

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: 17 March 2008

SUBJECT: **Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs
ERC Minutes – January 16, 2008**

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

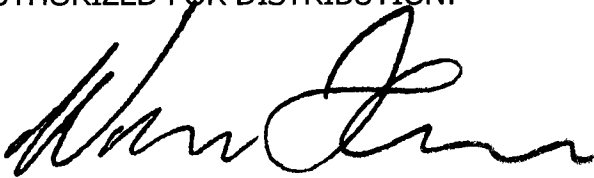
Please post or otherwise make them available to the members in your workplaces.

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.

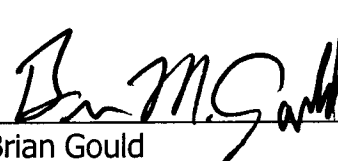
PLEASE NOTE: THESE MINISTRY MINUTES WERE PREPARED BY THE EMPLOYER.

AUTHORIZED FOR DISTRIBUTION:

IN SOLIDARITY,



Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President



Brian Gould
OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

/gi
att.

cc: MERC Chairs
Ministry ERC

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

January 16, 2008

Room 203, 1 Stone Road, Guelph

For Management:

Karen Chan (Co-Chair)
Mike Toombs
Jim Felker

For OPSEU:

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

Resources:

Marilyn Everingham
Bev Rawn

Resource:

Stephen George, Job Security Officer

Guests:

Doug Peebles
Cathy Wilson Pinkney

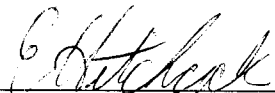
Co-Chair Emily Hitchcock opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
Additional Agenda Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Slips and Falls ▪ Article 1.4 ▪ Vacancy & Unclassified Report 	
<u>STANDING ITEMS:</u>		
Ad Hoc Meetings	<p>See attached Appendix</p> <p>The Union inquired as to whether two names were omitted from the reporting relationship disclosure.</p> <p>The Union requested confirmation of the completion of corrected union dues to be sent to the Union Co-Chair</p>	Management to correct the disclosure
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. Timelines are being reviewed. Next steps include establishment of Recruitment Centres.	

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Terms of Reference	The Terms of Reference remain unsigned. The Union stated its initial response to the Ministry's correspondence is unchanged in that MERC cannot bind the actions of CERC.	
Results Based Planning	Management reported that OMAFRA's 2007-08 RBP had been posted on the Ministry web site. A copy was provided at an ad hoc meeting. Work is currently underway on the 2008-09 RBP.	
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>	Strategic Priorities Project to be removed as a Standing Item for the next meeting agenda.
Interest Based Problem Solving	The template used for moving issues forward was discussed. Management reported that members of the Meat Inspection Employee Relations Committee are to participate in an ERC training session on January 29, 2008.	Template for moving issues forward to be circulated to MERC members. ✓
Violence in the Workplace Committee	Management reported that no decision has been made regarding OMAFRA implementing a workplace violence prevention program. 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>In response to the Union's request to investigate Compressed Work Week Agreement that would not require renewal until such time as the parties wished to terminate the agreement, Management proposed a one year renewal between the manager and employee so that the entire agreement would not have to be rewritten.</p> <p>The Union responded that language would have to be incorporated into the agreement to extend the timelines. The Union agreed to provide samples of agreements currently in place at other ministries.</p>	The Union to provide management with samples of agreements.
ASP – Attendance Support Program	Management advised that there was nothing new to report regarding the corporate review of the Attendance Support Program. The review is still expected to take place in fiscal 2007-08.	Management to report back on the status of the review.
Bee Inspection Communications	Doug Peebles, Local President, joined the meeting and suggested that a joint meeting with the Bee Inspector employees could assist with communications and resolution of outstanding issues.	Management agreed to discuss with program management staff the potential for initiating a

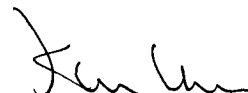
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		meeting for Bee Inspection staff to assist in the resolution of issues
<u>HEALTH AND SAFETY</u>	<p>Management provided a revised report update of incident statistics further to the report shared at an ad hoc meeting. Management also reported on Wellness Week activities that took place from October 22 to 26 2007 including a Run-Walk with the Deputy Minister. A Wellness Fair was held at Stone Road on October 24, 2007. Public Flu Clinics were also held again at 1 Stone Road.</p> <p>The Union inquired about program evaluations on wellness activities. Management replied that individual events were evaluated and suggested that the Employee Engagement Survey could be used to broadly evaluate the program.</p>	
<u>NEW ITEMS:</u>		
Car Policy	<p>The Union raised an issue that the use of ministry vehicles could be more efficient if staff were allowed to drive them home in certain programs. The Union also requested copies of any updated ministry car policy.</p> <p>Management pointed out the personal use of ministry vehicles and Taxable Benefit implications as well as program operational responsibilities in determining ministry vehicle use. Management distributed copies of the corporate Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive, Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive Frequently Asked Questions, General Expenses Directive and the OMAFRA Best Practices Guide to the Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive and the General Expenses Directive.</p>	
Parking Issues	<p>The Union inquired about the status of new parking policy and practice at 1 Stone Road.</p> <p>Management replied that a new parking lot operator has been contracted by ProFac. OMAFRA's Service Management Branch are working with ProFac and ORC regarding implementation of any changes regarding parking at Stone Road.</p>	
2008 Meeting Dates	The following dates were determined for 2008 MERC Meetings: March 14; June 6; September 19; December 5	
Slips and Falls	The Union raised an issue of sidewalk and parking lot safety at 1 Stone Road following a number of recent staff slips and falls due to winter weather.	Management to follow up on safety issues with

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
	Management replied that responsibility for walkways and parking lots is with ProFac and their contractor. As a building tenant, management has raised concerns with ProFac and agreed to follow up again.	ProFac
Article 1.4	The Union inquired OMAFRA's compliance with Article 1.4 of the Collective Agreement requiring the disclosure of new job descriptions. In particular the Union inquired as to whether the Further Processing Inspector description had been disclosed. Management agreed to investigate and report back.	Management to investigate and report back.
Vacancy and Unclassified Staff Reports	The Union requested this issue to be a Standing Item on the MERC Agenda. The Union requested updated reports since this meeting had been rescheduled and previously shared reports were out of date. Management agreed to generate new up to date reports within 1 week.	Management to provide updated reports within one week.
1 Stone Road Furniture Refresh	Cathy Wilson Pinkney, Acting Manager, Service Management Branch joined the meeting to provide an update on the furniture refresh at 1 Stone Road. She reported on the results of staff feedback on the model work stations used in selecting a supplier and selected materials and cubicle heights. The staged refresh is scheduled to take place over the next year. An ergonomist will be available to staff to assist with equipment setup in new configurations. The Union inquired about compliance with the Ontario Disabilities Act, Building Code and Fire Code in determining the new configuration. Management replied that all work will be compliant with the ODA and codes and will be adjusted for particular circumstances as required.	
Next Meeting Date:	March 14, 2008 Room 203	



For the Union

March 10/08



For the Employer

APPENDIX
MERC Ad Hoc Meetings – January 16, 2008

Date	Provided To	From	Information Provided
Sept. 26/07	Emily Hitchcock	Bev Rawn	Disclosure on the reorganization of the Environmental Management Branch
Oct 16/07	Bob Lowry	Marilyn Everingham	Changes ORC/Profac is making to the operations management of parking at One Stone Road West in Guelph.
Oct 19/07	Bob Lowry	Marilyn Everingham	Extension of timelines for the changes ORC/Profac is making to the operations management of parking at One Stone Road West in Guelph.
Nov 8/07	Emily Hitchcock	Bev Rawn	Notice regarding the posting of General Manager, Meat inspection Program is expected November 9, 2007
Nov 21/07	Emily Hitchcock	Bev Rawn	Local disclosure regarding reporting relationship changes in Food Inspection Branch and Animal Health and Welfare Branch
Nov 22/07	Emily Hitchcock	Marilyn Everingham Bev Rawn	Reporting on MERC Action items from the September meeting: Provided a copy of 2007-2008 Results Based Planning Report Update on Compressed Work Week contracts Update on employee union dues to be completed in December Update on ASP Review expected in current fiscal year Update on Temporary Agency staff – no staff currently employed in OMAFRA Update on Issue Template as distributed in MERC Training for moving issues from MERC to CERC Provided Unclassified Staff Reports Provided Quarterly Health & Safety Report in a new format
Nov 27/07	Emily Hitchcock	Bev Rawn	Provided Quarterly Vacancy Report Update on Temp Agency staff contract dates Update on Bargaining Unit Position dues issue Local disclosure regarding reporting relationship changes in Communications Branch
Jan 11/08	Emily Hitchcock	Marilyn Everingham	Update on Family Day, February 18, 2008 re memo to managers