

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** All Presidents with members in the Ministry of Natural Resources  
All Stewards in the Ministry of Natural Resources

**FROM:** Brian Gould, OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

**DATE:** 20 September 2007

**SUBJECT:** **Ministry of Natural Resources  
ERC Minutes – July 19, 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.

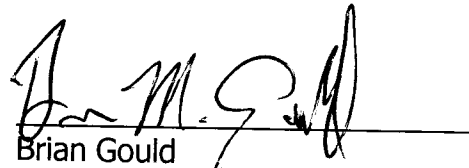
**PLEASE NOTE: THESE MINISTRY MINUTES WERE PREPARED BY THE EMPLOYER.**

AUTHORIZED FOR DISTRIBUTION:

IN SOLIDARITY,



Warren (Smokey) Thomas  
President



Brian Gould  
OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

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att.

cc: MERC Chairs  
Ministry ERC

**Ministry Employee Relations Committee  
OPSEU Regional Office  
31 Wellesley St., Boardroom A  
Toronto, Ontario**

**Tuesday, June 19, 2006  
9:30 – 3:00**

Present for OPSEU:

Elaine Bagnall (Co-Chair)  
Dave Fluri  
Ed Evens  
Peter Wall

Present for the Ministry:

Rob Kennedy (Co-Chair)  
Laural Rueffer (Minutes)  
Paul Chamberlain  
Dave Payne

Guests:

Doug Storey (by Phone) - Employee Engagement Survey  
Joyce Minielly (by Phone) - Employee Engagement Survey  
Tim Bovington - Air Maintenance Engineers Apprenticeship  
Fadia Mishrigi - Communications Survey

Regrets:

Kevin Smith

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**Standing Items**

**1. Fish & Wildlife Review**

The Employer indicated that it is not in a position to provide any further information at this time. As information concerning decisions made arising out of the review becomes available it will be provided first through the corporate disclosure process.

**2. Transformation**

The presentation materials on HR Transformation that were originally disclosed corporately were shared with MERC. These also have been provided to staff in the HR Branch. The Employer indicated that HR Transformation was moving forward and the parties discussed potential implications.

### 3. Employee Engagement Survey

Joyce Minielly and Doug Storey joined via teleconference to discuss the employee engagement surveys. They described the work done as a result of the 2006 survey and the results of the 2007 survey. The results of the 2007 survey are not significantly different although the priority areas of improvement have changed to now include recognition. The report is expected to be released in late June. Discussion followed concerning implications of the findings.

*Action: Doug to be invited back on September 12<sup>th</sup> if there is further information to share.*

### 4. Grievance Administration Project

The Employer indicated that at the corporate level the Terms of Reference are currently being reviewed by OPSEU and at the ministry level the parties are working to reach agreement on the active grievances.

### 5. Terms of Reference

OPSEU provided comments on the draft Terms of Reference for the operation of MERC/LERCs.

*Action: The Employer to review and respond to the OPSEU MERC co-chair prior to the next meeting.*

### 6. Lateral Transfers

The parties discussed the pilot lateral transfer agreement and agreed to renew the agreement based on the provision within the agreement.

*Action: The Employer to draft short Memorandum of Understanding.*

### 7. Safety Glasses

OPSEU raised the issue of safety glasses for individuals that require prescription eyewear. It appeared any solution would require amendments to the vision care plan which is something that would have to be addressed centrally.

#### Follow up items:

#### 1. Bush Meals – Employer and Union to Review

The parties discussed the current cost of bush meals and the potential for increasing the reimbursement rates. As well, OPSEU expressed concern that there is inconsistent application of the policy around meals that has disadvantaged some individuals working in the interior of the parks.

*Action: OPSEU to provide business case rationale for increasing the bush meal rate and to provide particulars regarding application of the meal policy for those individuals working in the interior of the parks.*

*Action: The Employer to discuss application of the policy with Ontario Parks.*

## 2. DCO Review

The Employer indicated that the Enforcement Branch is still in the process of reviewing the DCO files but have not located the 1997 report.

*Action: The Employer to provide OPSEU with the 1997 report if available.*

## 3. Use of Force

The Employer indicated that the Use of Force report has been expanded and currently is being finalized. The parties discussed recent use of force activity in the North Bay district and the Employer relayed positive comments regarding the training provided to the conservation officers.

*Action: The Employer to provide use of force report once complete.*

## 4. Passports

The Employer investigated the issues raised by OPSEU with respect to the passport requirements for fire crews. The Employer confirmed the policy which allows the Ministry to pay for passports for employees that are required to travel to the United States (US) under specific circumstances and clarified the application of that policy to fire crews. Due to the process by which fire crews are dispatched to the US, there is no requirement for crew members to possess passports. Essentially this is because all necessary US governmental approvals are obtained by the receiving agency for all affected individuals prior to them entering the US.

*Action: The Employer to verify that this is reflected in the current direction provided to managers.*

## 5. Communication Survey

Fadia Mishrigi attended via teleconference to provide an update on the communications survey. Fadia provided an overview of the drivers of the initiative, the progress over the past year and she provided some of the highlights of the results to date. The parties discussed some of the communications challenges facing MNR and the strategies for the future.

*Action: Fadia to attend September 12th meeting to provide a debriefing following Executive Committee review.*

## 6. Permanent Positions turned into unclassified or seasonal

OPSEU raised concerns regarding the permanent positions being filled as unclassified contracts or seasonal positions.

*Action: OPSEU to provide particulars to the Employer.*

New Business:

1. Filling of classified positions through open competitions

OPSEU indicated that there have been instances where the posting and filling practices have led to a perception that qualifications and seniority are not the deciding factors in job competitions. The parties discussed the interest that management has in maintaining some flexibility in recruitment while still working within provisions of the collective agreement.

2. Pay administration

OPSEU expressed concern that a number of seasonal staff experienced a delay in receiving their pay cheques upon recall to their positions. The Employer indicated that where the pay issues have been brought to our attention we have addressed those issues through OSS.

3. PDP request at job competition

OPSEU indicated that there are instances where job candidates are being requested to provide a copy of their latest PDP when applying for positions. The parties discussed the request within the context of job competition jurisprudence.

4. Reclassification of positions

OPSEU inquired about the treatment of those positions that were deemed identical to those that were reclassified as a result of the review by the Joint Systems Sub Committee (JSSC). The Employer confirmed that the Ministry would apply the same treatment to those individuals in identical positions that did not grieve and provided a list of those positions had been deemed identical at this time.

5. Minutes

The parties discussed the timelines for posting MERC meeting minutes.

6. Shift premium

OPSEU indicated that as a result of the recent shift premium document that was sent out, some of their members are of the view that there is a violation

of the collective agreement and they are entitled to shift premium. The employer provided the rationale for the pay treatment in question.

#### 7. Environmental Commissioner's Report

The parties discussed the report of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario (ECO) and the issues pertaining to the services provided by the Ministry. OPSEU requested details of any plans that the Ministry had developed or was developing in response to the Commissioner's conclusions and recommendations with respect to MNR's capacity to fulfill its mandate. In response, the Employer indicated that, at that time, specific plans to address the concerns and recommendations raised in the ECO report had not been developed and confirmed the Ministry's commitment to the promotion of healthy, sustainable ecosystems and the resource economies and communities that depend on them. Employer also took the time to describe some strategic investments made by MNR in recent years which, in their view, obviate some of the comments and recommendations contained in the ECO report

#### 8. Confined Spaces Trainers

The Employer provided an overview of the process for generating the list of trainers and indicated that should the H&S Centres want to be included there is a process for adding providers.

#### 9. MERC Questionnaire

The parties discussed and participated in a questionnaire from Employee Relations Division, MGS and OPSEU to evaluate the effectiveness of the MERCs.

#### 10. AME Apprenticeship program

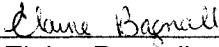
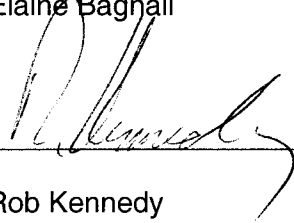
Tim Bovington, Chief Engineer, AFFB attended to discuss the development of an apprenticeship program for college students to provide them with the experience to get their engineering license, as well as, provide the Ministry with a good hiring pool.

The parties discussed the issues encountered while developing the program including the parameters of the collective agreement and guidelines of the Colleges and Universities. The enabling language in the collective agreement is Addendum 1 of the Unified Agreement which has the advantage from the employer's perspective of not triggering Article 31A.15 but does raise a technical concern since it appears that AME are not covered under the Apprenticeship and Tradesmen's Act. The parties agreed that due to significant benefits of such an initiative they would work together to attempt to address the various technical issues.

#### 11. Pre-fit numbers

The Employer indicated that the pre-fit numbers are expected in the near future.

Action: Employer to provide report once available.

For the Union	 Elaine Bagnall	Date <i>Sept 12/07</i>
For the Ministry	 Rob Kennedy	Date <i>12/9/07</i>