

MEMORANDUM

OPSEU



SEFPO

Syndicat des Employé-e-s
de la Fonction Publique
de l'Ontario

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

All Stewards in the Ministry of Northern Development & Mines

FROM: Terry Baxter, OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

DATE: December 2, 2005

SUBJECT: **Ministry of Northern Development & Mines
ERC Minutes – October 7, 2005**

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 our 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.

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Leah Casselman
President

/ms
att.

cc: MERC Chairs
Ministry ERC

Terry Baxter
OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

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

**October 7, 2005
159 Cedar Street, Deputy Minister's Boardroom
Sudbury**

IN ATTENDANCE

For the Union:
Norm Trowell
Michel Lavoie
Fred Richardson t/c
Stephen George

For the Ministry:
Cleo Degagne
Jonathan Barrett
Ross Kelly
Louise Brinkmann
Sue Lepage (guest)
Leslie Cooper (observer)

Regrets:
Sherri PirkI

Recording Secretary:
Donna Fillier

The Union chaired the meeting that was called to order at 9:05 a.m. Introductions were made for the new members. Union and Management expressed their thanks for the contributions made by former members of the committee and welcomed new members Louise and Fred.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Union requested the following be added:

Under Other Business:

- Ontario Disabilities Act
- LERCs
- Health & Safety – Snow Tires

2. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

Health & Safety Policies – Sue Lepage reported that following the last meeting a copy of the guidelines was provided to OPSEU and a memo was sent to all managers in September encouraging them to discuss the document with their staff during mid-year reviews. Sue made presentations at some staff meetings and also had some one-on-one discussions with managers. The document is on our web-site at:

http://ndmdev.ndm.gov.on.ca:8090/cmd/healthsafety/policies_directives_and_guidelines.asp

An annual review will be done on all health and safety policies.

Management informed the committee of other health and safety issues that have been brought forward. Mandatory WHMIS training for all staff was recently launched. Also, a proposal was sent to Human Resources Management Committee (HRMC) on Defensive Driving Training. It was proposed to implement a computer based training program leading to a certification process. HRMC approved making this training available to staff. A memo will be posted on the public folder recommending the training.

Attendance Support Program – Threshold – Sue Lepage contacted MBS in October 2004 to discuss the calculation of ministry thresholds, and in particular, the application to GIC employees who have different thresholds depending on whether they work for MNDM or MGS (formerly MCBS).

MBS advised that they would take the issue under consideration. Further, it was reported at an OPS Disability Management group meeting on July 5, 2005 that Bob Sherman, MBS lead, had attended an inter-jurisdictional conference in Halifax where there was discussion on common metric approaches for sick leave usage.

3. **Successor Rights** – The Union requested that this be a standing item at future meetings. Management stated that there is nothing to discuss on this matter as it is out of our jurisdiction.
4. **Request by Union for List of Unclassifieds** – Staff lists are prepared corporately every month. Management was under the impression that the Union already received these. The Union replied that they do get them, however, they are not broken down by ministry. It is just a list of all vacancies with no indication of what ministry they belong to.
5. **Request by Union for List of Vacancies** –The union advised that ministries at other MERC tables have been providing such lists.

Action: Management to consult with MGS on central reporting refinements for items 4 and 5.

6. **Request by Union for Copy of New Human Resources Plan** – Management reported there is no new Human Resources Plan published as in previous years due to the HR Transformation work in the OPS. The Union asked how they proceed if there is no plan in place. Management explained initiatives that were created in previous plans are now established programs and initiatives ongoing as the need arises.
7. **Neureka** – They occupy the 5th floor at the WGMC. Apparently, they are having financial problems and have reduced their staff. The Union asked if Management had any information on their future. Management replied they had none at this time other than what has been reported by the media. The Union stated this comes back to communication. Management should be keeping staff at WGMC informed of any changes within the building.

Action: Management will discuss with new ADM and request that communication with staff be on-going as changes are frequent in the building.

8. **Compensating Leave for Schedule 6 Employees** – Article 8.871, Section C – this relates to Northern Development Area Teams. The Union requested clarification around amount and timing of compensating leave. Is there a yardstick or is it completely up to the manager. Some managers are asking staff to take a day as it is accumulated. Some staff would prefer to accumulate more and take a few days off together. Management replied that ultimately it is at the manager's discretion, but certainly should be reasonable. Managers have to consider operational requirements and the dollars required for pay-out of unused leave. The Union stated the application of the policy is inconsistent and staff feel it is being applied unreasonably.

Action: Management will look into how it is being applied and report back at the next meeting.

9. **Laurentian Earth Sciences** – Management did not have any new information. Union again stated there was no communication and this creates anxiety for staff.

10. **Meal Receipts** – Meal receipts are now required for all travel. The Union pointed out this is not always possible in the remote Northern communities and some managers will not accept written receipts. What does management consider a proper receipt? This is an issue that needs to be addressed as there are cases where the manager has refused to pay if a proper receipt is not produced. Also, the amounts allowed are not sufficient; the Federal Government is closer to \$70.00 per day.

Management replied that in terms of the daily allowance, that is not going to change as the issue was reviewed just recently. As for what is considered a proper receipt, this is something that can be asked of our Controllershship office. Staff can also bring up this issue at staff meetings with their manager and have a discussion so they know what is expected of them. Management noted that accountability is first with employees and ultimately with managers who need to know what costs were incurred and without an itemized receipt they have no way of verifying nor do auditors if that were to occur. The Union replied that there has to be some trust that staff are there to do their job and are not spending the money improperly.

The Union would like consistency in management approach. The Union also stated that with receipts being required for everything, staff are entering exact amounts in IFIS instead of what they are allowed and this is not right as the \$34.00 per day is seen as an allowance and staff should get the full amount. Management indicated that employees should be compensated for meals while on travel status in accordance with the policy and managers are responsible to approve claims based on the policy. It was recommended that the issue be discussed at staff meetings where all employees can have an open discussion with their manager on the issue.

Action: Management will discuss this issue with the Controller.

11. **MNDM Newsletter** – The Union asked what happened to the Newsletter. Last year we had eight issues and this year only two have been produced. The Union would like to see it continue as staff do read it.
12. **Staff Day** – The Union wanted to thank the Staff Day Committees for the wonderful job they did this year. It is a good initiative and a great morale booster.
13. **Climate Survey** – The Ministry began with Climate Surveys in 1999. HRMC has recently approved another survey which will be conducted by an outside organization and is completely confidential. The survey is expected to come out early December.
14. **Other Business**

Ontario Disabilities Act – Plans are to be shared at the MERC table. The Union asked for a copy of MNDM's plan. They also stated that there is a problem with one of our remote offices not being wheelchair accessible. It was indicated that Facilities Management was aware of the situation.

Action: Norm Trowell will provide a copy of the MNDM plan to Stephen George.

LERCs – We have had a Local Employee Relation Committee in the past and the Union would like to see it established again. It is their experience that issues are dealt with more effectively and quickly at the LERC level. In some areas it may make more sense to have a regional committee as opposed to local.

Snow Tires – The Union stated that staff who require the use of a Ministry vehicle should have snow tires for safety reasons. It seems that it always comes down to budget and all-seasons are usually used. This is not acceptable for Northern Ontario.

Management replied that they have recently resurrected the Ministry Health & Safety Committee and the first meeting was in June. There was some discussion about leasing vehicles and Sue Lepage looked into the leasing policies. She spoke to the Controller about using SUVs, but they are considered a luxury vehicle. It was noted by management that they have not received any reports of vehicle accidents in winter. The Union replied that it was not just a case of accidents, but also of unreported "near misses" and getting stuck in remote locations.

Action: Sue Lepage will raise this issue at the next Health & Safety Management Committee meeting and report back to the Union before the next MERC meeting.

For important Health and Safety issues, the Union requested Management to report back as soon as they have the information, rather than wait until the next MERC meeting. Management agreed.

Minutes – The Union confirmed the new language in the Collective Agreement regarding minutes; they are to be completed within 10 working days of the meeting.

15. Next Meeting – December 15, 2005.


Norm Trowell, Union Co-Chair


Cléo Degagne, Management Co-Chair



FOR MERC ACTION

Strategic Action from Local Employee Relations Committee
(to be used when an issue is not resolved at LERC table)

Ministry:

Workplace Location:

Local #:

Please use a Separate Form for Each Unresolved issue.

- ✓ Please include the specific details about the issue.
- ✓ Provide any documentation that may assist the discussion at your Ministry Employee Relations Committee (MERC).

Is the issue related to (please ✓):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job Security and Article 20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable Efforts - Divestment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employer's Corporate Initiative and work re-organization | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enforcing the Contract | <input type="checkbox"/> Contract Interpretation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Safety | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: (please identify) | |

Statement of the Issue:

The Resolution sought by your Local Employee Relations Committee (LERC):

Date Issue was declared unresolved by your LERC:

Is the Relevant material attached? Yes No

LERC Minutes dated:

Correspondence. Please list:

Local ERC Member Contact

Name:

Home #:

Address:

Work #:

FORWARD to: OPSEU Job Security Unit, 100 Lesmill, Toronto, Ontario M3B 2P8

Fax: (416)448-7462

