

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Presidents with members in the Ministry of Community and Social Services
All Stewards in the Ministry of Community and Social Services

FROM: Brian Gould, OPS Supervisor

DATE: October 26, 2009

SUBJECT: **Ministry of Community and Social Services –
ODSP Sub-Committee
ERC Minutes – August 18, 2009**

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.

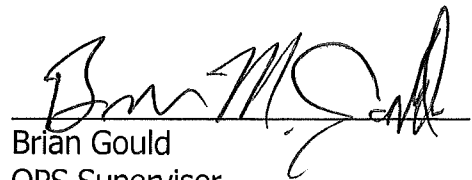
PLEASE NOTE: THESE MINISTRY MINUTES WERE PREPARED BY THE EMPLOYER.

AUTHORIZED FOR DISTRIBUTION:

IN SOLIDARITY,



Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President



Brian Gould
OPS Supervisor

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att.

cc: MERC Chairs
Ministry ERC

**“CONFIDENTIAL TO LABOUR RELATIONS”
FINAL MINUTES**

1.0 Business Arising

- The Union requested that the “Desk Side Interviews” agenda item be removed from the agenda.
- Management notified the Subcommittee that changes would be made to their membership.
- The Union notified the Subcommittee that changes would be made to the bargaining team.
- These changes will be effective for the September meeting.

1.1 Review of Minutes/Action Items

- Review of the meeting minutes for July 2009 was postponed until the September meeting.
- Currently, meeting minutes are being distributed to members through the Enterprise Attachment Transfer Service (EATS).
- The Union requested that the meeting minutes be distributed in a different fashion moving forward.
- Management indicated that the minutes were being sent via EATS due to the confidential nature of material and committed to providing instructions to the group as to how to use EATS.
- The Union questioned if non-Ontario Public Service (OPS) employees would be able to open attachments sent to them via EATS.
- Management confirmed that non-OPS employees could open attachments sent to them via EATS, provided that the email had been addressed to them.
- The Union and Management confirmed that the process for distribution of meeting minutes, agendas, etc, would be that materials would be sent to all members.

Employee Relations Committee (ERC) Training

- Management provided an update on the request for Employee Relations Committee (ERC) training for the Subcommittee.
- Management and the Union discussed the option of having the ½ day training session available through the Centre for Leadership and Learning versus the 1 ½ day session that was previously developed and delivered jointly by representatives of the Ministry and Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU).
- It was agreed that the 1 ½ day session would be preferable for the Subcommittee.
- Management identified that the ½ day training session was supported by the Central Employee Relations Committee (CERC) but that Management would be willing to facilitate an exception to allow for the 1 ½ day session.
- The Union indicated that they would support the 1 ½ day session and indicated that a formal request would need to be submitted to CERC for the exception. The next CERC meeting is September 2, 2009.

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- Management indicated that they would like to approach the Ministry Employee/Employer Relations Committee (MERC) Co-chairs about potentially having a joint training session with the two tables.
- The Union identified that the next meeting of MERC would be September 16 and 17, 2009 and that the joint training session concept could be tabled there.
- The Union further indicated that they would approach the Union members of MERC with the proposal and that Management should approach the Management members.
- Union and Management indicated that they would like to have the training for the Subcommittee completed as soon as possible and before the end of the year.

Meeting Schedule Start Times

- At the July 7, 2009 meeting, Management proposed moving the start time of the Subcommittee meetings to the afternoon.
- Given recent changes in senior management within the ministry, Management indicated that current meeting start times were the most appropriate and thanked the Union members for considering the proposal.
- **Action – Management committed to sending instructions to the Subcommittee regarding how to use the EATS system.**
- **Action – Management to request an exception from CERC to allow the Subcommittee to participate in the 1 ½ day ERC training session.**
- **Action – The Union and Management will approach the associated members of the MERC table regarding participating in a joint Employee Relations Committee (ERC) training session.**

1.2 Rescheduling of September 15, 2009 Meeting

- The Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) Leadership Day has been scheduled for September 15, 2009.
- As a new Deputy Minister was recently appointed for the ministry, all managers are expected to attend.
- The Union and Management agreed to move the date of the meeting to September 29, 2009, with the agenda setting teleconference moved to September 22, 2009.
- **Action – A new meeting request will be sent out for both the Subcommittee meeting and the agenda setting teleconference.**

1.3 SDMT Release 9.2

- The Union raised concerns regarding the workload associated with release 9.2.
- Release resulted in two new adhoc reports related to the Transition Child Benefit, issues with ODSP payments with multiple income deductions, manual overpayment letters, review of pay directs, etc.
- The timing of the release was also problematic as it was released in July while many staff are on vacation, resulting in greater workloads than previous releases.

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- The Union stressed the need to bring items that could potentially have an impact on staff workload to the Subcommittee table for feedback/comment on how it will impact the field.
- Management indicated that they would look at the schedule of future meetings and will add releases to the meetings in the month prior to the release.
- Management indicated that timing may be an issue with some releases.
- Union acknowledged this, however stressed that anything that can be done to soften workload impact for the field should be done.
- **Action – Release 9.3 (November) will be added to the October 20, 2009 Subcommittee meeting for discussion.**
- **Action – Future releases to be added to ODSP Subcommittee of MERC Action Item Tracking List.**

1.4 Vacancy Management

- The Union expressed frustrations with the vacancy management practices currently in place in some Regions.
- There is a general understanding of the constraints and fiscal pressures faced by the Regional Offices, however there are some perceived practices that make not filling ODSP positions difficult to understand.
- The Union indicated that it is difficult for staff to see ODSP positions remain vacant when other positions are being filled and other positions are being created.
- Management questioned if this issue has been raised with the Local Employee Relations Committee (LERC), and if so what was the rationale given.
- The Union confirmed that this had been raised with the LERCs and that the response back has been that the positions being filled were needed.
- The Union stated that vacancy management at the expense of ODSP workers has gone on for far too long and that they may need to consider filing grievances.
- Management requested that the Union provide more specific information regarding positions and locations so that Regional Directors can respond to the concerns more specifically.
- **Action – The Union committed to providing a note on the vacancy management issue to Management as soon as possible.**
- **Action – Management committed to discussing the vacancy management issue at Operations Division Management Committee (ODMC) and reporting back to the Subcommittee table following these discussions.**

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(ODMC) and reporting back to the Subcommittee table following these discussions.

1.6 Eligibility Review Officer (ERO) Legislative Authority

- The Union questioned if the new caseworker will encompass all of the job functions of the current ERO or if there will be some flexibility.
- The Union indicated that the initial message was that the field would still continue to have flexibility for expertise; however, a more recent message was that this would not be the case. There is a need for consistency in the messages being sent.
- Management noted that they would consider this for a future discussion.
- The Union indicated that the current Income Supports Specialist (ISS) has a commissionaires stamp and questioned if this function would continue under the new Caseworker position.
- Management noted that this question would be followed up on.
- The Union also questioned if the new caseworker positions required an Order in Council to be filled.
- The Union questioned how the joint ERO/Case Presenting Officer (CPO) positions in the North and North East regions would be treated under the new model.
- Management noted that this question had been raised before and that it was being reviewed.
- Management questioned if there had been much feedback from local office staff on the new position descriptions.
- The Union indicated that they had not heard a lot of feedback yet, but expected to begin receiving more once the summer period was over (vacations, etc.)
- The Union also identified that while employees in some positions (such as Employment Support Specialists) have expressed concerns over the changes to the staffing model, employees in ISS positions have not expressed the same level of concern.
- The feeling is that the ISS is used to undergoing changes in their roles and responsibilities and just view the change as they would any other.
- **Action – Management to look into if an Order in Council will be required to fill the new caseworker position.**

2.0 New Business

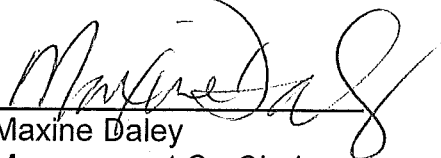
2.1 ODSP Modernization

- An in camera discussion on ODSP Modernization was held.

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3.0 Meeting Adjourned

Approved on Oct 20/09 by:



Maxine Daley
Management Co-Chair



Stuart McInnes
OPSEU Co-Chair