



AFM Local 500

Winter 2023 Newsletter

Dear Local 500 members,

I hope you have enjoyed a safe and relaxing holiday season and have renewed energy for the year ahead. I spent much of the past year thinking about the word “solidarity,” not just as a concept, but as an act. Showing solidarity with our fellow musicians means more than sending good wishes or liking a post on social media; it means stepping outside our own experiences to understand the unique joys and challenges we each face, reflecting on our own biases and assumptions about musicians who play a genre we don’t, or perform at different venues, or whose musical life is composed of a different balance than our own.

I think I’ve just scratched the surface of what showing solidarity means, but I think the more I practice these actions, the more I’ll learn. I hope you will join me this year in growing your musical community and showing solidarity with your fellow musicians.

In Solidarity,

Jessica Kunttu

Secretary-Treasurer, AFM Local 500

Message from the President

Dear fellow musicians and friends:

Happy New Year! I hope that you all had a wonderful holiday season - not only lucrative, but with time for loved ones. This past month seemed to go by in a flash - finally, after three years of pandemic-related cancellations, live music filled the Triangle. As I looked out into the audience during so many Messiah and Nutcracker performances, I was moved to see families making memories together. Grandparents with their grandchildren, couples of all ages, and huge extended families and groups of friends all enjoying music, live and in person. I also heard about wonderful concerts by the NC Jazz Repertory Orchestra and the ever popular NC Symphony Holiday Pops Series. These are only a few examples of the musical events that have meant so much to people recently. One of the most moving events I personally attended was the Kinston community Messiah concert together with North Carolina Baroque Orchestra. This event has not been held since 2019, and you could see and hear the enthusiasm of both the community chorus and the audience, some being moved to the point of tears. It was also a wonderful reminder of the musical talent and richness to be found throughout our Local. Though this sentiment is repeated so often that it can become cliché, music really does bring people together. The holiday music we created together over the past five weeks is one of the largest parts of the holiday magic that our communities look forward to every year.

While December is typically one of the busiest months for musicians, it is nice to have a breather in January. We start each new year with optimism and big dreams for the year ahead. In 2022, we successfully increased our membership by 20%, bringing our numbers back up to pre-pandemic levels! Let's continue this positive trend into 2023. Find a musician friend who isn't involved yet, and let them know what our Local means to us! Also coming up this year are elections for our Executive Board, to be held later in the spring. We welcome your input and would especially love your involvement in committees or at a leadership level.

Wishing you all the very best in 2023.

In solidarity,

Leah Peroutka

President, AFM Local 500

Bylaws Updates

At the December 19, 2022 General Membership Meeting, the Local 500 membership voted on changes and updates to our Bylaws. The entire document can be found on our website under the Resources tab. Visit www.afm500.org/resources

Here is an overview of the changes:

Wage Scale Minimums: Roughly 10% increase in all wage chart minimums for non-CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement) work. There had not been an increase for several years, so a 10% increase was necessary to make a dent in rising inflation and the cost of living.

New categories to the Wage Scale Minimums: Several new categories of work have been added to the wage scale minimums including: Television Broadcast, Non-commercial Radio, Commercial Radio, Local Recording (Local TV Variety Show, Non-Commercial Radio, Local Public TV, Jingles, Demo Recording, Limited Pressing - Audio and Video).

Updates and Changes to the Cartage Minimum Rates:

- Several large instruments have increased cartage minimums.
- New instruments added include: bass saxophone, chamber organ, contrabass clarinet, contrabassoon, tuba, double bass, harpsichord, amplifier, PA system, drum set (6-piece or larger), percussion "box."
- Percussion "box" has replaced the term "armload" to remove ableist language.

Electronic meetings: Since the AFM is no longer providing special Pandemic Waivers that allow for electronic meetings, we have set standards for holding electronic meetings.

Work Dues Rates: Work dues rates have been updated to comply with AFM National Bylaws and promulgated agreements. The work dues rate for Symphonic Engagements is 1.5% and the work dues rate for MPTF engagements is 5%. These are the lowest allowed rates in accordance with AFM Bylaws.

Jurisdiction correction: There was a small (yet important) spelling error in our jurisdiction that has been corrected to clarify our Northeastern boundary.

Formatting: General changes within the formatting of the document to reflect new articles and increase ease of reading.

Local 500 Elections

2023 is an Election year for Local 500. All officer and board member positions will be open during this election period. They include:

- President / Second Delegate to Conferences and Conventions
- Vice President
- Secretary-Treasurer / First Delegate to Conferences and Conventions
- Board Member at-Large (up to six positions available)

The timeline and procedures for elections are laid out in Article VII of our Bylaws. These procedures follow guidelines set out by the US Department of Labor. Here is an overview:

- March - the President will name an Elections Committee Chair.
- April - nominations meeting will be held.
 - If you cannot be present at the nominations meeting but would like to either nominate someone for a position or accept a nomination, you must email the Secretary-Treasurer at contact@afm500.org before the meeting. No nominations may be made or accepted after the conclusion of the nominations meeting.
- At the conclusion of the nominations meeting, any officer positions and any board member positions (not exceeding six) that are unopposed will be elected by acclamation. If all positions are elected by acclamation, the elections process will end at this time.
- Voting will take place in May
 - If there are contested elections, the voting process will take place with a secret vote via mail-in ballot. Detailed instructions on how this process is to be conducted are laid out in our bylaws.
- Installation will take place in June

Do you have questions about the elections process? Would you like to learn more about the various positions? Detailed information can be found in our Bylaws, but feel free to email contact@afm500.org with any questions.

If you're interested in getting more involved but don't want to commit to serving on the executive board, please consider joining a committee! Anyone in good standing can join.

FAQ - Website Edition

Some of the most frequently asked questions concern how to use the website. Here is an overview of some of the website features that may help answer your questions:

Q: Can I pay my dues online?

A: Yes! You can pay membership dues and initiation fees online under the “Shop” tab on our website. If you aren’t sure how much you owe for dues, please email contact@afm500.org before making a purchase.

Q: Can I see my status and last paid thru date online?

A: Unfortunately, no. Our website is not able to be linked to our membership software. If you aren’t sure of your last paid thru date, please email contact@afm500.org.

Q: I’ve been a member of Local 500 for many years. Why don’t I have a profile on the website?

A: Our new website was launched in February 2021. At that time, all current members were allowed several weeks to create a membership profile via the “Join” button. After a this time, the “Join” button needed to function as an actual joining process for new members. If you missed this window, you have two options for creating a membership profile: 1) email contact@afm500.org stating you’d like a profile and what you’d like your username to be. The Secretary-Treasurer will manually create a profile for you with a temporary password and email you. 2) You can click “Join” and fill out the necessary information. When the Secretary-Treasurer sees your request come through, they will see that you are already a member and accept your profile.

Q: Will there be more resources shared on the website?

A: Yes! Sharing resources and information on the website is an ongoing process.

Q: How does “Find a Teacher” work? Why am I not listed under this?

A: The “Find a Teacher” feature on our website is an opt-in feature. When you access your membership profile page, you can toggle this feature on.

Committees

Want to get more involved in strengthening our union? Any member in good standing can join a Local 500 committee! We can accomplish more together!

These are the current Local 500 committees and some information about their goals:

Bylaws Committee - The Bylaws Committee reviews our bylaws, comparing them to national and other Local bylaws, and making suggestions for changes or updates.

Diversity Committee - The Diversity Committee works to identify ways to diversify our membership in every way possible. This committee works closely with the Membership Committee on recruitment efforts.

Future Planning Committee - The Future Planning Committee works to advance topics related to long-term planning for the Local.

Membership Committee - The Membership Committee identifies ways to recruit members, help plan the membership drive and reengage current members. This committee works closely with the Diversity Committee to increase membership diversity.

Social Media Committee - The Social Committee works to increase our social media presence, sharing important news and engaging the community.

TEMPO/Legislative Committee - The TEMPO/Legislative Committee identifies legislative interests and goals for Local 500 and follows national legislative updates.

Do you want to help advance these legislative goals for the AFM? Make a donation to TEMPO today! TEMPO is the Taskforce for Employment of Musicians Promotional Organization and is entirely funded by small contribution given by AFM musicians. TEMPO works to support lawmakers and candidates who support music. You can make a donation by either visiting www.afm.org/what-we-are-doing/tempo/ or by writing a check to AFM Local 500 with TEMPO in the memo - we will pass on the donation to TEMPO.

All About MPTF

The Musicians Performance Trust Fund (MPTF) was established in 1948 as a nonprofit independent public service organization whose mission includes contributing to the public knowledge and appreciation of music. MPTF grew out of negotiations and agreements between the AFM and major recording companies of the time, and is funded via royalty streams from recording companies, including Sony Music Entertainment, Universal Music Group, and the Warner Music Group. The result is admission-free, live music performed by professional musicians made available to the general public.

So how does that work? Each Local is allocated a certain amount of funding per year to allocate to various MPTF projects. Events are partially funded by MPTF and partially funded by the vendor or person/group hiring the musicians. The idea is to find a community partner that may not be able to afford to pay full Local wage scale minimums, and the MPTF funding will partially cover the cost of paying musicians. This way, high quality, live performances can reach more of the greater public.

Are there events that qualify for full funding via MPTF? Yes! MPTF typically offers full funding for events centered around Black History Month in February, Jazz Appreciation Month in April, and Juneteenth celebrations.

Want to learn more and apply? We are currently working on a how-to guide with information about MPTF that will live on our website. In the meantime, if you have questions or are interested in applying for an MPTF event, please email contact@afm500.org and we'll get started.

Community Board

Composer/keyboardist Michael Pelz-Sherman is interested in forming a group to help produce concerts of new music by local composers. If interested, please contact Michael at 919-279-0825, or mpelzsherman@gmail.com.

Members of the Local 500 Executive Board are participating in a **local labor roundtable event** with Congresswoman Kathy Manning from NC's 6th Congressional District on February 15th.

Local 77 (Philadelphia, PA) has created an **IDEAS (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access, Solidarity) Council** that, among other things, holds a study group that meets once a month to discuss books, articles, and other materials related to their mission.

Would you like to be a part of something similar in Local 500? Planning is in the preliminary stages, but email contact@afm500.org if you'd like to be involved!

News from Other Locals

Local 58 - Fort Wayne, Indiana - Musicians of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, members of Local 58, have been on strike since December 8, 2022, following unfair labor practices charges and failed negotiations with management since October 2020. Management seeks to eliminate full-time positions from the orchestra, drastically change the leave request process including firing musicians for taking leave, and make changes to the schedule, both by creating unpredictable times services will be held and by spreading out the 30 weeks of employment over 39 weeks with no additional pay. Find more information and show your support for the musicians at www.fwpmusicians.com.

Local 23 - San Antonio, Texas - Management of the San Antonio Symphony ceased operations in June 2022. The musicians of the former San Antonio Symphony have formed a new professional orchestra, the San Antonio Philharmonic. Their message is inspiring, as they strive to be an orchestra of the 21st century, infused in the culture and of their community and dedicated to education. Find more information at www.saphil.org!

Local 30-73 - Minneapolis, Minnesota - Musicians of the Minnesota Opera Orchestra, members of Local 30-73, had been working without a contract for six months when they voted unanimously to authorize a strike on January 27, 2023. Management has cut musicians' work by 40%, does not seem intent on providing a contract, and will not disclose financial information of the organization. Find more information and show your support for the musicians on their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/musicians.mn.opera.orchestra/>.

AFM Local 500 Events

- AFM Local 500 Executive Board Meeting - February 6, 2023 via Google Meets
- Nominations meeting - April 2, 2023 at 7:30pm
- AFM Local 500 Executive Board Meeting - May 7, 2023 at 7:30pm
- Voting will take place in May - more info will be shared via email

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