

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: June 4, 2008

SUBJECT: **Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs
ERC Minutes – March 14, 2008**

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)**

March 14, 2008

Room 203, 1 Stone Road, Guelph

For Management:

Karen Chan (Co-Chair for the Meeting)
Mike Toombs
Jim Felker

For OPSEU:

Emily Hitchcock (Co-Chair)
Bob Lowry (Vice-Chair)
Andrea Gomirato

Resources:

Marilyn Everingham (regrets)
Bev Rawn

Resource:

Stephen George, Job Security Officer

Guests:

Doug Peebles
Cathy Wilson Pinkney

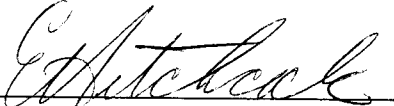
Co-Chair Karen Chan opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

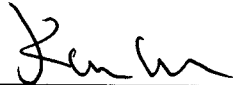
AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
Additional Agenda Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Snow Removal ▪ Designation/Membership Fees ▪ T2200 Forms ▪ Health & Safety Committees ▪ Move Item 9 to the end of agenda for report 	
<u>STANDING ITEMS:</u>		
Ad Hoc Meetings	A list of ad hoc meetings was distributed and reviewed. See attached Appendix The Union inquired as to whether the disclosure correction noted in the pervious minutes had taken place. Management replied that the corrected disclosure had been submitted.	
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)	
Human Resources: A) Transformation	Management provided an update on implementation of the OPS HR Transformation project. Transformation information was disclosed to bargaining agents in early March. The first phase of implementation for the project is to take place April 1, 2008 with OPS	

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
B) Vacancy & Unclassified Staff Reports	<p>staff mapped to three new Centres: The Centre for Employee Relations; Centre for Health, Safety and Wellness and Service Management Coordination. OMAFRA will have one position move to report to the Centre for Employee Relations while remaining located in the HR Branch in Guelph.</p> <p>Launching on June 30, 2008 will be Enterprise and Regional Recruitment Centres; Enterprise Classification Unit; Enterprise Workforce Planning Unit; and Executive Programs and Services.</p> <p>Satellite offices for recruitment and HR service delivery are to be located in Guelph as part of the West Region. Strategic Business Units and Regional HR Service Delivery will be implemented by March of 2009.</p> <p>Although OMAFRA does not have any affected bargaining unit positions, information being shared with other ministries regarding Transformation will be shared with the MERC Co-Chairs.</p> <p>The Union raised a question about the vacant position reports reflecting status of vacancies under competition versus positions identified as vacant on ministry organization charts. The union asked that the report be changed to compare to organization charts.</p> <p>Management replied that the report is based on vacancies that are funded and approved for recruitment. Management agreed to review the report and report back.</p>	<p>Management to review the Vacancy Report and report back.</p>
Results Based Planning	<p>Management reported that work is currently underway on the 2008-09 RBP. The Provincial Budget is scheduled to be announced on March 25, 2008. More information will be shared when it is available.</p>	<p>Management to provide RbP information when available.</p>
Strategic Priorities Project	<p>The Union inquired as to the status of the Strategic Priorities Project.</p> <p>Management replied that the project is complete. Some Branch realignments are being implemented to align with the new structure.</p>	<p>Strategic Priorities Project to be removed as a Standing Item for the next meeting agenda.</p>
Interest Based Problem Solving	<p>The Union inquired as to whether the template used for moving issues forward was distributed to MERC members as discussed. Management reported that members had received the template as part of the ERC training materials including those received by the Meat Inspection Employee Relations Committee members on January 29, 2008. Management agreed to specifically distribute the template to MERC members.</p>	<p>Template for moving issues forward to be circulated to MERC members.</p>

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
Violence in the Workplace	Management reported that no new information was available. No decision has been made regarding implementation of a workplace violence prevention program at OMAFRA. A presentation to senior management on the subject is to be scheduled.	Item to be included on the next agenda for report back.
Compressed Work Weeks	<p>The Union provided suggested text for a new item in the Compressed Work Week Agreement. Item 9.2 would not have an end date for the agreement allowing either party to terminate the agreement with notice.</p> <p>Management agreed to consider the proposed text and report back.</p>	Management agreed to consider proposed agreement text and report back.
ASP – Attendance Support Program	Management advised that the corporate review of the Attendance Support Program is moving forward. The review is still expected to take place in fiscal 2008-09.	Management to report back on the status of the review.
Parking Issues	<p>The Union inquired about the status of new parking policy, practice and security cards at 1 Stone Road. Staff continue to experience issues with parking lot access.</p> <p>Management replied that the building security system is being upgraded including parking access technology. New security card pictures are being taken as part of the process. Some improvements by the building operator such as the change in snow removal contract were noted. Staff should continue to report issues to the building operator.</p> <p>The Union inquired about security issues at regional field locations. Management reported that security has been addressed at all facilities. Additional concerns are reviewed and addressed as they are raised.</p>	
<u>HEALTH AND SAFETY</u>	<p>Management provided a revised report update of incident statistics further to the report shared at an ad hoc meeting</p> <p>The Union noted that the majority of incidents are reported from one Division and inquired about the need for proactive communications and training with staff. Health and Safety information at staff orientation programs was discussed. The issue of Health and Safety Committee requirements at field locations was also discussed relative to physical locations of staff.</p> <p>Management agreed to review and report back on safety awareness and training as well as committee requirements.</p> <p>The Union noted that health and safety information on the Charlotte Intranet site should be updated.</p>	<p>Management to review and report back on safety awareness and training; committee requirements.</p> <p>The Union requested a copy of the Staff Orientation Manual as posted on the intranet site.</p> <p>Potential H&S issues at a particular work site are to be referred to the H&S Committee.</p>

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
<u>NEW ITEMS:</u>		
Snow Removal	The Union raised staff concerns about Stone Road snow removal. Management noted that the contractor had recently changed and that issues would continue to be forwarded to ProFac.	
Designation Fees / Membership Fees	<p>The Union inquired about any policy regarding the payment of professional designation or membership fees for staff.</p> <p>Management replied that professional designation fees are paid as negotiated in collective agreements. In other cases a corporate organization membership fee may be paid in order to access lower conference rates for multiple staff members.</p> <p>The union commented on inconsistent coverage for training reimbursement of course tuition and books. Management replied that training and learning opportunities are assessed on an individual basis.</p>	
T2200 Forms	<p>The Union raised an issue regarding inconsistent application of T2200 tax forms in the OPS and identified a need for interpretation.</p> <p>Management asked if conditions had changed since the last interpretive memo was provided to affected OMAFRA staff in 2007. Management agreed to investigate the application and interpretation of the federal tax form with Ontario Shared Services.</p>	Management to investigate and report back.
Bee Inspection Communications	Doug Peebles, Local President, joined the meeting and reported that a meeting had been scheduled and subsequently cancelled due to scheduling issues. The proposed agenda for the meeting was reviewed. It was confirmed that all 2007 bee inspection staff would be invited to the meeting.	Update to be scheduled for the next meeting.
Next Meeting Dates:	June 6, 2008 Room 203 September 19, 2008 Room 203 December 5, 2008 Room 203	


 For the Union


 For the Employer

Approved 1/08

APPENDIX
MERC Ad Hoc Meetings – March 14, 2008

Date	Provided To	From	Information Provided
Jan 21/08	Emily Hitchcock	Marilyn Everingham	Advised that the Vineland office closed at noon due to problems with heat
Jan 22/08	Emily Hitchcock	Marilyn Everingham	Advised that heat was restored in the Vineland office and that the office was open. Advised that the Clinton office closed at 1:15 p.m. due to inclement weather and problems with the heat. Advised that the Stratford office was closed due to inclement weather.
Jan 28/08	Emily Hitchcock	Marilyn Everingham	Local disclosure regarding reporting relationship changes in the Economic Development Policy Branch.
Jan 30/08	Emily Hitchcock	Marilyn Everingham	Advised that the Clinton and Thessalon offices were closed due to inclement weather.
Feb 1/08	Emily Hitchcock	Marilyn Everingham	Advised that the Vineland, Simcoe and Alfred offices closed early due to inclement weather and an email was sent from the CAO advising that all staff could leave at 3:00 p.m.
Feb 11/08	Emily Hitchcock	Marilyn Everingham	Advised that the Clinton office was closed in the a.m. due to poor weather conditions. The office opened at 1:00 p.m.
Feb 13/08	Emily Hitchcock	Marilyn Everingham	Advised that a memo is being sent to OMAFRA staff housed at the government's Downsview property regarding a new intranet web page being launched that will provide information, news and updates relating to the Downsview site.
Feb 21/08	Emily Hitchcock	Marilyn Everingham Dean Donaldson	Dean Donaldson, Service Management Branch, provided an update on Parking and Building Access Cards at 1 Stone Road West. Information to be sent to all building staff from ORC the following week.
March 5/08	Emily Hitchcock	Marilyn Everingham	Advised that information will be sent out to staff later this week regarding a possible labour disruption at the University of Guelph.
March 6/07	Emily Hitchcock	Bev Rawn	Provided Quarterly Unclassified and Vacancy Reports
March 11/07	Emily Hitchcock	Marilyn Everingham	Provided information regarding the Ministry threshold for the Attendance Support Program. The threshold for OMAFRA remains at 8.4 days. Communication will be sent to staff shortly. Determination was made to keep ministry thresholds the same as in 07 while a review of the Attendance Support Program takes place.