

September 21, 2017

**Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and
Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
MERC Minutes**

In attendance:

For OPSEU:

Elaine Bagnall (Co-Chair)

Roxanne Barnes

Helene Scott

Daryl Smith

Antonio (Tony) Crispino

For the Employer:

Tracy Demal (Co-Chair)

Carly Jones (Minutes)

Brooke Mahoney

Bridget Schulte-Hostedde

Kevin Smith

Ross Hart

Guests:

Amber Flynn

Juanita Magill

Ed Cappelli

Rick Watchorn

Administrative Items:

Approval of Agenda

Agenda was approved.

Standing Items:

1. PRRT Disclosure/Reductions and Vacancy/Surplus/New Position Listings

The Employer advised that there is no new information at this time. OPSEU inquired about a PRRT disclosure submitted corporately.

Action Item: The Employer to look into the disclosure to see what additional information might be available. Employer followed-up and responded to OPSEU on October 5, 2017.

2. Employee Engagement/Inclusion/Accessibility/Diversity

The Employer advised that an Inclusion Speaker Series: Conversations on Inclusivity – Diversity within Indigenous Peoples hosted by MNR Inclusion Counsel in partnership with Nation2Nation took place on May 30, 2017.

The Employer advised of a collaborative Inclusion Event lead by the ministry on August 22, 2017, called the Collaboration Jam with over 50 representatives from across the OPS.

The Employer advised that the Diversity Career Championship Program (DCCP) was launched September 5, 2017 and the application period will run to September 29, 2017.

3. Fixed Term Position Conversion/Seasonal Employee Statistics

The Employer provided the report to OPSEU.

OPSEU asked to receive the report earlier.

Action Item: The Employer will endeavour to provide the report to OPSEU one (1) week in advance of future MERC meetings.

4. Surplus Employees/Temporary Assignment Lists

The Employer advised that there is no new information at this time.

5. 2015-11e) – Workplace Violence Statistics (Appendix 29)

The Employer advised that there are no statistics available on workplace violence at this time.

Action Item: The Parties agreed to refer this item to CERC.

Business Arising:

6. 2010-10 – National Fitness Exchange Standard

The Employer and OPSEU have been in communication regarding a meeting of the subcommittee tasked with finalizing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Action Item: The Parties agreed that discussion related to any further concerns would be more appropriate to undertake with the subcommittee.

7. 2016-05 – Number of Employees in ASMP

The Employer provided updated reports that include divisional numbers.

The Employer advised that internal communications have been sent to managers related to utilizing processes under current policy to support employees in transitioning out of the ASMP by December 31, 2017 where possible.

8. 2016-14 – Rotary-Wing Pilots and Unpaid Overtime

OPSEU expressed concern that rotary-wing pilots are working additional hours and are not being paid for these hours.

OPSEU indicated they have backdated records for one employee which demonstrates these unpaid hours.

Action Item: OPSEU to provide a summary along with the detailed data that has been collected to the Employer.

9. 2016-18 – PCU Workload issue and safety concerns of manning the radios

The Employer advised that new radios have been installed and management continues to hold sessions with staff from the PCU to discuss concerns. The Employer also advised that they have received positive feedback and a LERC meeting has been held.

OPSEU raised concerns related to the number of people covering the consoles and the level of training provided.

The Parties acknowledged the establishment of the Local Employee Relations Committee as a positive move forward.

OPSEU indicated that they would like to keep this item on MERC agenda for the time being.

Action Item: The Employer to communicate OPSEU's feedback to appropriate members of management at the local level.

10. 2016-22 – Isolation Pay (Article 12) – Atikokan District Office

This item has been referred to CERC.

OPSEU inquired about how far back employees are required to repay.

Action Item: The Employer to follow-up regarding the retroactive date used to calculate the original overpayment. Employer followed-up and responded to OPSEU on September 27, 2017.

11. 2017-01 Health and Safety Issue Regarding Snow Removal

Guest Speakers: Ed Cappelli and Juanita Magill

The Employer advised that Cochrane District Office and Kapuskasing Field Office are Infrastructure Ontario (IO) owned properties and MNRF is a tenant. The best course of action is to call the property services hotline for any issues regarding snow removal. It is important that a concern is logged and a ticket is opened so the Ministry can track and engage IO/CBRE as required.

The parties discussed the processes available to escalate concerns not resolved by calls to hotline or issues related to Health and Safety concerns.

Action Item: The Employer to follow-up on OPSEU concerns with Cochrane and Kapuskasing locations with local management.

The Employer to follow-up with a communication document to support/remind management about the escalation processes related to snow removal that can be shared with members of JHSC as appropriate.

12. 2017-02 Conservation Officer Job Specs

The Employer advised that the job spec is still with the manager and the affected employee has been updated.

Action Item: The Employer committed to providing an update when one is available.

13. DZ License (2017-05 [18])

The Employer confirmed that it is a consistent practice in MNRF not to pay for a DZ license and it is not a requirement that is outlined in the Collective Agreement.

OPSEU advised they are aware of a past practice in AFFES to pay for testing required to obtain the license.

Action Item: The Employer to follow up.

14. Meal Allowances – Conservation Officers (2017-05 [19])

The Employer advised that there have been a number of grievances filed and therefore it is not appropriate to discuss this item.

Action Item: OPSEU to follow-up and share sample Terms of Reference which permit discussion of certain grievances for discussion between Co-Chairs.

15. Independent Forest Audits (2017-05 [20])

Guest Speaker: Rick Watchorn

Employer provided overview and presentation on Independent Forest Audits and the shared accountabilities related to audits across the Ministry.

OPSEU raised specific concerns about comments made in auditor reports in Wawa District related to staffing levels of forester positions.

The Employer suggested that this issue may be more appropriate for discussion at the local level.

Action Items: OPSEU agreed to bring specific concerns about staffing in Wawa District back to local level.

The Employer to communicate OPSEU's concerns to Regional Operations Division related to staffing flexibility in the division.

16. Parks Hiring Practice (2017-05 [21])

The Employer provided further detail about the competition raised by OPSEU and that local members of management in Ontario Parks had been in communication with the former employee about his/her concerns with the identified competition.

The Employer reiterated that it is not a requirement to post seasonal positions and there is no requirement to 'reach-back' to a competition when a new vacancy exists.

Action Item: OPSEU to follow-up.

New Business

17. PSD Respect Cards

The Employer advised that this is strictly a Provincial Services Division (PSD) initiative and there are no plans to roll this out to other divisions at this time.

OPSEU inquired about the status of the survey that was conducted in PSD.

Action Item: The Employer to follow-up on the status of survey results.

18. Parks – Murphy's Point and Rideau River – Staff Code of Conduct

OPSEU identified concerns about the specific terms of the Code of Conduct used at Murphy's Point and Rideau River.

The Employer advised that the Murphy's Point Code of Conduct was based on Ontario Parks Code of Conduct best practices. Discipline was not issued to staff who did not sign the Code of Conduct.

Action Item: OPSEU to provide further details regarding specific concerns with the identified document.

19. MIRR – Separate MERC for MIRR

OPSEU inquired whether the Employer thought a separate Ministry Employee Relations Committee was required.

Action Item: The parties agreed that this is not needed and can be removed from the agenda.

20. Next meeting date is November 9, 2017 at 31 Wellesley, Boardroom B.

Action Item: The Parties agreed to set meeting dates for 2018 at the next meeting.

Elaine Bagnall _____ *Oct 23/17*
For the Union Elaine Bagnall Date

Clare Matthews *per Tracy Demal* _____ *October 23, 2017*
For the Ministry Tracy Demal Date