

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

MERC MEETING MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, June 3, 2014
 Location: 400 University Ave., Toronto, ON, Boardroom 3A

<p>FOR OPSEU:</p> <p>Darren Winger (Co-Chair) Nancy Recollet (Vice-Chair)</p> <p>Judith Marion (OPSEU Job Security Officer)</p>	<p>FOR THE EMPLOYER:</p> <p>Sue Hastie (Meeting Chair and Co-Chair) Joanne Bénard</p> <p>Joanna Macri (ER Advisor)</p>
<p>REGRETS:</p>	
<p>Guests: Tony Marzotto</p>	
<p>Recorder: Veronica Ha</p>	

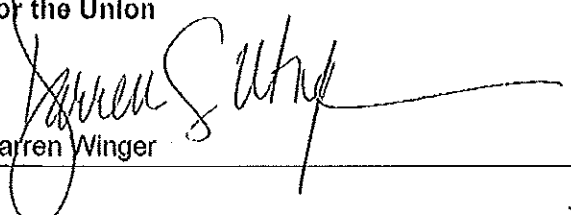

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
1. PREVIOUS MINUTES	Minutes of March 27, 2014 meeting signed and posted.	
2. BUSINESS ARISING: (Updates)		

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
a) Strategic Assessment Review of Regional Services Branch	<p>The Employer confirmed that it shared the Union's request for advance notice of information provided to MERC regarding the Review. The Director has subsequently confirmed that MERC will be alerted to the timing of staff communiques.</p> <p>The Director also confirmed that he has received the report and expects to be meeting with regional staff sometime later in June.</p> <p>The Union raised concerns that the Director will not be travelling and communicating the review results directly to Western regional staff. The Union requested the Director share the information with all Regional staff via a teleconference call. Regional Services Branch Staff requested that the Union submit a request on their behalf for an advanced copy of the report in advance of this teleconference call.</p>	The Employer committed to sharing the request with the RSB Director.
b) All Staff Day (2014)	The Employer confirmed that the request to acknowledge the MERC members at the All Staff Day has been shared with the Ministry Lead. The agenda is still in the formative stages so the request is still under consideration.	The Employer will provide additional information when available.
3. STANDING ITEMS		
a) Program Updates	<p>The Union reported that the presentation from the previous MERC meeting regarding the proposed Ontario Immigration Act had not as yet been shared with staff.</p> <p>The Union reported that the launch of the Municipal Innovative Immigration Fund was not shared in advance with Regional Staff and that training on the program has not been provided. The Union further reported that staff felt unprepared to respond to questions from municipal stakeholders regarding the Fund when contacted.</p> <p>The Union inquired about the information-sharing and communication strategy for MERC items. The Employer confirmed that meeting minutes are shared directly with relevant management for follow-up.</p>	The Employer committed to sharing the presentation with the RSB Director for distribution to staff.
b) Fiscal Update	The Employer provided a fiscal update.	Keep as a standing agenda item.

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
c) OPS Employee Engagement Survey (MCI)	<p>The Employer confirmed that the May 21, 2014 edition of the OPS Weekly newsletter provided some additional information on the Employee Survey and next steps. Work is currently underway to analyze the survey data and ministries are expected to receive their survey results over the summer.</p> <p>The Union requested that when survey results are shared with MERC to include Divisional results (where applicable).</p>	Keep as a standing agenda item.
d) Fixed-Term (Unclassified) List and 2013 Seasonal Employees Seniority List	<p>The Employer provided MERC Co-Chairs with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Fixed-Term Report (ref. Article 16.5.1) on May 29, 2014; • Ministry Seniority List (ref Article 18.5) on June 2, 2014; and • 2013 Seasonal Seniority list (ref Article 16.5.2) for the Immigration Selection Branch on June 3, 2014 <p>The Union acknowledged the Employer's efforts in providing these lists.</p>	<p>The Employer committed to sharing with the MERC Co-Chairs the Ontario Honours and Awards Secretariat 2013 Seasonal Seniority list when it becomes available.</p> <p>The Union committed to responding to the Employer's request to providing the Seasonal Seniority List on an annual basis.</p>

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
e) RSB – Regional Advisors Activity Reporting Tool	<p>The Employer confirmed that it shared the Union's request to designate one hour of the agenda at regional meetings for employees to share their feedback on the tool. The Employer indicated that they would not be dedicating time at regional meetings to further discuss the tool.</p> <p>The Employer highlighted that a recent opportunity to provide feedback on the tool was provided by way of a staff-wide survey. Nine out of thirty-eight Regional Advisors responded to the survey. The Employer will continue to develop the tool seeking staff feedback as appropriate. The Union requested confirmation on how and when the survey was distributed and that Management re-distribute the survey.</p> <p>The Union noted concerns that Management has declined requests to engage staff in the improvement of the tool. The Union presented an impact statement prepared by staff from each Region regarding their feedback on the tool. The Union requested that a copy of the impact statement to be shared with the Ministry's Senior Management.</p> <p>The Union requested that a Committee Working Group be struck pursuant to article 8 of the Activity Reporting Policy/Protocol developed by the RSB Director (posted on RSB SharePoint site with all staff on June 25, 2012) to assess the Activity Reporting Tool. The Union requested that Regional Advisors be included in this Working Group.</p> <p>Impact Statement and Activity Reporting Policy/Protocol attached to these Minutes.</p>	The Employer committed to sharing the Union's requests with Management.
f) Disclosures	The Union confirmed that no disclosures have been received since the last MERC meeting.	Keep as a standing agenda item.
g) Training and Development	The Co-Chairs reported the launch of the new Employee Relation Committees (ERC) training for LERCs and MERCs. Level 1 (LERCs and RERCs) training dates and registration information is posted on the OPS Learning and Development, HR Ontario Services site and the OPSEU website. LERCs must submit their completed registration form to their MERC Co-Chairs.	Keep as a standing agenda item.

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
4. NEW BUSINESS		
a) Vacancies in Regional Services Branch	<p>The Union inquired about vacancies and current recruitment activities within the Branch.</p> <p>Management confirmed the following staffing actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSSU SO3 (2) competitions and the Regional Advisor, Sudbury (2) competitions are concluded • Regional Advisor competition in Midhurst (1) and Secretary (Designated) competition in Ottawa are in progress <p>The Union inquired about Regional Advisor positions in Walkerton, Kenora, and Thunder Bay. Management indicated there are no confirmed staffing actions for those positions at this time.</p>	Remove from agenda.
b) Huntsville Regional Advisor Vacancy	<p>The Union inquired about the recent cancellation of the competition for a Regional Advisor, Huntsville. The Employer confirmed that the competition has been cancelled as it is reviewing its current operational needs. Client support was realigned in 2012 when the position incumbent retired. Existing coverage will be maintained at this time.</p> <p>The Union requested Management provided update to the coverage of the Huntsville position.</p> <p>The Union had requested on behalf of Regional Advisors a copy of the competition cancellation letter. The Employer confirmed documents relating to the competitive process are only shared with applicants to maintain confidentiality.</p>	The Employer will share the Union's request with RSB Management.
c) Roles of Regional Coordinators and Regional Advisors	The Union raised concerns that a Regional Coordinator (AMAPCEO-represented position) may be performing OPSEU bargaining work.	The Employer committed to investigating this issue and advise the OPSEU MERC Co-Chair.
d) MERC Committee Membership	MERC acknowledges and thanks Nancy Recollet for her contributions to MERC as a committee member and former Co-Chair as she retires at the end of July.	
NEXT MEETING:	September 16, 2014, to be hosted by the Union.	

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
For the Union  Darren Winger	For the Employer  Sue Hastie	

Regional Advisors CD03

Impact Statements – Activity Tracking

June 3, 2014

Regional Advisors are well aware of transparency and accountability with operations in the OPS and with the Activity Tracking procedure, we capture most of our work. Unfortunately, this time consuming procedure can be cumbersome since advisors are constantly seeking the right options in drop down lists to accurately demonstrate their work. Automatic default options should be provided such as (phone and email management-Under RSB Operations) which are obviously done on a daily basis. With improvements to this system such as automatic default and “Other” options, this could be a more efficient recording tool.

Did you know... Currently, the average time spent on activity tracking for a new Regional Advisor is 1.5 hours per week. That translates to 2.15 work weeks per year or \$2,692 per year, per Regional Advisor. With 12 RAs in the North, the total reaches \$32,304, not including time review by management. (NOTE: 34 Regional Advisors = \$91,538) *North Region*

I think we've all learned that the way we do Activity Reporting in RSB is clearly not adding value to the organization. And as a result, RA staff are either ambivalent or frustrated. It's time to for management to courageously acknowledge that and create something meaningful (like a Client Relations Management system) that would provide us with information that has value for RSB, the ministries we serve and for individual RA's.

If activity tracking is a means of documenting and validating RSB's work attributed to our various portfolios, then the contributions by all units should be reported, not only RA's – Managers, Coordinators and RSSU's time on programs, special projects, public affairs, etc. should also be included. If Advisors are the only group reporting, this is not an accurate reflection of RSB's dedicated time for the various ministries.

Activity reporting has become a task that has morphed into a time tracking device rather than meaningful discussion tool. Further it recaptures information such as attendance, sick days, or holidays that are part of the collective agreements. This confidential information is reviewed and tabulated by non-managers. The intent of this reporting tool has become obscure. As a result, whatever the initial well-meaning intent of activity reporting was, its intent is no longer clear.

The advisors who work in RSB are extremely adept at their work. They effectively toil in programs with a variety of diverse and complicated criteria and somehow manage to keep everything straight despite the many, competing and often unreasonable deadlines. We serve many different stakeholders, often advising our clients with incomplete information and materials, program overlaps and other competing pressures; all while being reminded of our TP accountability and expectations. We are the field presence, providing intelligence and are constantly working to develop relationships and intelligence. We support ministers' and senior management tours, volunteer awards, seemingly endless consultations, ICPs, briefing notes, invitations and much more. We spend hundreds of hours each month in Grants Ontario, a system which is inflexible and not user friendly to employees or to clients and is still in desperate need of improvement. The designated Advisors have an additional layer of work in addition to all of this...and yet very little of the valuable work we do is captured in Activity Reporting.

We have made numerous suggestions, all of which seem to have fallen on deaf ears. We are assured that the significant amount of time we spend inputting in Activity Reporting is valuable and yet, except for a few high level pie charts, most of us still fail to see the value in this futile exercise. Those who request and track this information do not track their activities in this manner. I would appreciate if only once, a manager would offer to track, for example, three weeks of vacation time in the Activity Tracking system. Then and only then would managers begin to understand what Regional Advisors do each and every day.

In short, this excellent level of RSB service is not captured in any way, shape or form by Activity Tracking. As such, we have now created a whole new system to track stories; on top of the many reporting systems we already have...one more administrative task to add to our ever growing pile, which leaves us even less time to build relationships with our stakeholders. And so in the spirit of an employee who still desperately wants to make a difference at the community level, I will ask once again that a review of the inefficient and ineffective Activity Tracking system be undertaken....before our service to the people of Ontario becomes totally futile and in vain. *East Region*

Central Region staff's understanding of the original purpose of Activity Tracking was that it would help give Regional Services Branch management detailed information with which to demonstrate to our program branch stakeholders the judgement and local intelligence value that Regional Services Branch contributes to their program planning and delivery, public affairs and stakeholder relations. Activity Tracking has been in place for over 2 years with no demonstrated value to RSB staff. Activity tracking is not a tool to help Regional Advisors do their job.

Activity Tracking does not reflect the impact of the work of RSB in advancing the goals and priorities of the government/ministries we serve. For example, if a Regional Advisor learns from a community stakeholder key information that would affect the quality of program delivery or identify a risk related to a program or community initiative, and reports that key intelligence, Activity Tracking does not demonstrate that added value. Activity Tracking would merely show that the Regional Advisor spent time communicating, but not how the local intelligence added any value. Activity tracking is simply a recording of staff's daily "to do" list based on 15 minute increments – it's one measure of outputs without relating these to outcomes. Of what value is it only to demonstrate how much time was spent on the various tasks entailed in the broad scope of RSB's collective work, but not reflect impact?

Activity Tracking does not contribute to productivity in RSB. It does not help manage or plan work. Moreover, the workload of recording daily tasks takes valuable time away from key job functions. Is this the best way to use technology to measure and demonstrate our value?

Activity Tracking represents an excessive level of reporting that is not expected of any other staff within the branch and the ministry. It is a level of reporting that is required in addition to:

- twice yearly reporting of PDLP results,
- annual reporting of Branch Operational Plan results,
- reporting of success stories for management, regular regional conference calls and regional meetings with managers,
- grant program management related activities, which are also recorded in GO as part of each case audit file,
- ongoing staff management and performance monitoring, measured against job descriptions, which detail duties roles and responsibilities of staff.

There are no policies or guidelines on how information derived from Activity Tracking will be used and who has access to it.

Activity Tracking has:

- demoralized and negatively impacted staff morale,
- created a work environment characterized by lack of trust, respect and value for staff,
- been used as an un-acknowledged performance measurement and management tool.

Central Region

At the heart of reflective practice is an invitation to shift the initial conditions, to reset the beginning spot of our thinking, our feeling and our spirit, in order to open the way to action that has greater vitality, sustainability, nimbleness and grace.

Everyone in RSB is highly committed to the common goal of delivering high quality services and achieving results. We also understand our common need to report on and communicate those results to various audiences.

We invite management to re-explore the practice of Activity Tracking.

Reflective practice yes, collective exploration yes, dialogues and rich conversations yes.

West Region

Activity Reporting Policy/Protocol

1. Activities are to be tracked on a daily basis using the tools provided. Alternate or manual methods are to be used when staff is not able to log into SharePoint directly. This manual tracking is to be input into the electronic system as soon as is practical upon return to the office.
2. All weekly input must be completed by the end of day Friday of each week.
3. Staff must indicate approved absences in addition to the categorized activities.
4. Staff may use the information for rolling up results for Operational Plans, Performance Plans etc.
5. All other activity reporting systems will be eliminated; however detailed "stories" that speak to accomplishments will still be required on an as needed basis.
6. Managers are to review staff activities on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance with the policies and engage in discussion with staff as appropriate.
7. On a quarterly basis, data will be rolled up for reports to the Director. Managers will be supplied with template reports for assessing activity on a regional basis. Staff will also be provided with instructions and templates to chart their own data.
8. A committee/working group will review the system 3 months after launch and every 6 months thereafter to assess changes needed to the program and information collected.

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