

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

Wednesday, February 21, 2024  
1:00 to 4:30 pm  
Held virtually via Microsoft Teams

**In Attendance**

<b>For the Union</b>	<b>For the Employer</b>	<b>Guests</b>	<b>Regrets</b>
Shawn Burr (Co-Chair) Alex Miller Katherine Onyshkewych Rodger Noakes (OPSEU/SEFPO Advisor)	Jacques LeGris (Co-Chair)* Joseph Odumeru Peter Taylor Greg Wilson Madiha Syed Andrea Venantius (TBS Advisor) Sunil Nair (Support)	Valerie Bowering Melissa Evers	

**Agenda Items (tabled February 21, 2024):**

<b>1. Review Previous Minutes</b>	<b>Referred to</b>	<b>Action</b>
'Live' minutes of the MERC meeting held on December 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 have been signed and posted on the Intranet site.	<b>Management</b>	

2. Previous Business and Standing Items		
<p><b>2.1 Fixed Term Usage Report</b></p> <p>Management provided the Union with the December 31st, 2023, Fixed-Term Usage Report in an email dated January 30th, 2024. Management received the Union's questions on conversions on January 30th, 2024. Management is currently reviewing and will provide a status update.</p> <p>The Fixed term Usage report as of March 31, 2024, will be available to be sent out in the second week of April 2024.</p>	<p><b>Management</b></p>	
<p><b>2.2 Training</b></p> <p>a. Conflict Avoidance Training 2</p> <p>Management provided an update on the CAT2 training procurement. Management also informed that the CAT2 Refresher Training will be paused during the procurement phase until a new vendor has been selected, and the full training will be delivered in collaboration with Regulatory Compliance Ontario (RCO).</p> <p>The Union appreciates the update provided by the Employer concerning the CAT2 training. The Union recognises that the Employer's recommendation to provide CAT2 Refresher Training on an annual basis will be paused until an appropriate vendor or option has been identified. The Union looks forward to working with the Employer on this important Health &amp; Safety item.</p>	<p><b>Management</b></p>	

<p><b>2.3 Employee Engagement</b></p> <p>The Union encourages the Employer to modify the timing or conduct a separate survey for seasonal staff members in MECP, especially those working in Ontario Parks. The Union will forward CERC a request to obtain a copy of the 2024 Employee Survey Questions.</p> <p>Management appreciates the feedback from the Union.</p>	<p><b>Union</b></p>	
<p><b>3. New Business</b></p>	<p><b>Referred to</b></p>	<p><b>Action</b></p>
<p><b>3.1 ON Parks – Public Safety Radio Network (PSRN) and the creation of the Ontario Parks Communication Centre (OPCC)</b></p> <p>The Union is concerned that the Employer is not undertaking the recommendations in the Environmental Risk Assessments. Not doing so could have H&amp;S implications. An opportunity to implement this recommendation – two-way radio communication - does not appear to have been considered even though this recommendation was made in 2022. The Union is requesting that the Employer, at the next MERC meeting, provide both a progress report and associated timeline which outlines the work and implementation for each recommendation made in the Health and Safety Risk Assessments.</p> <p>Management appreciates the feedback from the Union and will take their comment under advisement.</p>	<p><b>Union</b></p>	

<p><b>3.2 Request for Proposals to Establish a Ministry Specific Vendor of Record Arrangement in Northern Region</b></p> <p>Both the Union and members have filed separate grievances regarding this privatization exercise being undertaken by the Employer. Both the Union and its members have requested that the Employer provide confirmation that it has ceased and desisted with this exercise, though no confirmation has been provided.</p> <p>The Union supports its members in their grievance.</p> <p>Management will not comment as the matter is under active grievance.</p>	<p><b>Union</b></p>	
<p><b>3.3 Language for Temporary Acting Assignment</b></p> <p>The Union raised concerns around language in employment contracts that states “There will be no extension approved by Northern Region beyond this date”. The Union believes that such language is counter to the Employers messaging on opportunity and development. Further, this language appears discriminatory in nature based on our members geographic location.</p> <p>Management appreciates the issue raised by the Union and recommend the item be addressed locally with the LERC in Northern Region as this is a local matter. Management is committed to providing a discrimination free work environment for all employees.</p>	<p><b>Union</b></p>	

<p><b>3.4 Environmental Investigations and Enforcement Branch (EIEB) – Assignment of Work</b></p> <p>The Employer is providing additional work to EIEB investigators under the Heritage Act. The Union is concerned about H&amp;S, training and workload issues for these members.</p> <p>The Union is further concerned that this exercise is part of the Employer’s Job Classification exercise which has not been agreed to by either party.</p> <p>Management will not comment as the matter is under active grievance.</p>	<p><b>Union</b></p>	
<p><b>3.5 Event Management Standard Operating Procedure (EMSOP)</b></p> <p>The Union supports its members who have filed a grievance pertaining to the ministry’s on-call program.</p> <p>Management will not comment as the matter is under active grievance.</p>	<p><b>Union</b></p>	
<p><b>3.6 Interview Question</b></p> <p>Union members in Central Region have raised concerns around an interview question where the interviewee comes across two members in the lunchroom gossiping about the ADM and how would they deal with this. The Union recognizes that such talk could be counter to the Employer’s respectful workplace policies, but there are other ways to test an employee's knowledge on this matter.</p>	<p><b>Union</b></p>	

<p>The Union is concerned that such questions lead an employee to report another member(s) to management. This could be viewed as anti-union animus or could result in a toxic work environment as it pits one member against another. The Union has asked the Employer to remove this specific question from interviews.</p> <p>Management appreciates the feedback on the Interview Questions. As interview questions are developed by the Program Areas at the local level, the matter should be raised at the Local Employee Relations Committee (LERC). Management is committed to providing a workplace free of discrimination and harassment in compliance with the OPS Respectful Workplace Policy.</p>		
<p><b>3.7 Alternative Work Arrangements (AWA)</b></p> <p>Union intends to forward this item to Corporate Employee Relations Committee (CERC) for further discussion.</p> <p>Management concurs the item should be referred to CERC.</p> <p>OPS Flexible Work Strategy information can be accessed through the following link : <a href="https://www.ontario.ca/ops-flexible-work-strategy">OPS Flexible Work Strategy - InsideOPS (ontario.ca)</a></p>	<p><b>Union</b></p>	
<p><b>3.8 Spills Action Centre (SAC) - Automation of Call Back Protocol</b></p> <p>The Union has inquired how staff who volunteer for this call back exercise at the Spills Action Centre will be compensated (both for the call back and wages). The Union is requesting that clarification around wages and call back entitlements be provided to the SAC volunteers</p>	<p><b>Union</b></p>	

who are considering participating in this exercise. The Union has also requested a copy of the SAC Call Back Protocol.  Management provided an overview of the Automation of the SAC Call Back Protocol and will share the document with the Union.		Management will share the protocol with the Union
<b>4. Health and Safety (Standing Item)</b>	<b>Referred to</b>	<b>Action</b>

<b>5. Sign-off of Live Minutes</b>		
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**Next Meeting: June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

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

For the Union: Shawn Burr

Date: March 4, 2024

For the Employer: Jacques LeGris

Date: February 27, 2024