

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: Ruth Hamilton, A/ OPS Supervisor

DATE: November 1, 2010

SUBJECT: **Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs**
ERC Minutes – September 17, 2010

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



Ruth Hamilton
A/ OPS Supervisor

/pb

att.

cc: MERC Chairs
Ministry ERC

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS
MINISTRY EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE (MERC)
September 17, 2010
Room 403, 1 Stone Road, Guelph**

For Management:

Karen Chan (Co-Chair, joined by teleconference)
Jim Felker
Brent Kennedy

Resources:

Marilyn Everingham
Bev Rawn

Bob Lowry opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

For OPSEU:

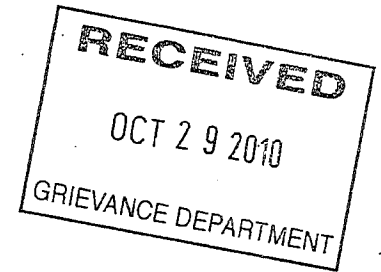
Bob Lowry (Co-Chair for the meeting)
Emily Hitchcock
Mavis Vet

Resource:

Stephen George

Guests

Bruce Drewett, Director, Diversity
Jennifer Oliver, HR Business Advisor



AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
Additional Agenda Items / Changes to the Agenda	<p>The Union added the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Real Time Minutes o 1 Stone Road LERC o Licensing changes in the Meat Inspection Program <p>It was agreed that agenda items would be re-ordered for priority discussion purposes.</p>	
Real Time Minutes	<p>The Union advocated the use of real time minutes as being more efficient and expedient than traditional minute taking.</p> <p>Management agreed to the concept of real time minutes and initiated discussion on principles and practices.</p> <p>It was agreed that key discussion points would be recorded with action items and a timeline for completion column included in the format to ensure timely follow up on items. It was also agreed that the synopsis of discussion for the minutes would be reviewed and agreed to following each agenda item before moving to the next item. Real Time Minutes would be in effect for the December meeting.</p> <p>The Union stated that they would not be confined to timeframes for topics with regard to limiting discussion. To ensure clarity of agenda items and follow up issues, it was agreed that the Union Co-Chair and Management representatives would meet 2 weeks following each MERC meeting and 2 weeks prior to the next MERC meeting. Timely follow up discussions would also occur as needed between meetings. MERC meetings would also be scheduled to allow for up to 3 hours of discussion if required.</p>	<p>Agreed that Real time Minutes would be implemented for the December Meeting.</p> <p>Union Co-Chair and Management representatives to meet 2 weeks following to report back on action items and 2 weeks prior to each MERC meeting to clarify agenda items and provide follow up information.</p>

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
STANDING ITEMS:		
Ad Hoc Meetings	A list of ad hoc meetings was provided prior to the meeting. See attached Appendix.	
Surplus List	Management distributed a report on the status of surplus employees. Currently there is one employee on the surplus list (on hiatus).	
Temp Agencies /Staff	<p>The Union inquired about current use of temporary agency staff. Management reported that there are currently three program areas with current contracts and that corporate guidelines for the use of temporary agency staff are being followed in terms of procurement and short duration of assignment.</p> <p>The Union inquired as to how many employees and the duration of the contracts.</p> <p>Management agreed to report on number of agency staff being utilized for business needs.</p>	Management report back on how many Temporary Agency employees are currently contracted.
Fixed Term Staff Reports	Management provided Fixed Term staffing reports prior to the meeting.	
Bill 168 The Occupational Health & Safety Act (Violence & Harassment in the Workplace)	<p>Management reported back on discussion from the last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and emergency contact posters were posted in all 34 OMAFRA workplaces. • Link to Bill 168 on OPS Wellness site is in the Spotlight on the Charlotte home page. • OMAFRA has adopted the OPS-developed training, and therefore the three <u>e-learning modules</u> (Bill 168:An Overview, Workplace Discrimination & Harassment Prevention, Workplace Violence Prevention) are mandatory for all staff and management. Completion is tracked and training is to be completed by OMAFRA staff by Dec 31, 2010. • Regarding in-class sessions, three management training sessions facilitated by the Centre for Employee Health Safety & Wellness were offered to managers/directors on July 6, 14 and Aug 17. • DVD versions of the training were made available for staff who do not have the necessary resources and if units/branches wanted to conduct group training. <p>The Union inquired about the status of threat risk assessments.</p> <p>Management replied that assessments were underway and agreed to report back on the expected timeframe for completion.</p>	Management to report back on the expected timeframe for completion of threat risk assessments.
Orientation sessions for new employees	<p>The Union inquired about the status of new employee orientation programs and previous in-person sessions.</p> <p>Management responded that for the short term, existing orientation material is still available on Charlotte in addition to links to the corporate orientation site. A new longer term orientation plan is expected in the fall that will line up with corporate information.</p>	Management to provide a future update on the program.

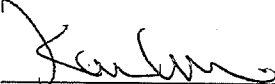
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Diversity	<p>OMAFRA's Diversity Director and a HR Business Advisor joined the meeting to provide information about plans to expand the ministry's Diversity Mentorship Program to include director level mentors and mentees within OPSEU and other bargaining units. The one year program would consist of at least 6 meetings between mentors and mentees. It is expected to expand in another year to include more participants. OMAFRA OPSEU staff in the Industrial Development Officer 3 and Information Officer 3 level and above will be invited by email to complete an application form and self-identify their inclusion in one of the diversity groups.</p> <p>The Union expressed encouragement for the initiative and inquired as to whether the ministry provided corporate disclosure on the program, consistent with other ministries.</p> <p>Management replied that corporate disclosure had been provided to corporate bargaining agents and agreed to investigate requirements for ministry specific corporate disclosure.</p>	Management to follow up on requirements for ministry specific corporate disclosure.
Conversion Reports	There were no Fixed Term Unclassified staff conversions to report since the last meeting.	
Health And Safety	<p>The Union inquired about health and safety inspection requirements for more than one person to attend as discussed at the Joint Health & Safety Committee. The Union also expressed concern about difficulty in locating Joint Health & Safety Committee minutes on Charlotte.</p> <p>Management agreed to report back on inspections and minutes.</p>	Management agreed to report back on requirements for health and safety inspections and location of Committee minutes on the website.
NEW ITEMS:		
Ontario Regulatory Modernization Act 2007 - Update	<p>The Union inquired about any new information relating to the Ontario Regulatory Modernization Act 2007, specifically relating to inspection, investigation, and enforcement. Management replied that there was no new information or impact on the ministry since previously reporting back to MERC.</p> <p>Following discussion, Management agreed to get clarification on the status and impact of the enforcement and inspections portions of the Act on the ministry.</p>	Management agreed to follow up on this item.
Discussion of Article 1.8	<p>The Union inquired about an issue raised at CERC re proper procedure for disclosure of new job descriptions and requirements for Corporate Surplus Clearance numbers.</p> <p>Management replied that new positions are disclosed when job descriptions are finalized and may not have reached the recruitment stage to receive clearance.</p> <p>The Union agreed to investigate and clarify the CERC issue and report back.</p>	The Union agreed to clarify the disclosure issue and report back.
Review of workplace uniforms – Made in Canada	The Union expressed support for procurement and purchasing requirements that would support local and Canadian business. Program staff have observed that the contracted linen / uniform cleaning & supply company uses non-Canadian products.	Management agreed to pass on comments supporting procurement for Canadian products to the Business

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
	Management agreed to pass on comments supporting procurement for Canadian products to the Business Planning and Financial Management Branch.	Planning and Financial Management Branch (noting that procurement is done centrally for many items) .
Attendance Support Program (ASP) – Update	<p>Management reported back that the specific ASP case identified had been handled appropriately. Management further commented that the ASP continues to be under review at the corporate level.</p> <p>The Union expressed concern that the program can be perceived as punitive toward staff.</p> <p>Management commented that the program is intended to be a supportive tool and asked the Union to identify specific instances that need to be addressed.</p>	Management agreed to seek information on the status of the review for the next meeting.
Results Based Planning	<p>Union inquired about an update to ministry Results Based Planning FTE data and disclosures to MERC.</p> <p>Management replied that the Results Based Plan was disclosed as required. Further disclosure will be provided as required. Management reported that the Ministry's current FTE level is set at 969. All ministries are working toward a 5% reduction of FTEs to be implemented by March 2012 through a variety of measures including vacancy management, attrition and retirements.</p>	Retain as a standing item.
Compressed Work Weeks	<p>The Union inquired about the approval procedures and guidelines for Compressed Work Weeks (CWW) given corporate support for alternate work arrangements. Specific areas of concern were identified.</p> <p>Management reported that individual CWWs are being approved by the ministry. Management also reported that discussions are continuing at the ministry level to develop an alternative work arrangement strategy that will line up with corporate strategies that are under development. Management agreed to follow up on specific areas of concern.</p>	Management to report back.
Travel, Meal & Hospitality Policy	<p>The Union inquired about differing practices within the ministry related to the operation and locations for ministry vehicles as well as provision of corporate travel cards. The issue had been raised at the Meat Inspection ERC but not resolved.</p> <p>Management provided information about the variables considered in the allocation and use of vehicles. Management agreed to review and report back on the vehicle and travel discussion held at the Meat Inspection ERC.</p>	Management to review discussion at MIERC
Local Employee Relations Committee (LERC)	<p>The Union requested that a LERC be established at 1 Stone Road.</p> <p>Management agreed to participate with the establishment of the LERC and advised that an HR Advisor from the West Region HR Delivery Centre would provide support HR support.</p>	The Union and Management agreed to select members according to the MERC Terms of Reference and establish

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
	<p>The Union and Management agreed to select members according to the MERC Terms of Reference and establish the LERC by the end of the year.</p>	<p>the LERC by the end of the year.</p>
<p>Licensing Changes in the Meat Inspection program.</p>	<p>The Union raised the issue of a recent letter from the Minister to meat plant operators announcing a change in meat plant licencing frequency from 1 to 3 years. The Union expressed concern that this was a first step in weakening the inspection system.</p> <p>Management replied that the change in licensing frequency was administrative in nature only and did not impact on the food safety compliance.</p> <p>The union requested further clarification on the matter.</p> <p>Management agreed to follow up with appropriate information and hold an ad hoc meeting between Management and the Union Co-Chair if needed .</p> <p>It was agreed to place this issue on the next MERC Agenda.</p>	<p>Management agreed to follow up and hold an ad hoc meeting between Management and the Union Co-Chair if needed to clarify the issue of changes to meat plant licensing frequency.</p> <p>It was agreed to place this issue on the next MERC Agenda.</p>
<p>Dates for 2010 MERC meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ December 10, 2010 	


 For the Union

Oct 13/10
 Date


 For the Employer

Oct 12/10
 Date

APPENDIX
MERC Ad Hoc Meetings – September 17, 2010

Date	Provided To	From	Information Provided
June 21, 2010	Bob Lowry	Bev Rawn	Local disclosure following June 8 corporate disclosure of changes in Policy Division economic analysis capacity
June 29, 2010	Bob Lowry	Bev Rawn	Local disclosure re realignment within the Strategic Policy Branch and Economic Development Policy Branch,
July 19, 2010	Bob Lowry	Bev Rawn	Change in timeline and error in reporting relationship within the Strategic Policy Branch and Economic Development Policy Branch disclosure of June 29.
July 21, 2010	Bob Lowry	Bev Rawn	Local Disclosure: Corporate Disclosure provided July 7 re: Change in HQ beyond 40 km in the Meat inspection program, Food Inspection Branch.
July 27, 2010	Bob Lowry	Pam Martell	New position disclosure – Three (3) permanent Economic Policy Analyst position in Policy Division
August 17, 2010	Emily Hitchcock	Bev Rawn	Advising of potential mold from routine building inspection by ORC in Simcoe Resource Centre, owned by Agriculture Research Institute of Ontario. Investigation to confirm.
August 25, 2010	Bob Lowry	Bev Rawn	Confidential Disclosure re OMAFRA Position Title Change & Reclassification
August 25, 2010	Bob Lowry,	Bev Rawn	Published Results-based Plan 2010-11 and Annual Report 2009-10
September 9, 2010	Bob Lowry	Bev Rawn	Provided Fixed Term Staff Reports
September 10, 2010	Bob Lowry	Bev Rawn	Update on mold in Simcoe resource Centre – no mold found in the small boardroom; some mold found in small equipment storage shed- to be removed.