

**Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Ministry Employee Relations Committee (MERC)
Ministry Health and Safety Committee (OPSEU)**

Wednesday, September 16, 2020
1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Held virtually via Microsoft Teams

In Attendance

For the Union	For the Employer	Guests	Regrets
Shawn Burr (Co-Chair) * Chris Johnston Julius Arscott Angelune DesLauriers Kathleen Demareski	Jacques LeGris (Co-Chair) Greg Wilson Teresa Polito Frank Miklas Joseph Odumeru Alex Seres (Advisor) Madiha Syed (Support) Isabella Celano (Note Taker)		

Date Tabled	Standing Items	Referred to	Action
September 16, 2020	1. Review Previous Minutes 'Live' minutes of the MERC meeting held on May 13, 2020 have been virtually agreed upon and posted on the Intranet site.		

Date Tabled	Standing Items	Referred to	Action
September 16, 2020	<p>2.1 Fixed Term Usage Report</p> <p>The Employer provided the Union with a fixed term employee report on July 7, 2020. The Union has identified staff that can be converted to permanent status.</p> <p>The Employer is following up on those.</p>	Management	Report back to the Union.
September 16, 2020	<p>2.2 Training</p> <p>The Union inquired about the access for tools for working remotely.</p> <p>The Union also inquired about ministry mandatory training and expiry dates associated with that, e.g. conflict avoidance, etc.</p> <p>The Employer will follow up with the MECP Training Unit on mandatory training and expiry dates and will report back.</p> <p>The Employer will follow up with the ADMs on access to tools to facilitate the work of remote workers. The Employer advised that staff should discuss their needs with local management and escalate internally if they are not satisfied with the answer.</p>	Management	Report back to the Union.

Date Tabled	Standing Items	Referred to	Action
<p>September 16, 2020</p>	<p>2.3 Employee Engagement</p> <p>The Union inquired about the most recent results of the Employee Engagement Survey.</p> <p>The Union also inquired about the recourse for staff in relation to harassment and bullying.</p> <p>The Union believes that questions should be developed in the Employee Engagement Survey in a manner that can assist in identifying solutions to engagement issues.</p> <p>The Employer advised that EE Survey questions are developed corporately through TBS and advised the Union to raise the matter with the corporate employer at CERC.</p> <p>The Employer shared the ministry employee results on July 21, 2020. Local program areas have been asked to develop local action plans to address their survey results with input from staff.</p> <p>The Employer takes allegations of harassment and discrimination and bullying in the workplace seriously. The Employer also reminded that the ministry has zero tolerance for reprisals.</p> <p>The Employer, through TBS, continues to regularly inform OPS employees of the application of the Respectful Workplace Policy and of the contact information with the WDHP</p>		

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	<p>Office. The Employer also reminds staff that there are provisions within their own Collective Agreements that apply and they may wish to discuss further with their Union representative.</p> <p>The Employer also informed of the establishment of an Anti Racism Respectful Workplace Advisory Committee with volunteer representation from across the MECP. The Committee reports directly to the Deputy Minister and will provide advice and recommendations on how to strengthen and improve on matters relating to the respectful workplace and anti-racism. The Committee is currently in the process of finalising their governance structure and terms of reference.</p>		

Date Tabled	New Business	Referred to	Action
<p>September 16, 2020</p>	<p>3.1 T2200 CRA Form</p> <p>The Union inquired about the T2200A Form.</p> <p>The Employer provided the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An employee who has been teleworking may be able to deduct expenses paid in the 2020 tax year for the employment use of a work space in their home, as long as Canada 	<p>Union</p> <p>Management</p>	<p>Union to raise the matter at CERC.</p> <p>Management is giving due consideration to supplementing the TBS</p>

Date Tabled	New Business	Referred to	Action
	<p>Revenue Agency (CRA) requirements are met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As with any tax issue, when employees are preparing their 2020 tax return, they should consult with a qualified personal tax advisor or the CRA for more information on allowable employment expenses (online or through local tax services office, or the CRA's General Enquiries Line at 1-800-959-8281). The information above can be found on TBS Inside OPS - <i>Questions and answers for OPS employees re: 2019 novel coronavirus (Q.37). See link below.</i> <p>https://intra.ontario.ca/tbs/questions-and-answers-for-ops-employees-re-2019-novel-coronavirus#family-assistance</p>		corporate communication.
September 16, 2020	<p>3.2 COVID-19 – Pandemic Procedures for Field and Office Staff</p> <p>The Union inquired about the pandemic procedures for field and office staff around public spaces and face coverings.</p> <p>The Employer advised that employees will be provided with approved face masks as PPE if and when required when performing their work duties. Employees are responsible to provide</p>		

Date Tabled	New Business	Referred to	Action
	<p>their own face coverings when in public spaces and commuting to and from work, if required.</p>		
<p>September 16, 2020</p>	<p>3.3 COVID-19 – Economic Recovery Act</p> <p>Item deferred.</p>		
<p>September 16, 2020</p>	<p>3.4 Environmental Protection Act – Adverse Effect</p> <p>The Union raised concerns regarding pending changes to section 14 of the Environmental Protection Act, i.e. changing “may” to “likelihood”. The Union believes that this could weaken abatement procedures in the ministry.</p> <p>The Employer advised that changes to the Act are a public policy decision and as such express concerns should be raised in a different forum.</p>		
<p>September 16, 2020</p>	<p>3.5 Ministry Budget</p> <p>The Union inquired about the ministry budget and potential impact it may have on the management of positions within the ministry.</p> <p>The Employer informed that the multi-year plan rollout is through TBS to disclose to bargaining agents in and Multi-Bargaining Agent session.</p>		

Date Tabled	New Business	Referred to	Action
	The Employer therefore advised that the matter should be raised at CERC.		
September 16, 2020	<p>3.6 Environmental Assessment Act Modernization Implementation</p> <p>The Union inquired about changes to the Environmental Assessment Act Modernization Implementation. The Union provided comments on July 8, 2020.</p> <p>The Employer will review the comments received from the Union and will advise.</p>	Management	Management will follow up with the program area.

Date Tabled	Health and Safety	Referred to	Action
September 16, 2020	<p>4.1 Update on Health & Safety Working Groups</p> <p>The Union requested a status update on the various initiatives.</p> <p>The Employer committed to providing an update.</p>	Management	Management to schedule a meeting within the next month.
September 16, 2020	<p>4.2 Update on Risk Assessment Tool for Field Staff</p> <p>The Union requested a status update.</p>	Management	Management to schedule a meeting within the next month.

Date Tabled	Health and Safety	Referred to	Action
	The Employer committed to providing an update.		
Date Tabled	Sign-Off of Live Minutes	Referred to	Action
September 16, 2020	5. Sign-off of Live Minutes		

For the Union: Shawn Burr

Date: September 16, 2020

For the Employer: Jacques LeGris

Date: September 16, 2020

There was an agreement between the two parties that the above represent the formal minutes of this meeting.