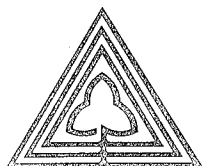


**M E M O R A N D U M**

**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:** June 8, 2006

**SUBJECT: Ministry of Northern Development & Mines  
ERC Minutes – April 26, 2006**

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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:

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or  
1-800-663-1070

Leah Casselman  
President

/jm  
att.

cc: MERC Chairs  
Ministry ERC

Terry Baxter  
OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

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

**Wednesday, April 26, 2006  
159 Cedar St., 6<sup>th</sup> Fl., IT Boardroom  
Sudbury**

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IN ATTENDANCE

For the Union:  
Norm Trowell  
Michel Lavoie  
Fred Richardson  
Sherri Pirkl

For the Ministry:  
Cleo Degagne  
Jonathan Barrett  
Louise Brinkmann  
Ross Kelly

Regrets:  
Stephen George

Recording Secretary:  
Donna Fillier

The Union chaired the meeting that was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

**1. Adoption of Agenda**

The Union requested the following be added:

- Message from the Deputy

Under Business Arising from Previous Minutes:

- Meal Receipts
- Job Specs

Under Other Business:

- Update on Service Ontario

**Message from the Deputy** – The Deputy asked CAO/ADM Corporate Management Division to attend the meeting on her behalf. The Deputy wanted to stress that she is a genuine supporter of the MERC Committee and is pleased with the relationship. Two issues the Union asked to be addressed were the composition of the Management side of the Committee and being able to get decisions at the table.

It was indicated that over time there have been different ranks of management sit on the Committee, some have been Directors and some have been Managers and Supervisors. The Union stated that in the last few years the majority of the management side has been from Human Resources and have not had a lot of decision-makers on the Committee. It seems most issues have to keep being brought back to the table. The ADM stated that he looks to the Management Co-chair to ensure the appropriate Manager is invited to the meetings in order to facilitate decision-making. The reality is you won't always have decisions made at the meeting as some issues require research and consultation. We run a system of decisions and accountability and manager's input is crucial.

The Union wanted to raise awareness that in the past, more decisions were made at the table and it seems that now we are spinning our wheels more than in the past. The Union also stated they used to be able to get certain information from past management reps, but now it is not supplied as per MGS instructions and find this to be very frustrating. Management replied that some of the same issues are raised at different MERCs and MGS wants an OPS approach to these issues as opposed to individual ministries giving their own interpretations. The ADM also pointed out that the Freedom of Information Act is also creating an impact.

The ADM reiterated that the Deputy feels this Committee is very important and is confident we can continue to work together to resolve issues in an open manner.

## **2. Business Arising from Previous Minutes**

**Winter Tires** – Management again looked into this situation and this has now been resolved.

**Plans at WGMC-New Tenants** – The Union requested information on any new tenants or major changes happening. The ADM for Mines and Minerals had held a meeting for staff at the WGMC and gave information on who the tenants would be, but there was no confirmed information at the time on which floors would be affected. Management stated that part of the problem in getting information out to staff is that ORC does not always keep the Ministry informed of their plans.

The Union asked Management to contact the ADM's office to see if they could communicate more often with ORC to ensure we are kept in the loop.

**Action – Management agreed to speak with the ADM's office.**

**Timing of Audit Report** – The Union had planned to bring in a manager to speak to this, but will postpone to the fall meeting to ensure the information is as up-to-date as possible.

**Action – Item carried over to the next meeting.**

**Meal Receipts** – This was moved up to CERC.

**Job Specs** – Management reported they have not received any new information.

- 3. Report on Ministry Climate Survey** – The Union asked when the Climate Survey would be out as there is concern that the field crews will not have the opportunity to complete it. Management replied that the survey will be going out by May 8<sup>th</sup>. There was a delay as MGS sent out a survey in April and we needed some separation of the two. The Union asked if we would only target 20% of our employees as MGS did. Management stated that each employee would be solicited for their input as has been the case in the past.
- 4. Safety Boots for Summer Students** – It is a requirement that all students working in the field must wear safety boots, although there are a number of them that usually show up without them. The Union asked what the Ministry's responsibility is. Apparently, Ministry of Labour supplies them for their students and the Union would like to know if there is any thought that our Ministry would do the same. Management replied that historically we have not paid. The policy says that appropriate footwear must be worn, but we have always stressed safety boots as opposed to hiking boots. The Ministry's obligation is not that we are required to pay for them, but to ensure students are properly equipped. Students should show up as directed, and if they don't, should not be allowed to work. Management stated that the Mines and Minerals managers have met regarding this issue and it was decided we would not pay for student footwear. The Union asked if the Ministry would consider a subsidy. Management informed that there is a Health & Safety Committee meeting scheduled soon

and this would be discussed. Once they have met we will ask them to share the outcome on this issue.

- 5. Procedures for Office Renovations** – The Union asked if there are any procedures that are to be followed regarding renovations. Recently the Kenora office underwent a renovation that happened very quickly before year-end and staff were not given the opportunity for timely meaningful input. Facilities Management was notified that dimensions were not adequate but were told that this layout was according to requirements. The feeling is that if staff had been consulted and adequate time for implementation, it could have been laid out better. This wasn't planned well.

There was some discussion on offices revolving around Service Ontario. Will there be money available to improve these offices? The Union asked how we can be expected to expand on our service when we don't have the proper facilities to provide it. Staff have been told there is no money for improvements in all offices and concern was expressed around Service Ontario offices.

Management replied that, except for major or planned infrastructure changes, local office modifications are often done close to year-end because that is when managers have resolved any pressures or contingencies during the year, and know if they have funds remaining in their budgets to accomplish needed changes. Unfortunately, that doesn't leave very much time to get the work done by March 31<sup>st</sup>, so may entail the work moving at a fast pace.

**Action: Management will speak with Facilities to see if there can be more opportunity for staff input prior to renovations being done.**

- 6. Staff Day** – It is felt by some staff that May is not a very good month to have Staff Days. The field crews are either already in the field or on Health & Safety courses to prepare them for the field work. The Union asked if they could be split, with half in May and the other half in September.

Management replied that Staff Day in Sudbury was delayed until September one year for that reason, however, when the stats were done it was found that only a couple field crew staff attended. Overall, September appears to be one of the busiest months for the majority of staff and that is why we tend to go with May. Perhaps, it would be feasible for the field crews to organize their own staff day at an appropriate time, however, one of the purposes of Staff Day is to meet and mingle with staff from other divisions.

GIC staff also have a problem attending staff day as someone has to stay behind to man the office. Management stated that each GIC handles it differently, depending on their circumstance. Some offices bring in back-up staff and others alternate staff each year. Participation will continue to be encouraged.

- 7. Lockdown Procedures** – Recently, there have been two lockdowns at 159 Cedar Street. The Union asked what the process is to determine a lockdown and who makes the decision. Management explained they are in the process of working with ORC to get protocols in place. The recent lockdowns were the result of protests taking place in Sudbury. The first time protestors were actually in the building and staff were advised to close the doors to their sections as all have the ability to lock up their areas. Some staff were taken by surprise by the noisy protestors and were upset with the disruption. The second lockdown was because it was rumored that protestors were once again targeting the building and a decision was made by the building lead to lockdown. An e-mail to all building staff was sent out the day before, but not all staff read it and therefore, were taken off guard when they came into work the next morning. Facilities Management was on the main floor for part of the morning to assist those that could not get to their floor.

Management assured the Union that they will be reviewing everything with ORC and will look at all considerations.

**Action: Management to report back at next MERC meeting.**

8. **Mould Problem at WGMC** – While having some windows replaced at the WGMC mould was found between the panes of the glass. ORC contacted the Ministry of Labour to come in and look at it. MOL has procedures that must be followed. As long as the panes were not pulled apart there was no danger and a wash down procedure was followed as per MOL's instructions. Still need to clarify if MOL identified the type of mould, but the problem has been resolved.

The window replacements done at WGMC also relates to the earlier discussion on procedures for office renovations. This work was started without notifying anyone in the Lab. The windows were pulled out and it was just left open to the outside. This affects the instruments in the Lab as well as staff. The Manager wrote a terse letter to ORC about doing things without warning, and not giving consideration to tenants.

**Action: Management will report back on whether the type of mould has been identified. Management will speak with Facilities Management regarding prior warning being given to the Lab of any work being planned in their area.**

9. **Other Business**

**Service Ontario** – The Union asked if there is any update on the implementation of Service Ontario offices and how it will affect staff. Management stated they have seen one example, which was in Ottawa, and there was no affect on staff. Management explained that the average person doesn't make the distinction between governments, so the idea is one point of access for all services.

**Action: Management will invite the GIC Manager to attend and give an up-date at the next meeting.**

10. **Next Meeting** – September 15, 2006



Norm Trowell, Union Co-Chair



Cleo Degagne, Management Co-Chair