

# **MERC Minutes**

## **Ministry of the Attorney General Ministry Employee Relations Committee Meeting (MERC)**

**October 24, 2023**

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

31 Wellesley Street

Chair: Loretta Clark

### **MERC Members:**

Loretta Clark, OPSEU/SEFPO Co-Chair  
Marie Paule Duret, OPSEU/SEFPO, Vice-Chair  
Farhad Rahaman, OPSEU/SEFPO Member  
Kathleen Demareski, OPSEU/SEFPO Negotiator

Angela Oh, Management Co-Chair  
Alexa Lopreiato-Yau, CSMD, MAG  
Kirstyn De Luca, CPSLRC, TBS  
Anna Marie LiPreti, CSD, MAG  
Kate Lupini, VVPD, MAG

### **Guests:**

Sarah Miaco, Workforce Policy Planning Coordinator, CSD, MAG  
Samantha Poisson, ADAG, Recovery Division, MAG  
Julie Chan, Mental Health Coordinator, Corporate Services Management Division

### **Regrets:**

Laurie Pitre, OPSEU/SEFPO Member

Ref #	Agenda Item	Issue	Follow-Up / Action
<b>Standing Items</b>			
1.	<b>Provincial Offences Act (POA) – Part III</b>	- No updates available at this time.	The Employer will continue to provide updates to OPSEU/SEFPO as available.

2.	<b>Civil E-Filing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No updates available at this time.</li> </ul>	<p>Employer to confirm if Caselines is still considered a pilot project and if there are any aids provided by the Employer to assist the Judiciary to help ease pressure on Trial Co-ordination</p> <p>The Employer will continue to provide updates to OPSEU/SEFPO as available.</p>
3.	<b>Recovery Division Update</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Secretary of the Cabinet recently sent an email reminding all OPS staff of actions we can take to stay healthy and prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses.</li> <li>- OPSEU/SEFPO confirmed that number one way members can help is by staying home when sick.</li> </ul>	Remove from agenda.

4.	<b>Mental Health Updates (1:30pm)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Vicarious Training e Module Training (rolled out Dec 2020)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o There are 3 modules to the training course.</li> <li>o 84% ministry has completed the training.</li> <li>o Renewed licenses and resumed training in August 2023.</li> <li>o Training is made available to new employees, students and Ontario Internship Program (OIP) students in Tribunals Ontario.</li> </ul> </li>   <li>- <b>Virtual Mental Health First Aid Training</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Mental Health First Aid Training has resumed in fall 2023.</li> <li>o Mental Health First Aid Training is a full day training session which is voluntary and was first made available to managers in CSD followed by CLD. There are 109 managers trained from CSD and CLD.</li> <li>o Goal is to have 184 managers trained by the end of the year.</li> </ul> </li>   <li>- <b>De-escalation Training</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The train the trainer pilot with CSD and VVPD ended March 31, 2023. CSD and VVPD will continue the training with their in-house trainers. A one-hour condensed version was created for new employees. This training received an overwhelming positive response.</li> <li>o An e-learning module is being developed by the MAG Mental Health Committee, leveraging training developed by OPGT, to provide the ministry with other training options and will potentially be offered on LearnON.</li> <li>o OPSEU/SEFPO inquired about training being mandatory in order to ensure front-line members are given time to take essential training.</li> </ul> </li>   <li>- <b>Other</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The MAG Mental Health Committee is taking on an advocacy role and focusing on burnout/workload in 2023-24. Burnout and workload are on the radar of the OPS Mental Health Committee, MAG's Mental Health Executive Champions, and MAG Senior Leadership Team.</li> <li>o 50 hours of wellness webinars with 45+ titles are available to divisions (e.g., Overcoming Burnout, Conflict Resolution in the Workplace, Stress Reduction Toolbag).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>OPSEU/SEFPO has asked if de-escalation training can be made a mandatory training.</p> <p>OPSEU/SEFPO has requested that mental health first aid training be rolled out to employees more broadly.</p> <p>The Employer will continue to provide updates to OPSEU/SEFPO as available.</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>OPS Mental Health and Action Plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ MAG was involved in consultations with TBS on the OPS Mental Health Action Plan and provided feedback on ways to improve EFAP.</li> </ul> </li>   <li>○ <b>World Mental Health Day and Mental Health Awareness Week</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Brought back the virtual mental health art gallery to show how people use art to cope with stress or feel energized.</li> <li>▪ A Memo was sent from Mental Health Executive Champions on September 25<sup>th</sup> on new enterprise services and campaigns regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive Counselling Services for employees from equity-deserving groups.</li> <li>• Sharing our Lived Experiences campaign about OPSers sharing their stories living with a mental health challenge.</li> <li>• AbilitiCBT module to support families dealing with alcohol and other substance use issues.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li>   <li>○ <b>Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Sessions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2 EDI sessions were provided to students including Summer law students where they have learned about micro-aggressions and mental health resources available to them while working at MAG.</li> </ul> </li>   <li>○ <b>Future Events</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To release Mental Health Minute regarding embracing change.</li> <li>▪ Mind Your Health is a learning series (launched in January 2023) that takes a unique approach to mental health. There will be a new learning series on <a href="#">Mind Your Health</a> at the end of January 2024.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ <a href="#">Voices for Mental Health</a> is a group of MAG employees with lived experience of mental illness and their allies who work to raise awareness of mental health issues, share resources available to people struggling with mental wellness, and reduce the stigma associated with mental illness. This committee provides resources and learning for all staff.</li> </ul>	
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<b>LERC Referrals</b>			
<b>5.</b>	<b>Local 601 – Sault Ste Marie</b>  (Tabled October 23, 2023)	- To be deferred to next meeting.	
<b>MAG Updates</b>			
<b>6.</b>	<b>Court Services Division (CSD)</b>	<p><b>Staffing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OPSEU/SEFPO raised concerns about staffing numbers, retention and recruitment in addition to workload issues and the impact on members.</li> <li>- 264 CCRs were hired through a mass province-wide competition. OPSEU/SEFPO inquired as to the number of existing as compared to total CCRs hired.</li> <li>- The Employer is conducting Regional competitions to fill additional positions that were not filled in the first competition.</li> <li>- OPSEU/SEFPO continuing to work with the employer suggesting new initiatives and recruitment strategies.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conversions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OPSEU/SEFPO expressed concerns over the number of employees who they believe have met the eligibility threshold for conversion across the Ministry but have not yet converted. MERC hearing from members across the province believing they have met requirements.</li> <li>- Article 31A.15 outlines the conditions that need to be met in order to be eligible for conversion.</li> <li>- OPSEU/SEFPO has asked the Ministry to look at how mass recruitment can be improved in the future. The Employer is looking at lessons learned.</li> </ul> <p><b>16-Week Notice Letters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OPSEU/SEFPO are hearing from multiple sites that 16 - week termination letters are being provided to members</li> </ul>	<p>Employer to consider ways to increase manager awareness on 16-week notice provisions/requirements.</p> <p>The Employer to flag for corporate TBS that FORTE is not accessible without government issued technology.</p> <p>The Employer will provide further updates as they become available.</p>

		<p>which is causing anxiety and leading members to look for alternate employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Employer advised that there are requirements under the Employment Standards Act that outline required notice. OPSEU/SEFPO requested managers discuss with members when letters go out to cut down on confusion and anxiety.</li> </ul> <p><b>Learning and Development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Resumes that Rock</a> videos have been recorded and available for staff; it was successfully taken up by members.</li> <li>- OPSEU/SEFPO noted that members cannot access FORTE from home without government issued technology leading members to potentially lose out on professional opportunities, affecting members working from home or on accommodations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Employee Engagement and Communicaiton:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On September 25<sup>th</sup>, CSD launched the <a href="#">CSD Reimagined</a> webpage which includes links to <a href="#">Courts Digital Transformation</a>.</li> <li>- CSD is now posting continuous job ads for CCRs on LinkedIn and on X (formerly twitter).</li> <li>- New staff feedback and exit surveys have been launched on the <a href="#">intranet site</a>. Staff who are leaving CSD for other opportunities will be provided with a new exit survey to share their final thoughts with CSD.</li> <li>- The Recovery Division (RD) is facilitating the survey process and CSD does not have access to individual survey results.</li> </ul>	
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		<p><b>Jurisdictional scan on courts administration:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Recovery Division is conducting a jurisdictional scan to learn from other courts administration across the globe. The focus has been on recruitment and training.</li> </ul>	
7.	<b>Victims and Vulnerable Persons Division (VVPD)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OPSEU/SEFPO heard concerns from the Office of the Children’s lawyer in Toronto. OPSEU/SEFPO will provide further updates.</li> <li>- OPSEU/SEFPO has requested that VVPD report back if there are any communications/resources about employee engagement for those in the regions. Requested that employee engagement initiatives be rolled out across province outside of GTA.</li> </ul>	The Employer will provide further updates as they become available.
8.	<b>Criminal Law Division (CLD)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No updates at this time.</li> </ul>	The Employer will provide further updates as they become available.
<b>Reports</b>			
9.	<b>Fixed Term Report (Article 16.5.1)</b>	The Fixed Term report ending June 30, 2023, was provided by the Employer on July 18, 2023.	
10.	<b>Conversion Reports (Article 31A.15)</b>	The Conversion report ending June 30, 2023, was provided by the Employer on July 18, 2023.	The parties continue to discuss.
11.	<b>FPT Deficit Hours</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No updates available at this time.</li> <li>- Employer will review numbers and report back.</li> </ul>	The Employer will provide further updates as they become available.
12.	<b>Job Descriptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- May disclosures – June 15, 2023</li> <li>- June disclosures – sent July 14, 2023</li> <li>- July disclosures – sent August 15, 2023</li> <li>- August disclosures - sent September 15, 2023</li> <li>- September disclosures – sent October 16, 2023</li> </ul>	



<b>Report Back Items</b>			
<b>13.</b>	<b>Financial Process Modernization</b>	- No updates at this time.	The Employer will provide further updates as they become available.
<b>14.</b>	<b>Landlord Tenant Board - Working Groups</b>	- To be deferred to next meeting.	
<b>15.</b>	<b>Anti-Racism Action Plan</b>	- The ministry is in the process of recruiting for two Anti-Racism Specialists.	The Employer will provide further updates as available.
<b>16.</b>	<b>New Toronto Courthouse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OPSEU/SEFPO expressed concerns over design issues e.g., elevators, public areas and workflow issues for members.</li> <li>- The Employer advised that Infrastructure Ontario (IO) and ProjectCo (EllisDon) are responsible for construction and ongoing maintenance of the courthouse.</li> <li>- Local 526 general membership meeting and an election has taken place for the JHSC; members are to raise any concerns with their JHSC.</li> </ul>	The Employer will provide updates as available.

17.	<b>OPS Return to the Workplace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- All OPS employees who were previously working from home continue to be required to attend the workplace a minimum of three days per week.</li><li>- No new direction has been shared.</li></ul>	Remove from agenda.
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19.	<b>Pay Equity Initiative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OPSEU/SEFPO would like to remind the Employer that this is a large initiative and unified employees are afforded three hours of paid time to complete the Position Information Questionnaire (PIQ). This initial launch has captured 500 employees and is the first phase. OPSEU/SEFPO requests help in ensuring time taken to complete surveys.</li> </ul>	Updates to provided if applicable.
<b>New Business</b>			
	<b>Milton courthouse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OPSEU/SEFPO has expressed concerns about recent media accounts about mould and asbestos in the Milton courthouse.</li> <li>- Safety precautions were undertaken by the Employer and work has resumed at the Milton courthouse.</li> </ul>	The Employer will provide updates as available.
<b>Inactive Status Items</b>			
20.	<b>Tribunals Ontario Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No updates at this time.</li> </ul>	
21.	<b>Remote Recordings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OPSEU/SEFPO will continue to canvass their membership for specific concerns and provide those to the Employer when available.</li> </ul>	OPSEU to canvass their members.
22.	<b>Role of the Employer (Tabled: December 10, 2020)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OPESEU/SEFPO has raised concerns about the hours of business run and are still an issue.</li> </ul>	The Employer will provide updates as available.
<b>Next Meeting Dates</b>			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• January 17</li> <li>• April 17</li> <li>• July 17</li> </ul>	

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For the Union

*Loretta Clark*

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Loretta Clark - Union Co-Chair

For the Employer



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Angela Oh - Employer Co-Chair