

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

**September 28, 2023**

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Sault Ste. Marie

**MERC Members:**

**OPSEU/SEFPO**

Christopher Bierman – Co-chair

Jake Rouse – Vice Chair

Jessica O'Donnell – Member

Jeremy Verdiel – Member (Regrets)

Kathleen Demareski, OPS Negotiator

**EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVES**

Donna Walton, Director – Co-Chair

Laura Aitchison,

Kerri Boyd

Brian Locke

Stephanie Maragna (Regrets)

Sean Giverin (TBS)

Additional Agenda Items/Changes to the Agenda

Date Tabled	Agenda Item	Issue	Follow-up / Action
<b>Standing Items</b>			
	<b>Disclosure</b>	August 30, 2023-Stand-by and On Call Duty Entitlements- AFFES, Provincial Services Division	The Employer will continue to provide updates to OPSEU as appropriate.
	<b>Employee Engagement</b>	<p>The parties agree that this is an important issue and positive discussions were held.</p> <p>The Ministry has confirmed that the divisional and branch level results have been communicated to staff. Employees are encouraged to raise any concerns with their manager.</p> <p>The union is requesting information on the launch of the next survey.</p>	The Employer will continue to provide updates to OPSEU as appropriate.
	<b>Inclusion/Accessibility /Diversity</b>	The Ministry provided updates on work related to Inclusion, Accessibility and Diversity specific to the MNRF.	The Employer will continue to provide updates to OPSEU as appropriate.
	<b>Fixed Term Position Conversion/Seasonal Employee Statistics</b>	A report was sent to OPSEU prior to MERC. The Union has raised questions on four specific assignments who may qualify for conversion.	The Employer to follow up.
<b>LERC Referrals:</b>		<b>There are no Local Employee Relations Committee referrals at this time</b>	
	<b>Classification/Compensation Discussions</b>	The parties agreed that the class standards are outdated.	The MERC OPSEU-representatives will continue to work with OPSEU centrally to meet the needs of the

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		<p>As per Appendix 34 – Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) and the Union established a Joint Working Group (JWG) to address the OPS Pay Equity Plan.</p> <p>Appendix 34 #10, the parties shall first address pay equity requirements and shall then proceed to discuss the application of the Job Evaluation System to all job classes in the two bargaining units.</p> <p>The Parties recognize that the ministry has the ability to update job descriptions and submit to TBS for evaluation.</p>	<p>members who feel that they are improperly classified.</p> <p>Item to be removed from agenda.</p>
	<p><b>Future of Work in the OPS- Modern and Flexible Work Arrangements</b></p>	<p>Appendix 42 – The parties agree that modern and flexible work arrangements can be an effective method of assisting employees to balance work and personal responsibilities as well as achieving organizational objectives (<i>pg. 251; OPS CA</i>)</p> <p>OPSEU will forward concerns with flexible work arrangement and CWW templates to the Ministry.</p>	<p>The parties will continue to work together to review processes and the feasibility of incorporating modern and flexible work arrangements in the workplace (<i>pg. 251; Item #3; OPS CA</i>)</p>
<p>2022</p>	<p><b>Organizational Charts and Maintenance of InfoGo</b></p>	<p>The Union requested the organizational charts for the Ministry.</p>	<p>The Employer advised that they were unable to follow up on the Union's request.</p>

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			Item to be removed from the agenda.
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.
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.	Item to be removed from agenda.
June 22, 2023	<b>MERC Terms of Reference</b>	Both parties have signed the TOR.	Item can be removed from agenda.
June 22, 2023	<b>Statement of Issue – re: Biologist positions in Regional Operations Division (ROD)</b>	As outlined in the Deputy Minister's response, Southern Region has initiated engagement with Southern Region and discussions are ongoing.	The union will monitor and follow-up as required.
June 22, 2023	<b>Appendix UN 6c – Schedule A</b>	The union raised questions with respect to payout of overtime in emergency situations.	The Parties to continue discussions.
June 22, 2023	<b>MNRF Bush Meal Business Practice</b>	The union raised concerns regarding Bush Meal allowance in this Ministry	The employer to follow-up.

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June 22, 2023	<b>ROD Survey Results</b>	Innovation team survey results were provided to Southern Region.	Item can be removed from the agenda
September 28, 2023	<b>Next Meeting Dates</b>	The next meeting is scheduled for November 23, 2023	

Originally approved on September 28, 2023

Christopher Bierman  
OPSEU/SEFPO

Originally approved on September 28, 2023

Donna Walton  
Employer