



# 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 Council Meeting ST. PAUL, MN August 20, 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

*NDC*

Brock Engstrom

*Fargo*

Local President Jeff Larsen called the meeting to order 10:10 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 (arrived at 12 p.m.)

**MN State Executive Board Member:** Shane Ryden

**ND State Executive Board Member:** Brock Engstrom

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

**Minneapolis Branch President:** Dean Abatte

**Fargo Branch President:** Brock Engstrom

Local President Larsen administered the oath of office to MN State Executive Board Member Shane Ryden at the beginning of the meeting.

### Review of the Previous Minutes:

The Council reviewed the minutes from the last meeting of August 15, 2019. ND SEBM and Fargo Branch President Engstrom made a motion to accept the minutes of this meeting. That motion was seconded by MN SEBM Ryden. The motion carried.

### President's Report:

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

- Local 323 Complement
- Installation of Officers
- Kathy Schultz Retirement
- Continuing COVID-19 Impact
- Congressional Lobbying
- Local Website

- Branch Activities

### **Treasurer's Report:**

Treasurer Frey provided the Council with a year to date Profit and Loss Statement which included a same period comparison with last year. The Council was provided an opportunity to ask any questions.

### **Officer Reports:**

**Vice President** – Recognized Local Council's efforts and importance at this time.

**MN SEBM** - Reports of continued challenges and successes with issues in St. Cloud. Excess of MHA's in St. Cloud and Duluth.

**ND SEBM** – Reports a continued backlog of Step Two grievances. Two new AFCS 200 machines. Little support for USPS from ND congressional delegation.

**St. Paul** – Reports reversion issues, Step 2 case load diminished significantly, and new RBUS machine coming by end of the year. Also issues with Management not complying with RFI's, and the removal of 7 DB's and one flat sorter machine.

**Minneapolis** – APBS has a new dumper for sacks. A new overhead scanner for the spider is beneficial to MH's. Management is hesitant to convert MHA's despite open bids. New forms for witness statements have helped to increase number of statements.

**Fargo** – Gary Tollefsrud recognized by Fargo Branch President Engstrom for his years of support and dedication to the NPMHU. Fargo is in the process of seeking approval for a new building.

### **President's Agenda Items:**

- On the Job Injuries discussed
- Computer Use
  - How to set up new user.
  - How to copy and paste to new forms.
  - Any input on new forms is helpful.
- Contract Enforcement
  - Persistent BUW violations discussed

## **Vice President - COVID-19 Leave Issues**

COVID-19 packet handed out.

Issues:

Management is improperly using leave codes for COVID-19.

### **Additional Items:**

New Local 323 shirts will be discussed with by the Executive Board.  
Mandatory mask wearing was also discussed.

ND SEBM and Fargo Branch President Engstrom made a motion to adjourn the meeting. That motion was seconded by Vice President and Minneapolis Branch President Abatte. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 2:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian Newhouse  
Recording Secretary Local 323  
National Postal Mail Handlers Union

cc: **Local Union Council**  
**All Branches**  
**File**



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August 20, 2020

## 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  
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Branch Presidents

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Edward Yun  
*St. Paul*

Mike Straiton  
*NDC*

Brock Engstrom  
*Fargo*

### Local 323 Complement:

The Local 323 career complement as of Pay Period 16-20 is 598 (522 MN & 76 ND) and the MHA complement is 123 (107 MN & 16 ND). Combined Membership is currently 651.

### Local Issues:

- **Installation of Officers**

On August 1<sup>st</sup> National President Paul Hogrogian administered the oath of office to the newly elected and the re-elected Officers. This occurred via Zoom. All Officers were present, either in person, or via Zoom, except MN State Executive Board Member Shane Ryden who was unavailable. Per the authorization of National President Hogrogian, I administered the oath of office to Shane Ryden at the beginning of this meeting. Congratulations go to all our Officers and I look forward to working with them during the next 3 years. We've got our work cut out for us.

- **Kathy Schultz Retirement**

I would be remiss if I did not recognize Kathy Schultz for her many years of service to the Members of Local 323. Kathy served the Minneapolis Branch for many years as a Steward and Chief Steward. She also served on the Local Executive Board, first as Recording Secretary, and then as Vice President. We all wish Kathy the best in retirement. Although, she will continue to work with us in marketing the Mail Handlers Benefit Plan; so, I guess you could say she is semi-retired. In any case, congratulations Kathy.

- **Continuing COVID-19 Impact**

Where do I start? We continue to be notified of additional cases and exposures in the metro Branches, we continue to argue for better

compliance with mask regulations, and now we're battling to ensure that Management is providing the appropriate pay to Mail Handlers utilizing COVID leave. Watch your checks Mail Handler!

Several Officers and I participated in the Northland District Labor-Management Meeting which was held via Zoom. I'll admit that went better than I was anticipating.

The National Union has announced that the SAMLU scheduled for October will be held via Zoom. We continue to await information concerning the previously cancelled MHBP Seminar. I'm guessing it's going to be held via Zoom. In a recent conversation I had with ND State Executive Board Member Brock Engstrom, he pointed out that it will be incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to comply with OPM marketing regulations with numerous users on the same Zoom sessions. Some guidance may be needed on that issue. Lastly, on the MHBP front, I was notified earlier this week that the St. Paul chapter of NARFE had cancelled their 2020 health fair. Hopefully, that's not a harbinger of things to come.

It's worth noting that numerous masked Mail Handlers from Local 323 were pictured in the National Union's magazine. That was uplifting for many people. Thanks to all of you who sent me pictures.

- **Congressional Lobbying**

I'd like to say we stepped up our activity; but I can't because we've continued full tilt since my last report. Recent efforts have been focused on the Senate. Both ND State Executive Board Member Brock Engstrom and I have sent additional letters to the respective Senators. Earlier this week St. Paul Branch President Edward Yun attended a rally near the St. Paul Plant which featured Senator Tina Smith as the guest speaker. Glimpses of Ed at this event can be seen on a Facebook video.

- **Local Website**

A significant overhaul was recently completed on the forms contained in the Steward Resource Center. I won't say that this was long overdue, but it was due. Some of the functions were written close to 20 years ago for Acrobat 5 (about 7 versions ago). The software changed, features changed, security changed significantly; and even though the forms had been updated, it was time to bring them completely in line with current standards. That was accomplished and I'm grateful to those who participated by testing some early versions. All in all, they turned out pretty good.

The website itself is aging and is due to be brought up to current standards. But that's probably down the road.

**Branch Issues:**

- **Branch Activities**

I've been at all metro-area Branches on several occasions. The visits have usually been of limited duration and for specific purposes. I haven't exactly been hanging around on the work floor.

**Upcoming Events:**

Virtual SAMLU – October

Fraternally,

Jeff Larsen  
Local President

cc: All Branches  
File