



# 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

December 28, 2023

### 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 10:21 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 September 28, 2023. 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
  - Mail Processing Facility Reviews
  - 2024 NPMHU National Convention- Delegate Election
  - Mail Handler Benefit Plan (MHBP) Seminar- Open Season

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*



- Local 323 Dental Program
- Local Organizing Seminar
- Changes and Administrative Initiatives
- Branch Activities
  - NDC Steward Training
  - St. Paul Stewards Meeting
  - Facility Visits and Activities

### **Upcoming Events**

- Fiscal Year Change- January 1, 2024
- Nomination Meeting for Delegates to the National Convention- January 12, 2024
- Annual Audit- February 2024
- Local Executive Board- March 28, 2024

### **Local President's Expense Report**

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

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

- Membership Review
- Organizing Drive
  - Local President Jeff Larsen put forth a motion to provide a temporary additional supplement, \$75.00, for any Mail Handler who signs up another Mail Handler into Local 323 for the duration of the Drive. After discussion the motion was seconded by ND SEBM Brock Engstrom. The motion carried.
- LRDC Issues
- Determination of the date of Metro Area Picnic
  - Tentative date for Picnic set for June 30<sup>th</sup>, barring any complications in procuring permit.

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

### **Executive Officer's Report**

- Vice President Dean Abatte reporting as Minneapolis Branch President stated that the Minneapolis Branch is now at 100% membership, in addition to curtailing the separation of 15 MHA's after Peak Season. Vice President Dean Abatte reporting as Minneapolis Branch President also stated that both computer/internet integration and Stewards meetings in Minneapolis are going well. Vice president Dean Abatte additionally

reported that St. Paul P&DC has brought back the 546-549 bullpens per A/Plant Manager Tate's request as well as two additional disputes in RI399 but does not believe there is proper grounds for such, and notes that the APWU has failed to attend RI399 for the 5<sup>th</sup> time.

- MN SEBM Shane Ryden reported a push to revert jobs despite having several residuals and not hiring out. Additionally, it was reported that management had been backfilling jobs with Overtime Details.
- Recording Secretary Aaron Kobes reporting as NDC Branch President stated that there was significant settlements and subsequent pay outs for Article 1.6 grievance during Peak Season with increased cooperation from Mail Handlers and Maintenance in the form of written statements. Aaron Kobes also reported multiple instances of erratic and even violent behavior from EAS over Peak Season that is currently being dealt with through the Grievance procedure.

### **Open Discussion**

Vice President Dean Abatte motioned to adjourn the Local Executive Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by MN SEBM Shane Ryden. The motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:25 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Aaron Kobes

Recording Secretary Local 323

National Postal Mail Handlers Union



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Dean Abatte

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Aaron Kobes

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State Executive

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*Fargo*

## Local President's Report

### Local Executive Board

#### Local 323 Complement:

The Local 323 career complement as of Pay Period 25-23 is 707 (635 MN & 72 ND) and the MHA complement is 103 (101 MN & 2 ND). The Bargaining Unit total is 810 and Membership as of Pay Period 25-23 is 766.

It should be noted that Pay Period 25-23 is part of the uncapped period and Mankato, Minneapolis, and St. Cloud, are employing MHAs above the normal percentage.

#### Local Activities:

- **Mail Processing Facility Reviews**

The Postal Service has been continuing to utilize a process known as a Mail Processing Facility Review (MPFR) in numerous locations throughout the country. According to the Postal Service and under Handbook PO-408 an MPFR determines the feasibility of changing mail processing operations to improve operational efficiency and/or service. Several facilities within Local 323 have the potential to be impacted by MPFR's, primarily the Minneapolis P&DC, and the Fargo P&DC.

By letter dated September 27, 2023, the Postal Service announced that it would be conducting an MPFR at the Minneapolis P&DC to determine whether efficiency and/or service could be improved by consolidating mail processing operations into the St. Paul P&DC. As previously reported during a meeting of the Local Union Council, the result of this MPFR was provided to the National Union by letter dated October 17, 2023. It indicated that the initial results of the review supported the business case to keep the Minneapolis P&DC open and modernizing it as a Local Processing Center (LPC).

By letter dated November 8, 2023, the Postal Service announced that it would be conducting MPFR's at the Bismarck, ND P&DC, the Grand Forks,

ND P&DC, and the Dakota Central P&DC (Huron, SD), to determine whether efficiency and/or service could be improved by consolidating mail processing operations into the Fargo P&DC. The results of these MPFR's were provided to the National Union by letter dated November 21, 2023. It also indicated that the initial result of the reviews supported the business case for keeping each facility open and modernizing them as LPC's.

By letter dated December 4, 2023, the Postal Service informed the National Union that it would begin implementing the results of the MPFR's at five facilities in various locations throughout the country. Among these facilities was the Minneapolis P&DC. Specifically, with respect to the Minneapolis P&DC this letter states:

The results of the facility review support keeping the Minneapolis facility open and modernized as an LPC. The review also supports transferring some mail processing operations to the Saint Paul P&DC. The Minneapolis LPC will be a critical node in connecting mail to the future Regional Processing and Distribution Center (RPDC) network.

- Destinating operations will continue to be processed at the Minneapolis P&DC
- No changes are expected to Retail or Delivery Operations
- Originating operations will be processed at the Saint Paul P&DC

The Postal Service anticipates there will be some impacts to staffing with Originating operations moving to the Saint Paul P&DC. We anticipate this to impact the following career positions at the Minneapolis P&DC:

- 74 Mail Processing Clerks
- 0 Mail Handlers
- 14 Maintenance
- 11 Management

It is important to note that as of this date, no withholding or excessing notices have been received for the Clerk Craft or Maintenance Craft. As such, it remains unclear as to exactly when management will begin implementation of the MPFR at the Minneapolis P&DC.

Any implementation of an MPFR is a big-ticket item. To say that the Local Union is watching this situation like a hawk would be an understatement.

- **2024 NPMHU National Convention – Delegate Election**

On October 26<sup>th</sup>, the Local Union Council voted unanimously to send a total of six (6)

Delegates to the 2024 NPMHU National Convention, the Local President and five (5) Delegates to be elected. On November 7<sup>th</sup>, a Local Executive Board Poll was conducted which appointed Anab Mohamed of the Minneapolis Branch as well as Tony Stickler and Alejandra Hernandez of the NDC Branch as Judges for the Delegate Election. The Judges held their first meeting to develop an initial schedule on November 27<sup>th</sup>.

The Judges met again on December 4<sup>th</sup> and mailed a Notice of Nomination Meeting to all Members. It was also emailed to the Representatives responsible for each Branch with instructions that it be posted. Contained in the notice were the procedures for submitting nominations through the mail. The Judges determined that the Nomination Meeting would be held on January 12, 2024.

- **Mail Handler Benefit Plan (MHBP) Seminar – Open Season**

Shortly after the last meeting of the Local Executive Board, the Local 323 marketing team attended the 2023 MHBP Seminar in Orlando, FL. In attendance at this event were Dean Abatte, Kathy Schultz, Delicia Johnson, Brian Blatchford, Michael Alvarez, and me. I am pleased to report that during the seminar, Local 323 was awarded Central Region Union of the Year for outstanding performance in marketing the MHBP.

The 2023 FEHBP Open Season ran from November 13<sup>th</sup> through December 11<sup>th</sup>. During this period the Local 323 marketing team attended more than 30 health fairs within the States of Minnesota and North Dakota. In addition, we attended informational meetings held by NARFE in the metro area. Our goal was to outline the benefits of the MHBP and answer questions from Postal employees, Federal employees, and retirees. The Local 323 marketing team spared no effort to maintain our status as Central Region Union of the Year, and perhaps, to take our performance a step further.

- **Local 323 Dental Program**

The Mail Handlers Local 323 Dental Program is quickly approaching its end. All dental plan coverage will be discontinued at the end of 2023. Any claim for services occurring up to and on December 31, 2023, will be covered even if the claim is not received until after January 1, 2024. A letter was sent in September which informed all enrollees of the Dental Programs discontinuance.

- **Local Organizing Seminar**

On the evening of December 7<sup>th</sup> an internal organizing seminar was held at the Local office. This seminar relied largely upon materials provided by, and a zoom meeting held by Labor Notes. The purpose of this seminar was to hear a different perspective on internal organizing and develop new approaches to Member recruitment. Particularly, regarding those Mail Handlers who are long term non-members.

In attendance for the Minneapolis Branch was Treasurer Jarred Hoover, Branch President Ed Yun attended for the St. Paul Branch, and Branch President Aaron Kobes as well as Tour 1 Steward Alejandra Hernandez attended for the NDC Branch. Following the zoom meeting there was a brainstorming session to discuss how we could apply some of the strategies we heard to our situation.

While Local 323 has a relatively high Membership percentage, there is room for improvement and this seminar was conducted to explore possibilities. It is currently the plan to launch an organizing campaign in January of 2024.

- **Changes and Administrative Initiatives**

Certain changes to our operations are being foisted upon from the outside, while others are being made as a matter of internal initiative. Regarding the former, the Social Security Administration is now requiring that we submit our W-2 form electronically and the IRS is now requiring a more frequent filing of payroll withholdings. Treasurer Jarred Hoover and I have taken steps to prepare for these changes and ensure that Local 323 remains in compliance with our filing obligations. An online employer account has been established with the Social Security Administration and we are currently awaiting final confirmation.

We are preparing for the close of the fiscal year and the upcoming annual audit which is likely to occur sometime in February. Lastly, Treasurer Hoover and I have secured the previously discussed safe deposit box. This safe deposit box is part of our disaster recovery plan. It will contain checks and the other materials needed to get the Local Union up and running should the Local office building be struck by lightning or destroyed by a tornado.

**Branch Activities:**

- **NDC Steward Training**

On November 16<sup>th</sup>, a training session was conducted for the Stewards of the NDC Branch. Five of the eight NDC Representatives were in attendance. Like any Local activity involving me, this session began with a review of the non-member list and a discussion of how we may get them into the Union (got some since then).

The training itself could probably be best described as the fundamentals plus. The first part constituted a review of some concepts from previous training sessions. What followed was a deep dive into Article 19 and the Handbooks and Manuals of the Postal Service. A particular emphasis was placed on the ELM and how it may be used to provide clarity to and bolster contractual arguments.

This was a full day training session, and I was encouraged to see the level of engagement demonstrated by the participants. A copy of the PowerPoint from this training session is available if anyone is interested.

- **St. Paul Stewards Meeting**

On November 18<sup>th</sup>, a Stewards Meeting for the St. Paul Branch was held at the Local office. Not surprisingly, this meeting began with a review of the non-member list and a discussion of how we may get them into the Union (1 since then). Branch President Yun conducted discussions which concerned grievance processing, jurisdictional enforcement, and the topics being discussed in the Labor – Management meetings. It is worth noting that every Representative of the St. Paul Branch from both the St. Paul P&DC and the Twin Cities L&DC attended this meeting.

- **Facility Visits and Activities**

I continue to visit the metro area Branches at least a couple of times a month and attend every Labor – Management meeting that my schedule allows. Whether it's assisting Representatives, discussing issues with Members, or working on computers, I'm always willing to help.

**Upcoming Events:**


Fiscal Year Change – January 1, 2024

Nomination Meeting for Delegates to the National Convention – January 12, 2024

Annual Audit – February 2024

Local Executive Board – March 28, 2024

Fraternally,



Jeff Larsen  
Local President

cc: All Branches  
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