

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

February 1, 2024

OPSEU/SEFPO Wellesley Office

MERC Members:

OPSEU/SEFPO

Christopher Bierman – Co-chair
 Jake Rouse – Vice Chair
 Jessica O’Donnell – Member
 Jeremy Verdiel – Member
 Brenton Beeston, OPS Negotiator
 Kathleen Demareski, OPS Negotiator

EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVES

Donna Walton, Director – Co-Chair
 Laura Aitchison, VVPD
 Brian Locke
 Stephanie Maragna
 Sean Giverin (TBS)
 Ariel Fair

Additional Agenda Items/Changes to the Agenda (below)

Standing Items			
	Disclosures	No updates.	The Employer will continue to provide disclosure to OPSEU as appropriate.
	Employee Engagement	The Employee Engagement Survey was launched on January 24 th and will close on February 14 th . The ministry held an information session, with approximately 615 staff across the ministry.	The Employer will continue to provide updates to OPSEU as appropriate and will

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		OPSEU requested an overview of the survey results specific to OPSEU-represented employees in the MNRF.	follow up on OPSEU's request.
	Inclusion/Accessibility /Diversity	The Parties discussed initiatives currently underway in the ministry to support Inclusion, Accessibility and Diversity.	The Employer will continue to provide updates to OPSEU as appropriate.
	Fixed Term Position Conversion/Seasonal Employee Statistics	A report was provided to OPSEU in advance of the meeting.	OPSEU to follow up.
Business Arising			
	Future of Work in the OPS-Modern and Flexible Work Arrangements	<p>The Parties agree that information as it relates to Alternate Work Arrangements is available on the OPS Intranet. Requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>The Employer will continue to ensure management's awareness of this information.</p>	OPSEU to follow-up and provide an update at the next meeting.
June 22, 2023	Seasonal Employees rights and Entitlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal employee rights and entitlements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Ministry continues to have active conversations with TBS. The Parties agree that this is a critical concern related to the recruitment and retention of the Fire Program. 	The Employer will follow up on opportunities to move this file forward and review the need for a communication strategy to impacted staff. The

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			Employer to provide a response to OPSEU by Feb. 29 th .
June 22, 2023	Compressed Work Week Agreements	OPSEU raised concerns that agreements are not being signed off.	The Employer to follow-up.
June 22, 2023	Intern positions classified under the Admin category vs. the Tech category	The Employer provided a response to OPSEU in advance of MERC. OPSEU has raised concerns with the level of classifications of these intern positions.	Remove from Agenda.
June 22, 2023	Statement of Issue – re: Biologist positions in Regional Operations Division (ROD)	OPSEU provided an update on this item.	The union will monitor and provide an update at the April meeting.
June 22, 2023	Appendix UN 6c – Schedule A	The Employer provided an update and recommended that the Parties raise this during bargaining.	Remove from the agenda.
June 22, 2023	MNRF Bush Meal Business Practice	The Employer did not have any updates at this time.	The employer to share information in advance of the next meeting, if available.
November 23, 2023	Professional Forestry Association Dues	The Employer provided an update and recommended that the Parties raise this during bargaining.	Remove from the agenda.
November 23, 2023	Fair Compensation for Forest Fire Workers	OPSEU shared communication with the Employer, indicating that the Parties continue to be committed to review the classification levels of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource Technician 1, G29 • Resource Technician 2, G29 	The Parties will continue to communicate updates as available.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource Technician 3, G29 	
November 23, 2023	Compensation Equality for Aircraft Maintenance Engineers	The Parties look forward to the outcomes of the special case, as indicated in the January 21, 2024 arbitration award.	The Parties will continue to communicate updates as available.
November 23, 2023	Compensation Equality for Conservation Officers	The Parties look forward to the outcomes of the special case, as indicated in the January 21, 2024 arbitration award.	The Parties will continue to communicate updates as available.
New Business (LERC Referrals)			
February 1, 2024	MERC/LERC – Communication between Employees and Employee ERC Members	OPSEU requested clarification about MERC-related work between MERC meetings.	OPSEU to provide additional information to the Employer. The Employer to follow-up prior to the next meeting.
February 1, 2024	LERC	OPSEU raised concerns related to establishing new LERCs. The Employer will continue to support managers on LERC.	The Employer to follow-up.
February 1, 2024	Integrated Resource Management Technical Specialist Position in ROD	OPSEU provided the Employer with information.	The Employer to follow-up.
February 1, 2024	Resource Technicians in ROD	The Employer requested specific information, to continue their review.	The Parties to follow-up.

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February 1, 2024	Belleville Enforcement Office	OPSEU raised concerns with communication to staff. Management has been provided updates.	OPSEU to follow-up.
February 1, 2024	MNRF PPE Allowance	OPSEU is requesting for consideration to align boot allowance across MNRF.	The Employer to follow-up.
February 1, 2024	MNRF Vessel Masters	<p>Recently there was a MOA that was agreed upon by TBS and the Union to increase wages for MTO Vessel Masters.</p> <p>OPSEU requested that the employer consider signing off on a similar agreement for the MNRF Vessel Masters.</p>	The Employer to follow-up.

Approved on February 1, 2024

Christopher Bierman
OPSEU/SEFPO

Approved on February 1, 2024

Donna Walton
Employer