

**Ministry of the Natural Resources and Forestry  
Ministry Employee Relations Committee Meeting (MERC)**

**November 23, 2023**

OPSEU/SEFPO Wellesley Office

**MERC Members:**

**OPSEU/SEFPO**

Christopher Bierman – Co-chair

Jake Rouse – Vice Chair

Jessica O'Donnell – Member

Jeremy Verdiel – Member

Kathleen Demareski, OPS Negotiator

**EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVES**

Donna Walton, Director – Co-Chair

Laura Aitchison, VVPD

Brian Locke

Stephanie Maragna

Sean Giverin (TBS)

Ariel Fair

Annie Leppington (Observer)

Additional Agenda Items/Changes to the Agenda (below)

**Standing Items**

<b>Standing Items</b>			
	<b>Disclosures</b>	The Parties discussed recent disclosures issued to OPSEU.	The Employer will continue to provide disclosure to OPSEU as appropriate.
	<b>Employee Engagement</b>	The Union is requesting information on the launch of the next survey. The ministry confirmed that the Employee Experience Survey is a TBS initiative and that MNRF takes direction from TBS. It is expected that the next survey will take place in 2024.	The Employer will continue to provide updates to OPSEU as appropriate.

Date Tabled	Agenda Item	Issue	Follow-up / Action
	<b>Inclusion/Accessibility /Diversity</b>	The ministry provide information on the Diversity Career Champions Program (DCCP).	The Employer will continue to provide updates to OPSEU as appropriate.
	<b>Fixed Term Position Conversion/Seasonal Employee Statistics</b>	A report was provided to OPSEU in advance of the meeting.	OPSEU to follow up.
	<b>Future of Work in the OPS- Modern and Flexible Work Arrangements</b>	<p>The Parties discussed the objective of a feasibility review. Employees are encouraged to submit AWA requests to managers. Managers are required to consider requests on a case-by-case basis. Information on flexible work strategies can be found on inside OPS.</p> <p>The Parties will continue to discuss Appendix 42 on an ongoing basis.</p>	The parties will continue to work together to identify challenges and concerns.
June 22, 2023	<b>Seasonal Employees rights and Entitlements</b>	<p>The parties have established a MERC subcommittee to discuss the following including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seasonal employee rights and entitlements</li> <li>• Retention of AFFES staff skills and abilities</li> <li>• Compressed Work Week Agreements</li> </ul>	The parties will continue to meet and will report back to MERC regularly.
June 22, 2023	<b>Intern positions classified under the Admin category vs. the Tech category</b>	The union raised concerns with respect to interns being placed in different categories than the full time equivalent.	The employer to follow up.

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June 22, 2023	<b>Unified Pay Equity Project (PIQ)</b>	Round 1 of PIQ's have been distributed. The Secretary of Cabinet has authorized 3 hours to complete.	The Parties agree to remove from the agenda.
June 22, 2023	<b>Statement of Issue – re: Biologist positions in Regional Operations Division (ROD)</b>	The union provided an update on this item. A meeting has been scheduled with the Biologists.	The union will monitor and follow-up as required.
June 22, 2023	<b>Appendix UN 6c – Schedule A</b>	The union raised some concerns	The employer to follow-up.
June 22, 2023	<b>MNRF Bush Meal Business Practice</b>	OPSEU requested an update on this item.	The employer to follow-up.
<b>New Business (LERC Referrals)</b>			
November 23	<b>Professional Forestry Association Dues</b>	The Union is requesting that the employer consider reimbursing members for the full amount of their PFA dues which is \$680.00. The ministry continues to explore OPSEU's request.	The employer to follow-up.
November 23	<b>Fair Compensation for Forest Fire Workers</b>	The Union provided the employer with a issue of concern document on November 10, 2023 and is committed to provide information to the ministry as necessary. The Ministry continues to explore OPSEU's request.	The employer to follow-up.
November 23	<b>Compensation Equality for Aircraft Maintenance Engineers</b>	The Union provided the employer with a issue of concern document on November 10, 2023 and is committed to provide information to the ministry as	The employer to follow up

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		necessary. The Ministry continues to explore OPSEU's request.	
November 23	<b>Compensation Equality for Conservation Officers</b>	The Union provided the employer with a issue of concern document on November 10, 2023 and is committed to provide information to the ministry as necessary. The Ministry continues to explore OPSEU's request.	The employer to follow-up.
	<b>Next Meeting Dates for 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• January 25</li> <li>• April 11</li> <li>• June 20</li> <li>• October 10</li> </ul>	Ministry to confirm location of October 10th meeting.

Originally approved on November 23, 2023

Christopher Bierman  
OPSEU/SEFPO

Originally approved on November 23, 2023

Donna Walton  
Employer