttal arguments (correction and additions). Stay tuned, there’s much more to come.

- **Matt Lopez – Local 323 Scholarship**

The opening date to submit applications for the 2021 Matt Lopez Local 323 Scholarship was June 1st and applications may be submitted through close of business on June 30, 2021. The applications submitted will be scanned and emailed to all Members of the Local Union Council for a vote on July 1st. The 2021 recipient will be announced when the vote is completed. Good luck to all applicants.

- **2021 LIUNA Convention Delegate Election**

The process of electing a Delegate to the 2021 LIUNA Convention will conclude on June 28th with the counting of the ballots. I would like to express once again my thanks to Tony Stickler of the NDC Branch, Nicole Rodriguez of the St. Paul Branch, and Jarred Hoover of the Minneapolis Branch, who served as Judges for this election.

Upcoming Events:

LIUNA Delegate Election Ballot Count – June 28th
Semi-Annual Meeting of the Local Unions – August 2nd through August 4th
August Picnic?
Virtual LIUNA Convention – September 21st and 22nd

Fraternally,

Jeff Larsen
Local President

cc: All Branches
File