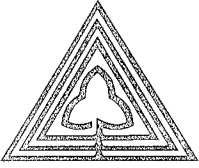


MEMORANDUM

OPSEU



SEFPO

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

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: January 10, 2007

SUBJECT: **Ministry of Natural Resources
ERC Minutes – December 6, 2006**

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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Leah Casselman
President

/jm
att.

cc: MERC Chairs
Ministry ERC

Brian Gould
OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

**Ministry Employee Relations Committee (MERC)
OPSEU Regional Office
31 Wellesley Street, Boardroom D
Toronto, Ontario**

**Wednesday, December 6, 2006
9:30am - 3:00pm**

Present for OPSEU:

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

Present for the Ministry:

Rob Kennedy (Co-Chair)
Julie Smith (minutes)
Kevin Smith
Paul Chamberlin
Dave Payne

Guests by telephone: Dale Scott and Steve Boyd

New Business:

1. 2007 Meeting Dates

The committee set down the following meeting dates for 2007: March 21, June 20, September 12, and December 12.

2. Parks – Use of golf carts and Gators

The union inquired about the use of these vehicles on Provincial Park roads which fall under the *Highway Traffic Act*. The vehicles aren't licensed or insured.

Action: The ministry will look into the use of these vehicles further and report back at the next meeting.

3. RT2 Enforcement Interns – Pay Rate

The committee discussed the classification of second-year CO interns. The union expressed that since the interns carry a weapon, they should be paid as an RT4. The ministry explained that the job evaluation for the position was conducted as it is for any OPSEU position and that access to a weapon in itself does not elevate the classification. The interns do not work independently; their role is very different from that of a CO.

Action: The ministry will provide the job specification and class standard to the union.

4. DCO Program Review

The committee discussed the last review of the program. The ministry explained that recommendations in the report resulted in changes to Enforcement's operational policy. Dave Fluri confirmed that he would follow up with Dave Payne to get a copy of the policy. The program is currently under review. The union had a number of questions with respect to number of DCOs, categories of badge-holders, and hours worked.

Action: Dan Smith, Manager, Provincial Enforcement Operations Section, will attend the next meeting to discuss the current review of the program.

5. Pre-Fit Stats

The ministry distributed the statistics from 2000-2006 which show that the failure rates are down markedly. The ministry communicated that incumbents better understand and are better prepared to take the test, and that fewer unprepared people are attempting the test for unfocused purposes (e.g. to add to a resume).

6. Frost Centre -- RFP

The union understands that an announcement was imminent. The ministry confirmed that an email from a group called Friends of the Frost Centre had been circulated unofficially. As this item was added to the agenda at the beginning of the meeting it was not known whether an official announcement had been made. More information is expected to be available on-line.

7. Confined Spaces Report

The ministry provided the union with a copy of the report of Pinchin Environmental consultants. The ministry has been working on a confined spaces program for about a year. The consultants were referred to a sampling of workspaces within the ministry with the view that they would provide advice and recommendations that would transfer generally to confined spaces in the ministry. Program documents will be finalised in December or January.

8. Passports

The union expressed a concern about the non reimbursement of expenses associated with passports which shortly will be required for travel to the United States. The ministry indicated it has been communicating with MGS to resolve the issue.

9. Insurance Legislation Changes

The union expressed a number of concerns with respect to the implications of recent changes to legislation regulating automobile insurance. The ministry indicated that this is a corporate level issue but that it is of common concern. The union confirmed that CERC is looking at the issue. The ministry cautioned against the union advising employees to refuse to use a rental vehicle where that is the only travel option which it was considering doing.

Standing Items:

10. Unclassified Usage Report

The union confirmed their receipt of the report in advance of the meeting.

11. Vacancy, Surplus, New Position Reports

Copies of reports were provided to the union electronically in advance of the meeting. Paper copies of the Vacancy and Surplus lists were distributed at the meeting.

12. Fish and Wildlife Review

Dale Scott joined the meeting to update the committee on the Fish and Wildlife Review. It is expected that the final report will be rolled out early in the New Year. The report's framework takes a "A3R approach" (logic model for doing business).

Action: Dale will attend a future meeting of MERC (March or June) to discuss the final report. This will happen after any corporate disclosure obligations are fulfilled.

13. Enforcement

Quick Release Shotguns: Information was exchanged by the parties prior to the meeting. The union expressed the concern that safety be considered in developing policy. The ministry confirmed that safety had been a paramount concern in developing policy, and explained how the branch looks across jurisdictions at best practices and works with Health & Safety specialists. Kevin Smith confirmed that he would take the safety concern back to the Branch's policy advisor and appropriate committees to reconfirm the importance of safety and that it has been addressed.

Policy for Reporting on Drawing a Weapon: The ministry confirmed that its policy is that the immediate supervisor be notified and a use of force incident report filed when a weapon has been drawn except where the weapon is drawn to dispatch wildlife.

Action: The ministry will provide to the union the policy wording on drawing a weapon. The ministry will provide a summary of incidents report to the union.

14. Pay Improvement Project – Update

Steve Boyd joined the meeting to present the Project Evaluation Report. Paper copies of the power point presentation were distributed and reviewed in detail. There has been a huge improvement in the processing of employee pay in the 2006 operating season. The project's three goals, deliverables and results were reviewed. The report recommends that the PIP initiative be sustained on a year-by-year basis. The parties discussed the electronic filing of ROEs and the ministry confirmed that OSS is currently working out an agreement to allow for electronic filing.

15. Meal Allowance – Definition of “Patrol”

The union advised that CERC has confirmed that this is a bargaining issue so there will be no further discussion.

16. WSIB Statistics

Paul Chamberlin reported on the 2006 statistics to date for all ministry employees: 468 reported incidents, 121 lost time, 347 health care. It has been an average year, and a stable past few years. The statistics are in keeping with the statistics of other highly operational ministries. The majority of incidents are out of Fire and Parks. The top five injury types are: soreness/pain; sprains/strains /tears; back pain; animal/insect bites; and cuts/lacerations.

17. Transformation

As recently indicated at CERC, the ministry confirmed that the November rollout will be the last for the fiscal year. The union expressed a concern that what amounts to a 5% funding cut could probably not be implemented without staffing implications.

18. Communications Strategy

The ministry communicated that the survey is nearly complete and that it will be brought back to the MERC agenda at a later date.

19. LERC Training

The ministry distributed a LERC listing (Nov 17, 2006). The issue of LERC locations will be raised at FSD. The union raised the idea of forming program-based LERCs, proposing that starting with Fire would be ideal. The ministry agreed to consider this possibility. The union will share more information about this with the ministry.

20. Workload Issues – Owen Sound

The ministry outlined specific steps being taken to address the workload issue in Owen Sound which was discussed at the last meeting.

21. Scheduling Issues – Fire

The parties briefly discussed the action item from the last meeting.

Action: The ministry will confirm that the expressed concerns were taken to local management.

22. Terms of Reference

The union advised that changes had been sent to the ministry for review. The ministry reviewed recent developments in the LR initiative re: early intervention pilot for grievances. The union introduced the idea of a ToR for a grievance committee. The parties discussed the importance of having people knowledgeable about the files, who have the time to do research and participate in an informal process towards resolving disputes early. Even coming to an agreed statement of facts would be helpful. The parties agreed to discuss this issue more fulsomely at the next meeting.

For the Union: *Elaine Bagnall* *Jan 9/07*
Elaine Bagnall Date

For the Ministry: *Rob Kennedy* *9/1/07*
Rob Kennedy Date