

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Presidents with members in the Ministry of Northern Development & Mines
All Stewards in the Ministry of Northern Development & Mines

FROM: Brian Gould, OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

DATE: July 18, 2008

SUBJECT: **Ministry of Northern Development & Mines
ERC Minutes – May 28, 2008**

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

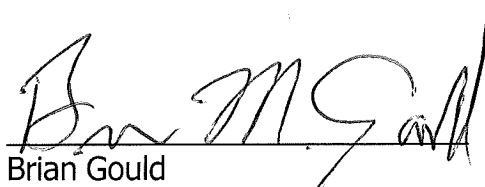
PLEASE NOTE: THESE MINISTRY MINUTES WERE PREPARED BY THE EMPLOYER.

AUTHORIZED FOR DISTRIBUTION:

IN SOLIDARITY,



Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President



Brian Gould
OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

/tl
att.

cc: MERC Chairs
Ministry ERC

**Ministry of Northern Development & Mines
Ministry Employee Relations Committee**

**Wednesday, May 28, 2008
159 Cedar St., 7th Fl., Minister's Boardroom
Sudbury**

IN ATTENDANCE:

For the Union:
Norm Trowell
Michel Lavoie
Robert Sandgren
Sherri Pirkl (t/c)
Stephen George (t/c)

For the Ministry:
Cleo Degagne
Sue Lepage
Louise Brinkmann
Ross Kelly

Recording Secretary:
Donna Fillier

Management chaired the meeting that was called to order at 9:05 a.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

The Union requested the following be added under other business:

- Staff Day
- Health & Safety Day
- MERC Training

2. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

ServiceOntario – The ServiceOntario Senior Manager attended to address any concerns. The Union stated there are two main concerns; new positions and training.

Management explained that the funding for the six new positions was retracted. Budget negotiations are currently underway to confirm supervisors and co-ordinators. We do, however, expect to have positions in place this fiscal year.

As for training, management agreed that this is an issue. MTO training is a priority and there is a commitment that all new services we take will have some form of training. The Union asked when the training would happen. Management replied they were unsure at this time as we don't have the resources in MNDM. The Union stated that some employees in the Northwest had to go to Thunder Bay for four weeks of training. That is a lot to ask of staff, for those with families. Management said it is unfortunate that the training is so intense, however, MTO services are very complex procedures and no two transactions are the same as many things can factor in. Training resources are limited and bringing someone on-site to train for a few days, isn't good enough. A Union member stated he has received e-mails from staff at 9:00 at night and asked if anything is being done about the late hours some of them are required to work. Management replied they are trying to remedy staff having to stay after 5:00 for clients. There has been a hot-line put in place, which is hoped will help some.

The Senior Manager addressed the issue brought up at the last meeting regarding disclosure of the Rainy River office moving and staff having to hear it on the street. In that case, Management was in negotiation with the landlord and had no idea the landlord would go out and talk to people about it before a deal was in place. Management wanted to make it clear that it was not a case of not wanting to inform staff, it was just there was nothing to report until the negotiation with the landlord was complete. Management will keep in mind for the future the small town dynamics. The Union commented that the move will give them more space and more security, which is definitely a plus, but there are still some hurdles. MNDM will pay for the renovations, but staff were told there is no money for furniture so Facilities is trying to scrounge up some for the space. Management replied that they will be able to buy a few new things, but as with all office relocations, an effort is made to utilize present furniture and equipment whenever possible to manage costs and not unduly waste resources. Management also stated that whenever renovations take place now, they make sure enough counter space is put in place to accommodate for the future in case new services are brought in.

The Union told the Senior Manager they appreciated him making the effort to visit various locations to see the challenges they face and meet the staff in person.

Post-meeting Note By Sr. Manager: While sleeping in a room opening on to very full and noisy pool and a subsequent 4 AM flight due to plane delays and missed connections, were not a highlight, the manager had a fantastic tour of some of the more remote offices and will be touring others shortly.

PDPs – Management reported that the latest newsletter featured an article on PDPs in an effort to enhance knowledge of staff. It was noted that one manager has actually gone to various office locations and talked with staff about his PDP and how it would reflect on theirs. The Union stated this manager has certainly set the standard and would hope other managers would try to follow his example.

Management wanted to reiterate that staff have access to many courses on-line through the Centre for Leadership and Learning (CFL). They can go to their web-site to have a look at what is available <http://intra.myops.gov.on.ca/training/learning.nsf/SimpleMonthly?OpenView> (must be logged on to MyOPS for this link to work).

The Union stated that our Newsletter would be a great tool to use to give hints on how to navigate through some of the intranet sites as some staff do not have as much opportunity to familiarize themselves with getting around on the intranet and have trouble finding information.

Management reported that once all the PDPs are received, a student will be brought on board to work on the stats for completed courses, which was discussed at the last MERC meeting.

Action: Management will provide information on completed course stats as soon as report is completed.

HR Transformation Update – Management gave an update on the progress. The Strategic Business Unit, which stays with the Ministry, will be put in place before the Regional Centres. Management expects this to happen by the end of summer.

Corporate Disclosure for Service Ontario – Management reported there have been no issues with security checks for our Ministry.

Requests for New Job Descriptions – The Union again stated that posting new job descriptions the day of the MERC meeting is not good enough. They should automatically go on the Corporate OPSEU site as they occur. Management replied that they are interpreting the wording in the memo as the job descriptions would be provided at MERC which is the day of the meeting. Management has no problem with the process of sending to the new web-site, but nowhere in the memo does it state they must provide them as they come. The Union told Management MNDM is the only ministry not complying and plan to bring this issue forward.

Violence in the Workplace Update – The Union was glad to see this training taking place and asked if there were any issues that came up. Management reported that one issue was employees wanted to know what recourse they have if the problem is with their manager and not another employee. Would Human Resources provide some support? Management advised that the first point of contact should be your manager, however, if the problem is with the manager, the employee would need to bring it to the next level. Human Resources staff is always available for advice and there is also the Employee Assistant Program that could assist. All Managers have had the training and are aware of all the steps. The training is mandatory and approximately 50% have completed it at this point. The Union asked if managers and staff are attending the session together and Management answered that they were. The Union wanted to know how this was being received corporately. Management replied we have had a very good response. We have incorporated a bullying aspect and Corporate was very pleased with how we incorporated it and also that we made the training mandatory. The Union stated they realize this Ministry is up front and centre regarding this issue and commend the action taken, especially the bullying component. The Union added that the Corporate group is looking to develop a package for all Ministries and would do well to use this one as an example.

3. **Emergency Preparedness** – The Emergency Management & Security Coordinator joined the meeting and gave the Committee an overview on the Ministry's plan. The most important is to have an Emergency Evacuation Plan in place with emergency protocols. Our Emergency Plan is on-line from our main web page at <http://www.ndm.gov.on.ca/emergman/default.asp> and the plan is updated on an annual basis. An evacuation of the building is the same procedure as the fire drills we have. We have two areas of specific responsibilities; Abandoned Mines and support to Provincial Emergency Management for Northern Ontario. We have communicated information regarding Emergency Preparedness to staff by articles in the newsletter, presentations and using splash pages for events such as Emergency Preparedness Week. It is recommended that all staff should have a look at the website to familiarize themselves with the procedures.

Our Ministry does not have anything identified as time critical, but will be setting-up building committees to look at it from a building perspective and find out which Ministries do have time-critical issues.

4. **Promotion of Ministry Programs** – Management asked the Union if they had any ideas on how they could help promote more participation for the PRAISE program and Staff Day. Management would like to see more submissions for PRAISE. There is great participation for Staff Day for those areas that have a committee to organize it, but we seem to have difficulty in getting people to sit on the committees for other areas.

The Union replied that they are all for Staff Day and think it is a good morale booster, however they would like to see more participation by Senior Managers. Management stated that they had looked at the stats in the past and in actual fact, management participation on a percentage basis exceeded staff. It's possible the percentage may be down in the past few years and Management will do their best to encourage managers' attendance next year. As for PRAISE, the Union is not really in favour of awards and feels the money would be better spent on training and development for staff.

The Union stated they had not had such a request from Management before and would take it under consideration and report back at the next meeting.

Action – Union will report back at next meeting.

5. **Other Business**

Health & Safety Day - The annual Health & Safety Day took place last week. There was a speaker from Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA) and Management felt it was one of the best presentations we have had.


The Union felt that, regarding training, we put our field crew through a lot of training, but no one ever really tests them afterwards. We throw a lot at them in a very short time. Management replied that, yes, all field staff have to go through significant training and we have tried to provide the best training we could. For instance, MOL has reviewed the package for ATV training and agreed that the training is appropriate. There is some testing that is required as well as certification for several mandatory programs such as WHMIS, Passport to Safety, Pleasure Craft, First Aid, Sirius Wilderness First Aid and Chainsaw Training. The Union replied that it just seems that no one ever fails anything. They are also concerned with the responsibility the Senior Assistant has, and whether they are really prepared enough to accept that responsibility. Management told the Committee that Supervisory training has been provided to field staff four years running. The Union replied that they may have had the training, but they probably don't know the Act. Management explained that all supervisors are required to have knowledge of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and sign off that they have read it and understand their responsibilities.

Action: Management will bring forward the Union's concerns to the Senior Manager.

Employee Relations Training – The training was effective but seemed a bit rushed. It seems that our Ministry is further ahead than many others. It was felt that perhaps it could be split into two parts; one for those just starting out and one for those that have been established. The facilitator told the group that 80% of workplaces don't have Local Employee Relation Committees (LERC), which is very surprising. The OPSEU committee member stated that he was not sure where they got that figure from, but it was incorrect. The Union pointed out that it seems this training was not mandatory after all, as there were members from some ministries missing from the session. The OPSEU committee member confirmed that it is definitely mandatory and if the names of those missing are brought forward through the right channels, there would be some action taken.

6. **Next Meetings** – Sept 18
Dec 4


Norm Trowell, Union Co-Chair


Cléo Degagne, Management Co-Chair