

MEMORANDUM

OPSEU



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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

DATE: May 3, 2004

SUBJECT: **Ministry of Northern Development & Mines
ERC Minutes – March 18, 2004**

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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IN SOLIDARITY,

Leah Casselman
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/ms
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cc: MERC Chairs
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Ministry of Northern Development & Mines
Ministry Employee Relations Committee

March 18, 2004
159 Cedar Street, Deputy Minister's Boardroom
Sudbury

IN ATTENDANCE

For the Union:
Norm Trowell
Michel Lavoie
Sylvie Valcourt
Stephen George

For the Ministry:
Cleo Degagne
Jonathan Barrett
Ross Kelly
Fred Lalonde (t/c)

Guests:
Sue Leblanc
Sue Lepage
Ed Debicki

Recording Secretary:
Jamesene King

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

1. **Adoption of the Agenda**

There were no items added to the agenda.

2. **Business Arising from Previous Minutes**

Correction: The Union requested under item #14 – Other Business – Attendance Threshold, the action item should read that Sue Lepage will forward information, rather than Health and Safety representative, for clarification.

Health & Safety Policies for “Small” Offices – The Health and Safety coordinator advised that the draft protocols for remote/small offices were circulated to all H&S committees for comment. All comments have been received and are being considered. The final draft should be ready for the end of April.

Action: Health and Safety Coordinator will bring forward the final version to the June meeting.

Cafeteria at WGMC – Other tenants in the building (Neureka and OMS) are expressing an interest in having a cafeteria at WGMC. This may help garner more interest for a vendor.

Wilderness First Aid Training – Norm Trowell, Ross Kelly and Jim Ireland have prepared a three-tier option plan for training.

Tier #1 – Standard First Aid training: this would be adequate for 90% of the field staff

Tier #2 – more than Standard First Aid training may be required: this training would be targeted to those that are in the field, but are relatively close to civilization and able to access some kind of care in a reasonable period of time.

Tier #3 – Wilderness Training: this training would be recommended for those field staff that are in very isolated and remote areas.

The recommendation is that each field project would be examined to see what level of training is needed. Utilizing this three tier system will help to contain costs. Norm, Ross and Jim are looking into potential providers for the training. Since the OGS is predominantly impacted, it was determined that this plan should be brought forward initially to Mines and Minerals Division senior management.

Action: Norm and Ross will bring the plan forward to John Gammon and provide an update / report at next MERC meeting.

WHMIS Training – Jonathan Barrett reported that there isn't anyone currently certified to deliver WHMIS training in the ministry. In addition, NORCAT a local training provider, doesn't offer the "train-the-trainer" / certification training any longer due to liability issues. This leaves 2 options for WHMIS training; (1) complete the on-line WHMIS training set-up through the HR Branch for \$10.00 per person (or for those at the WGMC, the Geolabs has the computer-based system available on a desktop computer, where employees can take the training free of cost and receive their certification) or (2) NORCAT will do in-person training for \$50.00 per person. The on-line system (either via the internet or via the Geolabs) takes approximately 2 hours to complete. The recommended approach is for employee's to access the on-line module for WHMIS training.

There was discussion around who needs to complete WHMIS training. The Union recommended that a communication be forwarded to staff advising that those in contact with hazardous materials are required to complete the training.

Action: Cleo Degagne and Sue Lepage will consider communication options

Geological Field Trips Led by Ministry Staff – A waiver form is being prepared and the legal department will review it. This document will only be 1 to 2 pages in length. A document should be ready for next meeting.

Action: Norm will bring forward the waiver form at the next MERC meeting.

Neureka at WGMC (Health & Safety Issues) – Ed Debicki, Senior Manager of the Geoscience Laboratories, attended a meeting to provide an update on some recent activities at the GeoLabs, including Neureka's establishment of a biology-based lab at the WGMC. Through intervention by MNM and in particular, the H&S Committee at the WGMC, several suggestions have been provided to Neureka. As well, a number of questions asked of Neureka have been responded to; Neureka and MNM continue to work towards ensuring a mutually safe and healthy lab environment.

IT / WDHP Training Update – The training was rolled out in February and March. Every manager in the ministry has received the refresher training. In total 386 staff were trained and accommodations are being made for those who haven't been trained by setting up additional sessions. There have been 26 sessions held to date (a mixture of face-to-face and teleconference). MBS's package was modified for the sessions and several slides were added enhancing some of the key messages such as employee's responsibilities and increased focus on WDHP. Sessions were 1-2 hours in length.

The Union raised concerns about this training, specifically that they feel it is not training but rather familiarization of the existence of the policies. Further that 2 hours is not sufficient to cover this material and that it requires a ½ day of training given the complexity. Concerns around the package, the consistency of the message and the examples used were brought forward to CERC. The Union did commend management for modifying the MBS package and taking into consideration / suggestions that were raised last MERC.

Action: Jonathan will provide Stephen with a copy of the package used for ministry sessions.

Max Merits – Concern expressed by the Union about members not receiving their max merit on time, as in the previous 2 years. The Union stressed the importance of this being done in a timely manner.

3. **Geoscience Labs – Amalgamation with “Central Analytical Facility”** – Ed Debicki advised that the GeoLabs is discussing joint efforts with the Earth Sciences Department at Laurentian University. Essentially the proposal is that Laurentian University students and staff of the Earth Sciences program would have access to the Geoscience Lab. Ed reiterated that there will be no reduction in staff or change in status of the Geoscience Labs as a result of this venture (i.e. the University would essentially be a “guest” and would need to adhere to same health and safety policies as staff while on-site). Ed also outlined that there will be some advantages to working closely with leading earth sciences researchers and the positive impacts on the GeoLabs as a research and scientific centre of excellence.
4. **IT Unit – Rumours of being Transferred to MNR** – The Union indicated that staff in the IT unit have been told that they were moving over to MNR by April 1st, 2004. Management advised that there have been no decisions made at this time and as this is a Land & Resources Cluster initiative, final communication will come directly from the Cluster management.
5. **Mining Lands – Perceived Problems with Hiring & Lack of T & D Positions for Field Staff (Outside of 125 km of Sudbury)** – The Union brought forward concerns about the number of postings that are limited to within 125 km of Sudbury, therefore limiting the ability for field staff to apply. They also feel that many of the secondments that are less than 6 months are being assigned instead of being advertised internally. Therefore, many people do not get the opportunity to train in other positions. The concern is that employees are losing faith in the ability to move forward in the organization. Management indicated that if there is a sufficient candidate pool within the 125 km, during times of fiscal constraint, the position may be restricted so as to prevent relocation costs. The Union stated that the Ministry is trying to have it both ways; on the one hand stating that they are a province-wide ministry where learning of all staff is encouraged, on the other hand restricting the training opportunities for staff outside of Sudbury.

The Union also brought forward the concern that some employees are not being permitted access to training opportunities. Management advised that reports are produced from the Career Management Tool, showing managers their L&D expenditures for the year. Also, the HR Plan requires an annual report back to MBS on the percentage of employee learning plans that have been achieved. It was agreed that HR would re-issue a message to all staff about the importance of training and development activities and participating in developing the individual learning plan as part of the Performance Development Plan (PDP).

Action: HR will provide some education reinforcing the importance of learning plans and training / development opportunities.

6. **OPS Spirit Campaign – Employer’s Liability** – The Union raised the issue that Premiere McGuinty has been encouraging individuals to volunteer their time for organizations (e.g. Habitat for Humanity). Concern was raised about potential liability issues if an employee is hurt while volunteering and employee’s understanding of their coverage/personal liability. Management advised that since the employee is volunteering on his or her own time, there are no employer liability issues and employees are not covered under WSIB (“workers compensation”). Staff injured

while not at work (including while attending Spirit-related events) have appropriate entitlements under the Short Term Sickness Plan provisions (and many organized events carry their own insurance as well). Staff are encouraged to check the OPS Spirit website for further information: <http://intra.opsspirit.gov.on.ca>

7. **Results Based Planning** – This is one methodology of completing the business planning process. MNM's business plan was submitted. If there are items stemming from this that need to be brought forward, disclosures will be undertaken as per norm.
8. **Other Business** – None brought forward.
9. **Next Meeting** – June 17th, Deputy Minister's Boardroom, 7th Floor, Sudbury



Norm Trowell, Union Co-Chair



Cleo Degagne, Management Co-Chair

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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"/> | Contract Interpretation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Enforcing the Contract | | |
| <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**

