



# 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 December 29, 2020

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 (via Zoom):

**Local President:** Jeff Larsen

**Vice President:** Dean Abatte

**Recording Secretary:** Brian Newhouse

**Treasurer:** John Frey

**MN SEBM Representative:** Shane Ryden

**ND SEBM Representative:** Brock Engstrom

Local President Jeff Larsen called the meeting to order at 10:29 a.m.

Recording Secretary Brian Newhouse took the roll call.

### Review of the Previous Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes from previous meeting on September 24, 2020. ND SEBM Engstrom made a motion to accept the minutes. That motion was seconded by MN SEBM Ryden, motion carried.

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

### Local Issues

- Peak Season
- Semi-Annual Meeting of the Local Unions
- National Convention
- LIUNA Convention
- Mail Handlers Benefit Plan (MHBP)
- Local Dental Program
- MHA Conversions – issues
- Local 323 Website

### Branch Activities:

- Local Negotiation
- Branch Visits

## **Upcoming Events**

- Fiscal Year Change – January 1, 2021
- Annual Audit – To be scheduled.
- 2021 Picnic discussion tabled until next EBM due to COVID-19 issues.

## **President's Expense Report**

Local President Jeff Larsen submitted for review his Expense Report and Time Sheet. ND SEBM Engstrom moved to authorize the Local President's expenses for the time frame reported and was second by Vice President Abatte. The motion carried.

## **Review of Local Presidents Leave Hours**

## **Officer's Reports**

### **Treasurer's report**

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

## **President's Agenda Items**

- Internet Issues
- New Computer(s)  
President Larsen requested Executive Board authorization for the purchase of a new computer. ND SEBM Engstrom moved to authorize said purchase. Vice President Abatte seconded the motion. The motion carried.

## **Open Discussion**

Vice President Abatte made a motion to adjourn the Local Executive Board Meeting. That motion was seconded by MN SEBM Ryden. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.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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## Local President's Report

### Local Executive Board

#### Local 323 Complement:

The Local 323 career complement as of Pay Period 26-20 is 594 (517 MN & 77 ND) and the MHA complement is 158 (133 MN & 25 ND). Combined Membership as of Pay Period 25-20 is 644.

#### Local Issues:

- **Peak Season**

Staffing impacts resulting from COVID-19 and a surge in package volume produced an unprecedented workload for this year's peak season. Many facilities continue to deal with a heavy workload as operations begin to return to normal. Once again Mail Handlers played a key role in moving America's mail under difficult circumstances. There have been many reports concerning the situations faced in specific facilities. But I'm encouraged by what hasn't been reported. There have been no reports of Mail Handlers being involved in accidents or suffering on the job injuries. This peak season wasn't pretty; so, it's good that everyone appears to have made it through safely.

- **Semi-Annual Meeting of the Local Unions**

Like the first SAMLU of 2020, the second SAMLU was held virtually. This occurred over two days on November 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. The first day included the report of the National President, a Legislative and Political Report, a Litigation Report, and a presentation from Union Plus. The second day covered reports from the National Secretary Treasurer, the Mail Handlers Benefit Plan, the Contract Administration Department, and the Article 12 Task Force. The National Union updated everyone on current circumstances and the attendees have adopted well to the virtual setting.

- **2020 National Convention**

The 2020 NPMHU National Convention has been rescheduled for a second time. It is now scheduled to occur from August 8<sup>th</sup> through August 11<sup>th</sup> of 2022. All Delegates were sent letters confirming this change.

- **2021 LIUNA Convention**

2021 is a convention year for our parent organization the Laborers International Union of North America. I am expecting the convention call soon and further information will be provided once that is received. It was mentioned during the SAMLU that there is a strong possibility that this will be a virtual event.

- **Mail Handlers Benefit Plan (MHBP)**

On October 9<sup>th</sup> I participated in the virtual MHBP open season seminar. Also participating in this event were Brock Engstrom, Brad Kaluza, Delicia Johnson, and retiree Kathy Schultz. The participants were provided with a summary of the changes to the plan for 2021 and given an overview of health fair scheduling considerations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The marketing outlook didn't look particularly favorable given the situation. On a positive note, Local 323 was the recipient of the Central Region Award for "Outstanding Performance" due to our efforts marketing the MHBP.

Following the seminar, we received our first health fair schedule, and everything went downhill from there. Cancellation after cancellation was received until we reached a point where only a handful of health fairs were attended.

If any beneficial change came from the situation it was made by the MHBP. The MHBP website has included a feature called "MHBP Live" during previous open seasons. This feature allowed visitors to their website communicate directly with a plan representative. During the SAMLU it was announced that "MHBP Live" will now be available year-round. This should prove to be a valuable resource; and we can direct people to the MHBP website for a more informed health plan decision.

- **Local Dental Program**

This year's marketing of the Local 323 Dental Plan was limited to mailings and the website. The landscape of this market has changed immeasurably in the 20 years since the inception of the plan and an assessment will need to be made concerning its future. The plan will continue to be in place through 2021 and I will continue to serve as the plan administrator.

- **MHA Conversions - Issues**

The National Union recently secured a MOU with the Postal Service which will result in MHA conversions in certain facilities. We are in the process of identifying the specifics in those facilities identified in the MOU. Conversions will take place no later than March 13, 2021.

In addition, the National agreement allowing management to exceed the MHA cap due to the COVID 19 pandemic has been extended to March 26, 2021.

- **Local 323 Website**

The Local 323 website has been moved to a different server and a security certificate applied. This was the first step in bringing the Local website up to a more modern format. A redesign of the website is underway with the objective of making it desktop, tablet, and mobile friendly. This new design will be launched sometime during the first quarter of 2021.

#### **Branch Activities:**

- **Local Negotiations**

The Local Implementation Procedures were invoked by Local 323 in the St. Paul and NDC Branches. The St. Paul bargaining team consisted of Branch President Edward Yun, plant Stewards Delicia Johnson and Brian Newhouse, and L&DC Steward Brian Lay. The NDC bargaining team consisted of Branch President Mike Straiton, Stewards John Frey and Tony Stickler, and Alternate Steward Jennifer Simmons. I joined both teams as the chief negotiator. Each team had several meetings prior to the bargaining sessions. Issues were identified, proposals debated, drafted, and redrafted (and sometimes redrafted, and redrafted, and redrafted). Both teams went to the bargaining table prepared.

The teams for each Branch engaged in bargaining sessions with their management counterparts throughout the entire thirty-day negotiating period. Negotiations were completed with no impasses in either facility. Updated versions of the LMOU's for both Branches are available on the website and printed versions should be available soon.

I would like to thank the team members for their hard work and focus throughout the process.

- **Branch Visits**

Like my last report, I have been in all the metro area Branches several times since the last meeting of the Local Executive Board.

**Upcoming Events:**

Fiscal year change – January 1, 2021  
Annual audit – To be scheduled

Fraternally,

Jeff Larsen  
Local President

cc: All Branches  
File