



# 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 Council Meeting ST. PAUL, MN January 13, 2022

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

*NDC*

Brock Engstrom

*Fargo*

Local President, Jeff Larsen called the meeting of the Local Union 323 Council to order at 10:28 A.M. Recording Secretary Brian Newhouse took roll call.

### IN ATTENDANCE:

**Local President:** Jeff Larsen

**Vice President:** Dean Abatte

**Recording Secretary:** Brian Newhouse

**Treasurer:** John Frey

**MN State Representative:** Shane Ryden

**ND State Representative:** Brock Engstrom

**St. Paul Branch President:** Ed Yun

**Minneapolis Branch President:** Dean Abatte

**Fargo Branch President:** Brock Engstrom

**NDC Branch President:** Mike Straiton

### Review of the Previous Minutes:

The Council reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting on May 27, 2021. Fargo Branch President/ ND SEBM Engstrom motioned to accept the minutes of the previous meeting and was seconded by VP/Minneapolis Branch President Abatte. The motion carried.

### President's Report:

President Larsen provided the Council a copy of the President's report. (See attached copy).

- Local 323 Complement
- Membership Campaign
- Career Conversions
- Local Website
- Arthur S. Vallone NPMHU National Scholarship

Upcoming Events:

Annual Audit – To be scheduled  
Local Executive Board Meeting – March

**Officer Reports**

**Vice President/Mpls Branch** – Staffing Issues

**Recording Secretary** – COVID Issues

**Treasurer’s Report** - Review of the Profit and Loss Statement, Year-to-Year Comparison

**MN SEBM** - St. Cloud: New steward; Mankato: Staffing issues

**St. Paul** – THS issues at LDC; daily assignment issues; mask issues

**NDC** – Congratulations, Mike Straiton is officially retired (from USPS); staffing issues

**President’s Agenda Items**

- Contract Administration
- Membership Levels
- Scholarship Rules
- Contract Proposals

**Those items reserved for the Local Union Council**

- Local 323 Bylaws

VP/Minneapolis Branch President Abatte raises several questions concerning Article 6 of the Bylaws which pertains to the Salary and Benefits of the Local President. He began with a question about the meaning of full-time in Article 6, Section 6.1 (A). President Larsen explained that full-time, as the term is used in this Section, has a specific meaning derived from the NPMHU National Constitution, the Uniform Local Union Constitution, and Article 24 of the National Agreement. He explained further that a Form 50 is cut which places the Local President in a LWOP status for an undetermined period and the Local Union becomes the primary employer. President Larsen added that the Salary rate of Article 6, Section 6.1 (A), only applies “provided” that the Local President is a full-time Officer.

VP/Minneapolis Branch President Abatte inquired specifically as to whether a full-time Local President could work overtime at the Postal Service. President Larsen answered no and stated that a full-time Local President was not eligible or available to work overtime at the Postal Service. He added that he has not worked overtime or a holiday at the Postal

Service since assuming office.

Fargo Branch President/ND SEBM Engstrom proposed increasing the initial rate used to calculate the Local President's salary from Level 5 Step O to Level 5 Step P. Discussion ensued and it was determined that this would result in a \$374.00 annual increase in the Local President's salary. President Larsen discouraged the Council Members from making this change, and as discussion persisted, stated that he would find it personally humiliating having to request the National President approve an annual increase of \$374.00 to his salary. The matter was dropped.

President Larsen stated that if anything, the Council should look to the future regarding the Local President's salary. He stated that if the current salary reflects what he is worth with 22 years of experience, then the Council should add a provision reducing this amount by \$5,000.00 to \$7,000.00 annually for a rookie Local President who takes office in the future. President Larsen added that he received a lower salary during his first term and did not receive compensation under the current formula until his second term. Neither President Larsen nor any Member of the Council proposed to add language in this regard.

#### **Additional Items**

- **Picnic** - to be discussed at Executive Board Meeting, March 2022

VP/Minneapolis Branch President Abatte motioned to adjourn, Fargo Branch President/ND SEMB Engstrom seconded the motion, motion carried, and meeting adjourned at 2:46 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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January 13, 2022

## Local President's Report Local Union Council

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*

Tony Stickler  
*NDC*

Brock Engstrom  
*Fargo*

### Local 323 Complement:

The Local 323 career complement as of Pay Period 26-21 is 741 (661 MN & 80 ND) and the MHA complement is 80 (65 MN & 15 ND). Combined Membership is 765.

- **Continuing COVID-19 Impact**

There continues to be an increase in the cases of COVID-19 being reported. Quite frankly, the numbers are alarming. The reported cases combined with the number of people being required to quarantine are significantly reducing employee availability. This is resulting in overtime being required by non-OTDL Mail Handlers in at least two Branches.

Throughout the pandemic, the Local Union has consistently recommended that people protect themselves, their families, and their coworkers, by following the regulations related to masks and social distancing. Unfortunately, some people are not taking the protection of their coworkers seriously; and most unfortunately, many of these people are supervisors and managers. Don't follow the poor example of management. Everyone should take personal responsibility for protecting their health.

- **Membership Campaign**

The 2021 Local 323 Membership campaign concluded at the end of the year. Many new Members were enrolled during the campaign; and several Members received checks for enrolling these people at the temporarily increased rate of \$50.00. A couple of Members remain entitled to receive this higher payment. Both 1187's are currently pending at HRSSC. One was received late in the campaign period, and the processing of the other was delayed due to the need to cancel dues from another Union. Both 1187's should be processed soon and then it's on to the drawing for the grand prize!

- **Career Conversions**

Career conversions have returned to being accomplished by means of the National MOU regarding the filling of residual vacancies. Due to the large number of conversions during 2021, facilities which do not have unassigned regulars will have residual vacancies placed into eReassign.

Branch offices are reporting problems with the posting of bids and the placement of residual vacancies into eReassign. Both problems delay the conversion process. In facilities where management is failing to comply with their contractual obligations in a timely manner, grievances should be filed to address the issues.

- **Local Web Site**

The last two components to the initial information to be contained in the "Training and Reference" remain uncompleted. This project is behind schedule. About half the component regarding "using your resources" (essentially computer training) has been written. This project will resume as soon as some other situations settle down.

- **Arthur S. Vallone - NPMHU National Scholarship**

Scholarship eligibility details and application instructions are available on the National Union's website. Applicants must submit complete applications and the related materials listed to the Scholarship Committee on or before March 15, 2022.

**Upcoming Events:**

Annual Audit – To be scheduled  
Local Executive Board – March

Fraternally,

Jeff Larsen  
Local President

cc: All Branches  
File