

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Presidents with members in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs
All Stewards in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs

FROM: Brian Gould, OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

DATE: 21 September 2007

SUBJECT: **Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs
ERC Minutes – June 8, 2007**

Attached, for your information, are the minutes of the above captioned meeting.

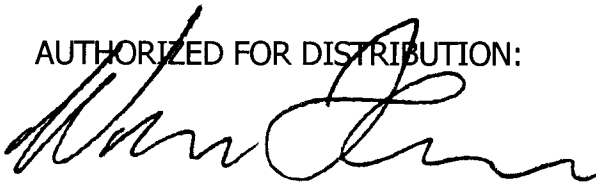
Please post or otherwise make them available to the members in your workplaces.

Also attached is a MERC referral form which should be used when referring unresolved local issues to the ministry level. The referral should be sent care of the Job Security Unit with all the supporting documentation, (e.g. minutes, correspondence, etc.), with any referrals.

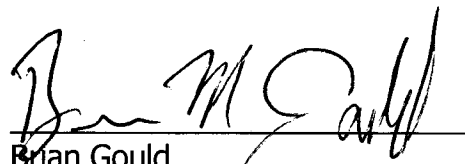
PLEASE NOTE: THESE MINISTRY MINUTES WERE PREPARED BY THE EMPLOYER.

AUTHORIZED FOR DISTRIBUTION:

IN SOLIDARITY,



Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President



Brian Gould
OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

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att.

cc: MERC Chairs
Ministry ERC

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS
MINISTRY EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE (MERC)**

June 8, 2007

Room 303, 1 Stone Road, Guelph

For Management:

Dave Antle (Co-Chair)
Mike Toombs
Jim Felker

For OPSEU:

Emily Hitchcock (Co-Chair for the meeting)
Bob Lowry
Andrea Gomirato

Resources:

Marilyn Everingham (regrets)
Bev Rawn

Resource:

Stephen George

Co-Chair Emily Hitchcock opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

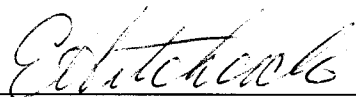
AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
Additional Agenda Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 3 Interpretation of Article 14 to be removed • Item 4 Violence in the Workplace Committee to be merged with Standing Item 11 I&IE Bill 69 • Item 6 re proper use of expense receipts to be merged with Standing Item 8 Insurance Act Amendments • Item 7 Justice Haines Audit to be removed • Add Attendance Support Program to New Items • Add MERC Member Survey to New Items • Add MERC Training Follow Up <p>Note: Due to time and schedule constraints not all agenda items were fully addressed at the meeting or discussed in the in the order reported in these minutes.</p>	
<u>STANDING ITEMS:</u>		
Ad Hoc Meetings	<p>March 9, 2007 Emily Hitchcock – information regarding a Regional Employee Health, Safety & Wellness Pilot beginning with Ministry of Transportation.</p> <p>March 14, 2007 Emily Hitchcock – job description disclosure</p> <p>March 15, 2007 Emily Hitchcock – regarding defibulators installed at 1 Stone Road</p> <p>March 20, 2007 Emily Hitchcock – email to staff regarding heightened biosecurity on poultry farms.</p>	The Union requested that Ad Hoc meetings be followed up in writing.

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	<p>March 20, 2007 Emily Hitchcock – email to staff regarding new employment accommodation materials available.</p> <p>April 4, 2007 Emily Hitchcock regarding: an operational review taking place in the Food Safety Science Unit change in timing for review of meat inspection delivery</p> <p>April 12, 2007 Emily Hitchcock regarding: posting of Notice of Termination Form 1 Employment Standards Act reporting relationship changes</p> <p>April 12, 2007 Emily Hitchcock report backs: CFIA and OMAFRA committees Interest Based Problem Solving Training Strategic Priorities Project Hospitality/cafeteria</p> <p>May 3, 2007 Emily Hitchcock – problems with direct deposits at RBC</p> <p>May 16, 2007 Emily Hitchcock regarding: reporting relationship change use of temporary agency staff</p> <p>May 18, 2007 Andrea Gomirato – conversion of employee from unclassified to classified status</p> <p>May 23, 2007 Andrea Gomirato – reporting relationship change</p> <p>May 28, 2007 Emily Hitchcock – disclosure of unclassified and vacancy reports</p> <p>May 29, 2007 Emily Hitchcock – update on HR Transformation</p> <p>May 31, 2007 Emily Hitchcock – reporting relationship change</p> <p>June 1, 2007 Emily Hitchcock – disclosure of Health & Safety Report</p>	<p>The Union requested that should the union Co-Chair Emily Hitchcock be unavailable for an ad hoc meeting that Bob Lowry be contacted next.</p> <p>Co-Chair Emily Hitchcock is to provide her schedule to management regarding availability for ad hoc meetings.</p>
Surplus Update	Management distributed a report on the status of surplus employees and the amount of remaining notice period for each employee. Currently there are two employees on the surplus list. (both on hiatus)	Management to follow up on the potential for retirement for one employee on the Surplus List.
Human Resources: A) Transformation	<p>Management provided an update on the HR Transformation project. Recently information regarding the next phase of the project was shared with the Human Resources Branch staff and the Human Resources administration staff in the Service Management Branch. Three key messages were communicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles behind the project • Staffing Strategies • Implementation Timelines 	

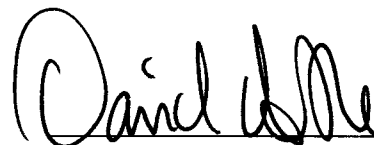
AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
	<p>Discussion focused on staffing strategies for the HR community that include a combination of position mapping, expressions of interest and competition to allow the transformation model to move forward with minimal disruption to staff.</p> <p>The union expressed a position that the transformation model appeared to protect non-bargaining unit positions from competition.</p>	
<p>Meat Inspection: A) Conversion</p> <p>MIERC Disclosure</p>	<p>The Union reported that representatives had met to review the information provided by management regarding conversion of unclassified Meat Hygiene Officers. New draft Terms of Settlement are being reviewed.</p> <p>Management reported at an ad hoc meeting that there has been a delay in the hiring of a consultant to provide an analysis of delivery options for meat inspection services. Management is to advise when more information is available.</p> <p>Management reported back at an ad hoc meeting that Canadian Food Inspection Agency – OMAFRA committees are examining opportunities for enhanced collaboration in the areas of veterinary/meat hygiene, enforcement/compliance and harmonized training. A new draft domestic standard has been completed to base federal regulatory changes affecting inter-provincial trade in meat and Meat by-products.</p>	<p>Management to advise when more information is available.</p>
<p>Terms of Reference</p>	<p>The Union tabled draft correspondence with the Management Co-Chair in response to this item.</p>	<p>Management to review correspondence</p>
<p>Results Based Planning</p>	<p>The Union inquired on the availability of 2007-08 Results Based Planning information.</p> <p>Management responded that the ministry is awaiting approval of the 2007/08 plan. A copy will be provided when available.</p>	<p>Management to provide a copy of approved plan when available.</p>
<p>Strategic Priorities Project</p>	<p>The Union inquired as to the status of the Strategic Priorities Project.</p> <p>Management replied that since the last meeting the ministry had undergone the planned reorganization effective April 1, 2007. New Division program plans are being developed for discussion and will be used for the development of Branch plans.</p> <p>The Union raised a question about an item in the previous minutes regarding the timing of the ministry realignment relative to other corporate initiatives and the need for timely communications to staff and whether management had met with the affected staff. Management replied that communications about realignment of staff within corporate</p>	

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	clusters had been provided.	
Insurance Act Amendments	<p>The Union inquired about whether all staff had been made aware of the changes to the Insurance Act regarding the rental of cars for ministry business.</p> <p>Management replied that a memo had the implications for staff operating rental vehicles on ministry business resulting been sent to all staff and would confirm the distribution of the memo.</p> <p>The Union inquired about the proper use of original receipts for expense account reporting and retrieval of originals should they be required by the employee for such purposes as Revenue Canada audits.</p> <p>Discussion continued regarding the clarification of manager discretion to approve reasonable expense account items when no receipts are available.</p>	<p>Management to confirm the distribution and version of a staff memo regarding Insurance Act amendments.</p> <p>Management to investigate and report back on the retrieval process for receipts.</p>
I & IE Bill 69 and Violence in the Workplace Committee	<p>The Union inquired about the status of Bill 69. Management reported that the Bill has received Royal Assent and was proclaimed in May. Although the timing for next steps is not known, the steps include writing regulations, guidelines and developing training.</p> <p>The Union asked if there is any intent to consolidate II&E functions across the OPS. Management to investigate and report back.</p> <p>The Union commented that as Bill 69 progresses there may be impacts for staff encountering violence in the workplace. Workplace violence issues have been discussed at CERC. The Union suggested investigating the creation of a committee to review workplace violence issues. It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting and investigate resources to address the issue at the next meeting.</p>	<p>Management to investigate and report back.</p> <p>Management to investigate and report back at the next meeting.</p>
<u>HEALTH AND SAFETY</u>	<p>Management provided an update of incident statistics at an ad hoc meeting. Management announced that West Nile Virus information would be sent to all OMAFRA during the week of June 11, 2007</p>	
<u>NEW ITEMS:</u>		
MERC Training Follow Up	<p>Management reviewed the MERC training that took place April 24, 2007 and commented that it was a very worthwhile exercise. A list of next steps was reviewed including a process for MERC Minutes Action Items and the introduction of a form to assist with the movement of issues from the Meat Inspection ERC to MERC or from</p>	<p>Agreement on agenda, minutes and movement of issues processes.</p>

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	<p>MERC to CERC. With regard to guests, according to the Terms of Reference, guests may be invited with notification to the corresponding Co-Chair.</p> <p>It was agreed that following the submission of meeting agenda items at least two weeks prior to an ERC that the parties engage in an informal discussion to determine the context of agenda issues in order to properly prepare for the respective meeting.</p>	
Attendance Support Program	The Union inquired as to the status of a corporate review of the Attendance Support Program.	Management to investigate and report back.
Interpretation of the T2200 Tax Form	The Union advised that this item was being moved to CERC.	Union to table item with CERC
Compressed Work Week Agreements, Bargaining Unit Positions	<p>The Union proposed that language be incorporated into Compressed Work Week Agreements that could automatically renew the agreement on an annual basis unless notice to discontinue was provided by either party. The intent is to reduce the amount of time each year spent drafting and renewing agreements</p> <p>Management agreed to investigate the proposal and report back.</p> <p>The Union inquired about the status of an error regarding the assignment of dues relating to an employee on an acting assignment from another bargaining group.</p> <p>Management replied that the error had been corrected. The Union requested a letter to the Co-Chair confirming the completion and timing of the error.</p>	Management to investigate and report back.
Concluding Remarks	<p>Co-Chair Dave Antle thanked the MERC members for their cooperation during his time as Co-Chair. He will be taking on a new assignment as ADM, Policy Division as of June 18, 2007.</p> <p>The Union members also expressed their appreciation for the time Dave had spent with the committee and hoped that his successor would continue to be responsive to MERC issues.</p>	
Next Meeting Dates:	<p>September 14, 2007 Room 205</p> <p>December 7, 2007 Room 205</p>	



For the Union



For the Employer