

MINUTES

Ohio EPA Labor Management Meeting

[held at OCSEA, Polaris, Wednesday, February 21, 2007, 10:00 a.m.]

Attending:

Deborah Bailey, Mark Besel, Mike Bolas, Craig Butler, Ken Dewey, Heidi Griesmer, Mariano Haensel, Dave Hunt, Kelvin Jones, Craig Rehkopf, Don Starr, Pat Tebbe and Donna Waggener. CALMC Trainers and Moderators Jim Cowles and Meredith Porterfield moderated the session.

Excused/Absent:

Jessie Keyes, Susie Marshall, Barcy McNeal and Natalie Oryshkewych (Mike Bolas joined in progress.)

Agenda

- 1 Review / discuss Minutes
- 2 Subcommittee Reports
- 2a Career Path Subcommittee Report
- 2b Training Subcommittee Report
- 2c Sick Leave Subcommittee Report
- 2d Subcommittee Work Time
- 3 Union Leave Request Log
- 4 Holiday Pay Arbitration
- 5 Agenda for Director's meeting
- 6 Communications
- 7 New Business
- 7a Facilitation
- 8 Future Agenda items
- 8a Voluntary Cost Savings
- 9 Next Agenda

We briefly delayed the start of the meeting owing to the absence of members and the weather, which was extremely foggy throughout much of the state. There was brief discussion concerning short-term facilitator Barcy McNeal, as she was leaving State service. Not all agenda items were discussed in order.

1. The minutes - The January 16, 2007 minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. Deborah offered for consideration the fact that some committees lose vitality by adopting routines; the non-rotation of minute keeping being a consideration. There was little discussion and no one voiced strong views. Mark acknowledged his note taking was voluntary.

2a. Career Path Subcommittee Report - Members worked by way of the GroupWise NetMeeting, allowing shared view and editing. (Mike Bolas is a resource for such matters.) Committee comments include: 'we've identified needs, desires, concerns & fears; need brainstorm solutions next', 'the Agency doe not have rewards / incentives', and, 'there is some prioritization criteria in DHWM & DSW, at least for some positions'.

2b. Training Subcommittee Report - The team had obtained 2 of 4 DEAL projects from Rod Spain. Considerations include formatting a policy, the differentiation and prioritization between Agency required training and employee desired training, how to be equitable among offices and divisions, the concern with integration into divisional budgets (without hamstringing chiefs, etc.), the need to ensure that all get some share of Agency training money.

There was discussion but no consensus or recommendation as to the implementation of new software (i.e., Microsoft), with little or no training. It was noted that four versions are in use, including 2007.

The group noted they planned to ask the individual divisions about training. Members suggested that multiple inquiries might be made by way of varying channels to ensure that responses were complete, including the realities for all staff, not the ideal, available to only some staff.

It was noted that 1.5-2 years ago, the Agency had planned more training via the IT department. Priorities and capabilities have shifted & training via IT has been "back-burnered". The working relationship between the divisional techs & the central techs is improving, but is not nearly "there". The Committee considers itself at the "problem identification" stage.

2c. Sick leave Subcommittee Report; Some internal frustration was expressed. Some non-written input from OCB appears to limit options concerning the efforts to address the 30% (second week) penalty. Don had recently shared OCB data with Donna, but overview statistics were still not available and shared. The group elected to progress with the two other foci of the group: developing some informative or working definitions of "low leave balances" and enhancing Agency communication about it ("low leave") to minimize problems, surprises and discipline, and, lessening "call-offs". (There seems to be general agreement that some portion of "call-offs" are less than legitimate use of sick leave. Also, some of this wording is my after-the-fact summarization and possibly includes our work session dialogue.

There was discussion of triggers for concern. There was discussion as to what was "concern". The sentiments being that awareness of a balance sufficient to meet a disability (80 hours), getting close to progressing to the "penalized leave" (-30% pay) and getting close to 0 leave - grounds for discipline - were legitimate fodder for communication. Was use beyond 40 hours in a year significant? (OCB did not want use of the "second 40" to increase.) It was generally agreed that due to the system we operate within, a zero leave or almost zero leave was not necessarily to be equated with abuse. It is also appreciated that there are "earn & burn" abusers throughout the Agency. Supervisor - subordinate communication and privacy concerning medical issues were noted as important, sometimes competing concerns.

In the work session with input from facilitators Cowles and Porterfield, it was suggested that after we look at the data, we select some triggers and ask the "five whys".

2d. Committee Work Time - (The committees met separately. Each group scheduled additional efforts prior to the next session.)

3 Union Leave Request Log - There was significant and diverse comment with bargaining unit members generally being more vocal. (Jessie was not with us and no OCB update was provided.) A few considerations emerged that were more or less summaries of the new situation. Management expects the "Union Leave Request Logs" to be completed to the satisfaction of the supervisor and to be in harmony with TAS. Bargaining unit staff expressed varying degrees of resentment concerning the use of the category, "leave" for efforts still in the workplace. The Union understands this to be for somewhat specific and discrete efforts, such as scheduled or impromptu meetings, training sessions, grievances, etc. These would be encounters beyond what was normally accepted, "chit-chat in the workplace", such as that discussing topical events, family, sports, etc. Bargaining Unit & OCSEA noted the free flow of stewards to be a work place expectation. Also, the grievance process would be an option, should it be deemed appropriate.

4 Holiday Pay Arbitration - (The concern being loss of holiday pay if sickleave is used prior to or after a holiday.) Don noted that the arbitration information was posted on his web page. It was noted that there was some confusion on the recent Martin Luther King Day holiday. The suggestion was made to provide updated information via an all agency e-mail. Don would check with the Director concerning sending such an e-mail prior to the next holiday, Memorial Day. (There were no instances cited re pay problems on MLK, but the Presidents day holiday pay information had not been processed and there were ongoing issues with OAKS access.)

5 Meeting With Director (at next L/M meeting)- The group discussed how we might best serve the Director, ourselves and the entire Agency as we introduced ourselves at the next session. "Brief and Positive" seemed to emerge as a theme. We did want to introduce ourselves, wear name tags and have our mission statement in a printed format. (Don was coordinating w Heidi re Mission Statement and possibly name tags, too. Don was putting together a brief power point presentation, coordinating with Craig R.) Among the points we did want to state: our rejuvenated/CALMC assisted efforts, the contract noted training and career path considerations as part of L/M, our joint interest in quality. (Draft "agenda for the Director" talking points follow.)

6 Communications - The issue of access of the Agency intranet site for OCSEA staff was raised. It is not possible due to security policy. The thought of a hot link from the Agency to the Ohio EPA portion of the OCSEA web site was also raised, but dismissed due to multiple reasons. (Don Starr noted that his office has a hot link to the main OCSEA web page.)

7 New business,

a. facilitation - We reinforced the need to look for facilitators. Anissa Goodwin and Bruce Wyngaard were noted as possible sources. Linda Oros, too was mentioned. (We previously noted Alauddin Alauddin. I spoke with him, & while he is in the BU, he is interested. There are probably others here, too.)

- 8 **Future agenda items** - voluntary cost savings
- 9 **The draft agenda** for the next meeting, 3/27/07, at EPA-Laz, 10:00, is [other dates set: 4/17/07- Polaris, 5/15/07- EPA-Laz, vs prev. SWDO]; :
 1. Director's Meeting [see #5 above & following]
 2. Review Minutes
 3. Subcommittee reports
 - a. Career Path
 - b. Training
 3. Sick leave
 4. Subcommittee work time
 4. Communications - How should information be communicated?
 5. (Vol cost savings) - August 2007 (I believe we agreed to table till then)
 6. Facilitation
 7. New Business Items
 8. Next agenda

[follows - notes re item 5 - discussion re Director's mtg]

Respectfully Submitted,
Mark Besel (draft shared 3/16/07; reviewed and accepted 3/27/07; finalized 4/10/07.)

“Agenda for Director’s Meeting”

(The ideas shared at 2/21/07 L/M committee; This is my take, allowing for the editing by way of arrows and cross-outs.)

15 - 30 minute meeting

Purpose of mtg:

- Director’s direction, expectations commitment to committee
- Introductions - around the table; name, district or work location
- Name Tags - Don will do name-tags
- Mission of the committee, why we’re here; Don to give ahead of time; Heidi to get poster
- Review of Agency Specific - written format for Don to give
- CALMC Training / facilitation Summary - Don
- Subcommittee Projects - Summary - Written Format - Don & Craig R.
- Availability (& interest ? mb) Of Director to participate in committee meetings - maybe quarterly or periodically - Verbal invitation, provide meeting dates online
Buy-in from committee proposals, procedures for getting items to him from committee - verbal expression needs to be stressed.
- What is his direction, expectations
- Challenging items
- How to handle differences - does he want to know about areas statement (?)
More generalized (statement?)
- Quality initiatives fallen by wayside
- Express verbal interest in quality w/out details; ask where he stands