

MINUTES

[approved Tuesday, October 26, 2006]

Ohio EPA Labor Management Meeting

[held at Ohio EPA, Central Office/Central District Office ; Lazarus Government Center]

September 26, 2006

10:00 am

Attending:

Mark Besel, Mike Bolas, Craig Butler, Ken Dewey, Heidi Griesmer, Mariano Haensel, Dave Hunt, Jessie Keyes (replacing Shelly Ward, who promoted to ODNR), Susie Marshall, Craig Rehkopf, Don Starr, Pat Tebbe and Donna Waggener. CALMC Trainers and Moderators Jim Cowles and Meredith Porterfield moderated the session. Barcy McNeal of DAS attended joined as a prospective moderator. (Christine became unavailable due to "OAKS" demands.)

Excused/Absent:

Deborah Bailey, Patty Howell, Kelvin Jones

Agenda

1. Review of the minutes
2. Identify Note Taker, Timekeeper, Scribe
3. Facilitator Discussion
4. Mission Statement
5. Barriers/Problems/Projects
 - a. Career Path
 - b. Training
 - c. Sick leave
6. New Agenda Items
7. Next Agenda

We experienced some modest personnel changes. Don introduced both Jessie Keyes and Barcy McNeal (See #3). Jessie replaces Shelly as a member and representative from the Office of Collective Bargaining. (Shelly promoted to ODNR). Barcy, a Quality Coordinator at DAS, replaces Christine as a facilitator. We introduced ourselves to Jessie and Barcy, providing the new members brief bits of relevant information.

1. The minutes - The August 1, 2006 minutes were reviewed and approved as presented with no corrections or changes. These included the Committee Mission Statement. Thanks to Don Starr.

2. Meeting roles - Mark agreed to take minutes, Don to be the time-keeper and Mike the scribe.

3. Facilitator Discussion; Christine was assigned "OAKS" project training responsibilities and was no longer able to commit to our committee. Barcy McNeal, a Quality Coordinator at DAS familiar to Don and OCSEA, offered to replace Christine. We welcomed her. (Christine would like to remain a back-up, stand-by facilitator. We briefly discussed the availability and desirability of a second or third facilitator, as I believe there was still possible interest expressed by a friend or associate of Deborah Bailey).

4. Mission Statement; (Heidi & Dave were not present when last discussed. They had reviewed and endorsed in the interim.) It was endorsed by all as presented (and follows): *“The Ohio EPA/OCSEA Labor Management Committee exists to provide a forum for discussion, catalyst for change, and solution to problems through cooperation between management and staff. The committee serves all agency employees as well as the citizens of Ohio, striving to create a work environment that leads to improved communication, increased employee satisfaction, and better performance.”*

5. Barriers/Problems/Projects;

a. Career Path; There was significant discussion concerning the magnitude of the topic; the inter-relationship of career path and training and the specific, but brief Agency specific component of the Bargaining Unit contract. (See page 255 of current contract, which notes in part; (the L/M committee) “will make training policy recommendations to the Director”, and “career track shall be an appropriate topic for discussion at the L/M committee”.) While I have separated considerations here, as “career path” and “training”, the distinction is often minor and not necessarily recapped in order of discussion.

- We appreciate that we are part of a bigger picture, i.e, governed by civil service laws and a contract that is renegotiate every few years.
- There was discussion of “smeared” specifications for environmental specialists (That is, this category is very broad, explained by way of 42 pages of specifications.) There was discussion of the background including evolution of classifications used by the agency and how the bargained contracts may have affected past hiring and promotions.
- It was noted that while the environmental specialist series possibly includes 50-60+% of Agency employees, our efforts need address all positions.
- The consideration that other agencies utilize more “technical slots”, providing a broader range of opportunities. (ODJFS was cited, noting 4+3 vs 3.)
- We noted the distinction between career advancement in the Agency vs individual development and opportunities to advance elsewhere.

5. Barriers/Problems/Projects;

b. Training;

- It was noted that training opportunities varied significantly withing the agency, affected by division, position, and numerous other factors.
- The fact that required training seemed to emphasize non-core matters such as EEO or diversity was noted as a peculiarity.
- The question was raised (not answered) if the problem and reason to include training as an action item was inadequate training, lack of consistent or comprehensive training, support training, etc.
- It was noted that available resources are not widely know and are consequently underutilized. An example being some teleconferencing abilities.
- It was noted that there was significant diversity in the Central Office among divisions with training for and help with support resources (databases, internet, other software. etc.)

5. Barriers/Problems/Projects;

c. Sick leave

- We recapped the bargaining contract history of past and current sick leave availability, now resulting at an annual 80 hours of sick leave available, but with a 30% use penalty for the second 40 hours, brought about by way of “fact-finding”.
- We noted that the management problem is the unanticipated “call-offs”, not scheduled leave.
- The appreciation is that institutional use (prisons, etc.) is the bigger problem, in that alternate leave use is not available.
- We discussed the hardship in instances where the 30% penalty results in a loss of take-home pay. It can be significant.
- “Donated leave”, an opportunity available via contract, lacked needed implementing policies.

After discussion with the assistance of our facilitators, we divided ourselves into two work groups. One to address sick leave policy. One to address training, with the appreciation that career path was at least a tangential consideration. (We started to create three groups but decided to work with just the two, considering, in part, the L/M mix.)

The groups are [Kelvin joining subsequent to the meeting]:

Training		Sick leave	
Mike Bolas	Ken Dewey	Mark Besel	Craig Butler
Heidi Griesmer	Mariano Haensel	Don Starr	Pat Tebbe
Susie Marshall	Craig Rehkopf	Donna Waggoner	Dave Hunt
Jessie Keyes	Kelvin Jones		

The groups worked independently to identify facets of the respective efforts and further identify the ground common to both labor and management. The Sick leave component is attached as an accompanying part of these notes. Mike Bolas has prepared those for Training.

6 New Business/Agenda Items; (see next item, numbers 6,7,8)

8 Next meeting & Agenda; The Labor Management committee will meet October 26, 2006 at OCSEA, Polaris, at 10:00 am with an initial anticipation to finish by 3:00 (ish).

- 1- review minutes
- 2- Identify note-taker, time-keeper & scribe
- 3- Career Path
- 4- Training
- 5- Sick Leave
- 6- LMC Web site development
- 7- Transitional document re LMC for the next director
- 8- District (and Lazarus, etc) “local” L/M committees
- 9- Possible additional Management member
- 10- Confirm/set next meeting date (11/14), location, agenda and lunch options

Respectfully Submitted,
Mark Besel, Finalized November 1, 2006