

## 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:** 20 November 2007

**SUBJECT:** **Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs  
ERC Minutes – September 14, 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.

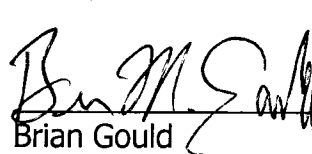
**PLEASE NOTE: THESE MINISTRY MINUTES WERE PREPARED BY THE EMPLOYER.**

AUTHORIZED FOR DISTRIBUTION:



Warren (Smokey) Thomas  
President

IN SOLIDARITY,

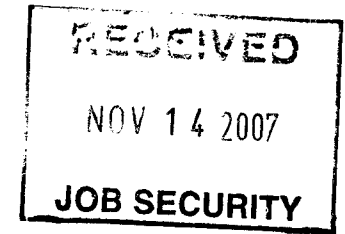


Brian Gould  
OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

/fs  
att.

cc: MERC Chairs  
Ministry ERC

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS  
 MINISTRY EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE (MERC)  
 September 14, 2007  
 Emergency Response Boardroom, 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  
 Bev Rawn

Resource:

Stephen George, Job Security Officer

Co-Chair Karen Chan opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. The ministry's Emergency Management Unit provided a brief overview and demonstration of the technology available in the boardroom to assist with ministry responses to emergency situations.

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
<b>Additional Agenda Items</b>	Meat Inspection Item removed from the agenda	
<b><u>STANDING ITEMS:</u></b>		
<b>Ad Hoc Meetings</b>	June 13, 2007      Reported to the Union – power outage at 1 Stone Road. June 15, 18 2007    Reported to the Union – water testing in buildings where government employees reside – water test results in London June 28, 2007      Reported to the Union email to staff regarding First Nations National Day of Action July 3, 2007        Reported to the Union –bee inspectors payroll/expenses - reclassification August 2, 2007      Reported to the Union – temporary assignment conversions August 9, 2007      Reported to the Union – IT Phase II – email to staff regarding furniture refresh	The Union requested that Ad Hoc meetings be followed up in writing by email with copies provided to Job Security Officer.  The Union advised that should the union Co-Chair be unavailable for an ad hoc meeting that Vice-Chair be contacted next. The content of ad hoc meetings is to be included

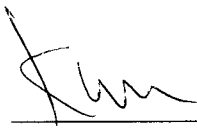
AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
	<p>August 14, 2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Reported to the Union;</li> <li>– Surplus employee</li> <li>– Meat Inspection ERC Disclosure</li> <li>– Terms of Reference</li> <li>– Results Based Planning</li> <li>– Insurance Act Amendments</li> <li>– Retrieval process for expense receipts</li> <li>– II&amp;E</li> <li>– Violence in the Workplace Committee</li> <li>– Attendance Support Program</li> <li>– Compressed Work Week Agreement</li> </ul> <p>August 17, 2007</p> <p>August 29, 2007</p> <p>August 30, 2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Reported to the Union – portion of Downsview Property to be leased to Humber River Regional Hospital</li> <li>– Reported to the Union – Environmental Management Branch organizational review underway</li> <li>– Reported to the Union;</li> <li>– Unclassified Staff, Vacancy, Health &amp; Safety Reports</li> <li>– Disclosure re Downsview property and Humber River Regional Hospital announcement to staff</li> </ul>	<p>with the list of ad hoc meetings in future minutes.</p> <p>Provide communications to the Union concerning any information that becomes available prior to the next MERC meeting</p>
<p><b>Surplus Update</b></p>	<p>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)</p> <p>Management reported back at an ad hoc meeting that the identified surplus employee was not eligible for retirement.</p>	
<p><b>Human Resources: A) Transformation</b></p>	<p>Management provided an update on implementation of the OPS HR Transformation project. Next steps include establishment of Recruitment Centres and completion of Business Process Reviews. The position mapping process has taken longer than expected.</p> <p>The Union inquired as to ministry responsibility for MERC under HR Transformation. Management replied that the responsibility for MERC would continue to operate out of the ministry's Strategic Business Unit and that dedicated Enterprise Centre resources would provide support.</p>	

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
	<p>The Union inquired about communications to all staff regarding HR Transformation. Management replied that current information is targeted to the HR Community and information for all staff will be available in due course.</p> <p>The Union requested that current HR Communiqués be shared with the MERC. Management agreed.</p>	HR Communiqués to be shared with MERC
<b>Terms of Reference</b>	<p>The Union stated that a response from the Management Co-Chair regarding correspondence tabled at the last meeting had been received and that the Union will respond.</p> <p>The Union stated its initial response to the Ministry's correspondence is that MERC cannot bind the actions of CERC.</p>	
<b>Results Based Planning</b>	<p>The Union inquired on the availability of 2007-08 Results Based Planning information.</p> <p>Management responded that the 2006-07 document had been posted on the Ministry web site. A copy was provided at the meeting. A copy of the 2007-08 document will be shared when available.</p>	Management to provide a copy of approved plan when available.
<b>Strategic Priorities Project</b>	<p>The Union inquired as to the status of the Strategic Priorities Project.</p> <p>Management replied that Division program plans are now in place and Branch plans are being developed.</p>	Strategic Priorities Project to remain as a Standing Item for the next meeting agenda.
<b>Insurance Act Amendments</b>	<p>Management reported back at an ad hoc meeting that a memo had been distributed to all staff regarding the Insurance Act amendments and the implications for staff operating rental vehicles on ministry business.</p> <p>Management also reported back at an ad hoc meeting regarding the Union's question about the retrieval of original receipts used for expense claims should they be required by the employee for Revenue Canada audits. Original receipts cannot be returned however copies of receipts are available from the Finance Branch together with a letter for employee use.</p>	
<b>Interest Based Problem Solving</b>	Management reported on the training session attended by MERC members on April 24, 2007. Discussion focused on a template form used to forward issues from MERC to CERC.	Template for moving issues forward to be circulated to MERC members.
<b>I &amp; IE Bill 69 and Violence in the</b>	Management reported back at an ad hoc meeting regarding the status of Bill 69. The item has been discussed at CERC. The Ministry of Labour has the lead on this issue.	

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
<b>Workplace Committee</b>	Management reported that no amalgamation of II&E functions is planned at this time.	
<b>Violence in the Workplace</b>	Management had reported back at an ad hoc meeting that a workplace violence prevention program has been developed for use by ministries. OMAFRA is looking at implementing this program. A presentation to senior management on the subject is to be scheduled.	Item to be included on the next agenda for report back.
<b>Compressed Work Weeks</b>	Management had reported back at an ad hoc meeting on the question of automatic renewal of CWW agreements. An automatic renewal is not part of the model CWW agreement stated in the Collective Agreement. Management agreed to check other ministries' practices.	Management to investigate CWW renewal practices at other ministries and report back. Item to be included on the next meeting agenda as a Standing Item.
<b>Bargaining Unit Positions</b>	The Union asked to be officially advised in writing as to whether Ontario Shared Services has completed the remittance of dues for an employee that had not been deducted correctly.	Management to follow up with OSS and provide documentation.
<b>ASP – Attendance Support Program</b>	Management had reported back at an ad hoc meeting as to the status of a review of the ASP program. As this program is OPS wide, management believes that the issue would be more appropriately raised at CERC.	Management to follow up again with corporate HR Planning staff on the review status.
<b><u>HEALTH AND SAFETY</u></b>	Management provided a revised report update of incident statistics further to the report shared at an ad hoc meeting. Management announced that Wellness Week activities will take place again this year from October 22 to 26. A Wellness Fair is to be held at Stone Road on October 24, 2007. The Union asked if furniture for the Stone Road refresh could be available during Wellness week for staff to try. Flu Clinics will also be held again in the fall with information going across the province.	Health and Safety report to be revised prior to the next meeting.  Management to investigate and advise as to the availability of sample refresh furniture
<b><u>NEW ITEMS:</u></b>		
<b>Temporary Agency Staff</b>	<p>The Union expressed concern about the existence of temporary agency staff in the ministry and inquired as to why expressions of interest for filling short term vacancies had not been used.</p> <p>Management reported on two staff employed via temporary agencies and their circumstances including the need for bilingual skills.</p> <p>The Union requested that management provide start and end dates for each of the staff</p>	Management to report on start and end dates for temporary agency staff and criteria / eligibility for bilingual skills.

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
	and follow up on the criteria and eligibility used for the bilingual position.	
<b>Bee Inspection Communications</b>	The Union raised issues with staff concerns in the Bee Inspection Program. Discussion focused on length of contracts and reporting errors on the Unclassified Staff report prepared for MERC.	
<b>I&amp;IT Ministry Transfer to LRC (Report Back)</b>	The Union expressed its concern that the former manager of the two affected staff is still a project lead for two I&IT projects. With the transfer of the staff, the Union feels that the project should be led by Business Solutions Services and another Manager. The Union indicated that they would be referring this issue to CERC.	
<b>Next Meeting Date:</b>	December 7, 2007 Room 205	

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 For the Union

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 For the Employer