

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: January 15, 2008

SUBJECT: **Ministry of Northern Development & Mines
ERC Minutes – November 29, 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:

IN SOLIDARITY,



Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President



Brian Gould
OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

/gj
att.

cc: MERC Chairs
Ministry ERC

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

**Thursday, November 29, 2007
159 Cedar St., 7th Fl., Human Resources Boardroom
Sudbury**

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

For the Ministry:
Cleo Degagne
Sue Lepage
Murray Morello

REGRETS:
Louise Brinkmann
Ross Kelly

GUESTS:
Jonathan Barrett

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:

- PDPs
- Wellness
- Expressions of Interest
- Statutory Holiday

The Union requested a change to the last minutes: Jonathan Barrett attended the meeting by teleconference.

2. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

GICs – The Senior Manager for ServiceOntario joined the meeting to address some of the on-going issues.

New Structure – The Union asked how all these new management positions being added would benefit the staff. Management replied that there will be more interaction between staff and their manager because they will be more accessible. The idea is the manager will be visiting the offices on a regular basis. The time frame for hiring will probably be in January.

Training – The Union asked since the temporary training position has ended, what is in place for staff. Management replied that there will be a permanent Training Co-ordinator position who will

take the data from the recent Regional Trainer pilot, which we feel worked in the North, and build the new ServiceOntario training model. There are no dedicated trainers in place right now, so it will mean that managers will have to make their own arrangements and in some cases, we may still need to have staff train co-workers on some operational processes for the interim.

MTO Services - The Union asked if MTO services were being transferred to our offices. Management replied if any of their services were transferred, it would be done on a case by case basis. The Union also wanted to know if Health Cards were going to be downloaded to MNDM's ServiceOntario counters. Management replied that there has been no discussion regarding this.

Procedures and Use of Buzzer Systems – The Union reported that training was being provided this week for the Northwest. Management stated that the Northeast would be done as soon as possible. The guidelines are very straight forward, however, there will likely be input from staff and some changes made to the document as a result. Management added that at the last MERC meeting there was a request to try and combine the buzzer with the name tag. This was looked into, but it was decided we won't be combining them.

Secure Cabinets - Management inspected the cabinets being used to store cash and are satisfied that they could not be easily moved. Therefore, they will not be bolted to the floor.

Accommodation – Staff are still not being informed on accommodation issues. There are still some offices that are not wheelchair accessible and not set-up to be functional. ORC has been around to look at several sites, but have not heard anything back.

Communication – Management agreed this is an issue and will be looking to make improvements.

Org Chart – The Union asked for clarification on the new org chart. Management explained that the org chart only shows management positions and that there are other positions. Management is still analyzing all the data so we will have the best business flow. This org chart was done in conjunction with the Southern Ontario set-up. The Union commented that it looks like we are once again, top heavy in management. Management replied that more managers are necessary so that they can respond to the massive geographic area.

Compassionate and Other Leave Guidelines – Management was not able to find the form referred to at the last meeting. The normal process is if less than 30 days, approved directly in WIN and more than 30 days a WEAR form is generated. The Union stated that one employee was asked to fill out a form, so do managers just do these forms on their own? Management replied that employees should not be required to fill out a form that is not standard to the Ministry.

Action: Management will contact manager regarding the form being used and report back at the next MERC.

Drinking Water in Provincial Buildings – This is a continuing issue as far as communication is concerned. Testing was done at the Kenora office, but was discovered it was not being done properly. It's not clear if this is problem at other locations. The Committee had a discussion on how the testing was done. Management stated that ORC was contacted after the last MERC meeting and they said signs were posted not to use the water as testing was being done, but staff didn't pay attention to it and just moved the sign while they used the water and put it back when finished. The Union felt that the signs should have been permanent so they could not be moved. In Fort Frances there has been an automatic flush valve installed and Kenora now has a reverse osmosis system in place. The Union stated there has been movement, however, communication is still an issue.

Unclassified List – The unclassified list was given the Union Co-chair. The Union requested that in the future the list be given to all Union committee members at least two weeks before the MERC meeting so they may have a chance to review it. Management Co-Chair replied that he would verify the accepted protocol. The Union reviewed the list and felt that it was not accurate as it did not appear to be only OPSEU positions. A new list was requested that would only include OPSEU.

Action: *Management will verify protocol regarding distribution of unclassified list.*

Postmeeting Note: *Management provided Union Co-Chair with updated list following the MERC meeting.*

Results Based Planning – An e-mail was sent out recently explaining the addition of the new Aboriginal Unit and there was talk there may be changes to job specs. The Union stated they should be made aware of this officially if that is the case. Management was not aware of the e-mail that went out and requested a copy of it. The Union asked what the status was on the 07/08 Plan. Management replied we are in the process of preparing the document and will meet timelines.

Action: *Union Co-chair will provide Management Co-chair with copy e-mail regarding the new Aboriginal Unit.*

Meal Allowance – There is still an issue with Managers not being consistent. The Union reported that recently an employee had to attend a Chamber of Commerce luncheon as part of his job and the lunch cost was set at \$15.00. However, when the employee submitted his claim the manager would not approve the full amount. The Union felt this was being unreasonable. Management replied perhaps it's just a matter of pre-approval. Most times the employee would know in advance the cost of these types of luncheons and should run it by the manager to ensure the expense would be approved. Management stated it did seem unreasonable not to approve this type of expense as the cost is out of the employee's control. Management offered to contact that manager if the Union wished.

Violence in the Workplace – Management reviewed the tool kit mentioned at the last MERC meeting. It was discussed with the Health & Safety Committee and they were asked to review our current practices and tools and then make recommendations to the Human Resources Management Committee. It is expected that Management will be able to report back at the next meeting in March. The Union requested a copy of whatever tools we currently have in place.

Action: *Management will provide the Union with the tools the Ministry currently has in place.*

3. **Regional Economic Development Branch Re-Alignment** – Management gave an overview of the changes which began around July. There was a teleconference held on Monday of this week which addressed a lot of concerns. The Union stated there was no corporate disclosure as they had not received any correspondence concerning it. The Union put Management on notice that they want corporate disclosure as soon as possible and also if there are any new job descriptions, the Union wants to see them.

Action: *Management will review disclosure in this instance.*

Postmeeting Note: *Disclosure in this matter did take place on June 18/07 to OPSEU headquarters, however, new process is to disclose using e-mail address. Material disclosed was forwarded electronically to OPSEU through Norm Trowell.*

4. **Progress of OPS 2005-2008 HR Plan** – The Union requested a status update. Management reported that there would be an updated plan to 2011.
5. **PRAISE** – The Ministry PRAISE Awards were held on November 14th. This year we linked with Thunder Bay by videoconference and the Chair of the PRAISE Committee attended there to be with those employees. It seemed to work very well and we hope to expand to other sites for future ceremonies. It was noted that this year, past Committee member, Jonathan Barrett received an award in the category “You Made a Difference”.

The Union felt that the effort and money put into this event might be better spent if applied to developing employees through training and development.

6. **HR Awards** – Management reported that the provincial award ceremony for the OPS also recently took place. Once again, Jonathan Barrett was the recipient of the award for “Mentoring Others”.

7. **Other Business**

PDPs – There is still an issue with staff being told they can't attend a course because of budget constraints, even though it is in their PDP. Or, if staff ask to attend a conference, managers view it as a reward rather than part of their training and development. Management stated this has been covered in past meetings, but would like to take some time to think about what can be done to improve the system.

Wellness – The Union asked if Management put anymore thought into organizing a Wellness Day as suggested previously. Management replied that we already have Staff Day and we are also the only Ministry to tie-in to National Wellness Week lead by Health Canada. Management agreed that we could look into trying to involve more offices.

Expressions of Interest – Some staff find that this procedure is being done unprofessionally. Staff are only finding out they are not being considered when they see someone else in the job. Managers should have consideration and inform those who weren't successful before the successful candidate starts.

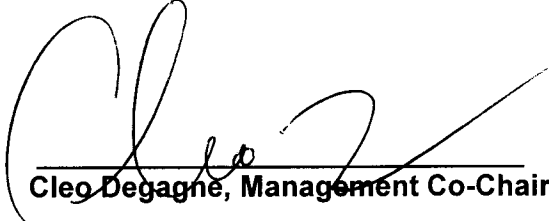
Statutory Holiday – A new statutory holiday has been sanctioned in Ontario called Family Day. It will fall on the third Monday in February.

OPSEU Bursary – The Union announced that three students have been selected. They will each receive \$750.00

Corporate Travel Card – There was a memo sent in October regarding a list of blocked vendors on for the Corporate Travel Card. The Union stated there have been some problems. For instance, one employee tried to buy windshield wipers at a Canadian Tire store and was unable to use the card. He had to pay for them personally and get reimbursed. This shouldn't happen. Management replied that in some Canadian Tire stores you have to use your card at the automotive cash; maybe this was the case in that particular instance.

8. **Next Meetings** – Committee Training – March 26
Meeting – March 27
June 12
Sept 18
Dec 4


Norm Trowell, Union Co-Chair
06/01/2008


Cleo Degagne, Management Co-Chair