**Executive Committee Minutes**

**4 January 2021**

**8:30am-4:30pm**

***Identity***: MAPE is a labor union of professionals dedicated to acting for the common good in a democratic society while advancing the interests of its members

***Purpose***: MAPE organizes and develops the civic capacity of state employees to advocate for members and build power in the workplace to improve civic life for all Minnesotans

**Meeting called to order at 8:36 a.m.**

Present: Statewide (SW) President Megan Dayton (President), SW Vice President Thu Phan, SW Secretary Lynn Butcher, SW Treasurer Todd Maki, Organizing Council Chair Sarah Evans (OC Chair), Political Council Chair Cathleen Cotter (PC Chair), Speaker of the Meet & Confer Committees (Speaker) Whitney Terrill

Staff: Executive Director Lina Jamoul

Guest: Public Affairs and Communications (Comms) Director Leah Solo (Director)

President Dayton read the identity and purpose statements.

**Opening round**

How did you spend the end of year break?

**MPLS rent control coalition donation request**

**M(**Maki**)SP** to have the executive committee recommend a donation of $1000 to the MPLS Rent Control Coalition. **Consensus**

Speaker Terrill expressed desire to know more about how the coalition intends to address the disparate treatment of diverse communities in housing. The executive committee discussed the need to include language in the donation request policy to ensure equity and diversity is being addressed in organizations’ requests. Treasurer Maki and Speaker Terrill will review the donation policy and bring recommendations to the board.

Additional discussion around the way board policies are created and maintained – suggestion for the constitution and rules committee.

**Communications plan (Solo)**

Comms is working on finalizing their strategic communication plan and expect it to be ready for sharing next month. Director Solo reminded the Exec Committee that Communications is not a substitute for strategic plan. She also expressed that since the Comms team is nine months into having a full staff, the department is excited to try new things. This past year has pointed to increased interest in communications in many areas. The George Floyd statement demonstrated that members are paying attention to what is coming from comms; we are aware that agency leadership is reading our newsletter and communications, as are reporters who are picking up stories based on our emails.

The department is focusing on process and how they are getting information to the membership strategically. The current plan has the newsletter shifting to every other week, which will allow the team to be more strategic and better manage assignments. Cynthia is working on the structure now. Additionally, they are looking at the narrative. Currently, the narrative has been MAPE Members Step Up. This can be broadened to a greater vision of Minnesota – a Minnesota that values public service, government is the best of what we do together. Comms is currently working on fleshing out that broadened narrative.

Comms would like to do some training with members, staff, and leadership, particularly around social media. This will help prepare members to respond to requests when we need them to.

Finally, Comms is looking at how they support MAPE’s tactical goals and eventual strategic plan. In order for them to be most effective, Comms needs to be included in the process from the beginning rather than as an afterthought. They are working on how best to affect change in this area.

Comms is working on updating the website as requested to highlight the leadership team, and is looking for opportunities on the website to better link to member stories.

Discussion

OC Chair Evans asked about the possibility of adding pictures and bios to the OC page, and what a reasonable timeline would be. Director Solo indicated that with the current workload, the earliest the team could get to that would be summer, and maybe as late as fall. President Dayton asked that continuation planning be built into the project to ensure that sites are updated as membership changes.

Speaker Terrill asked if Comms used data around the frequency that members are accessing information from the newsletter in their decision to move to bi-weekly, and expressed concern that cutting the newsletter frequency would affect how members access information. Director Solo indicated that pre-pandemic, the newsletter had an open rate of around 20%; that increased to 35% of so around the release of the COVID policy, and has dropped off somewhat since. She explained that at this point, we have a good open rate, but we are not being strategic about the information that is included in the newsletter. Giving more time to be thoughtful is the first step and then from there, we can adjust if we need to (e.g., if we see drop in open rate, or are sending multiple updates/emergency newsletters). Speaker Terrill suggested highlighting one member story and one equity story per week, that would be 52 member stories per year and could provide structure going forward that would still allow Comms to be strategic. The Speaker suggested an editorial calendar to help, and that perhaps the councils and M&C committees could help share some of the burden.

Speaker Terrill expressed that the Comms team need to be more diverse and suggested looking at ways to address that. She suggested looking into a diversity fellowship in communications, perhaps reaching out to the U. The Speaker reminded that it is hard to have representation of diverse voices without them on the team.

Director Solo indicated she would be ready to share the plan with EC next month. President Dayton asked Director Solo and the committee if it would be helpful and feasible to add a Comms update as a standing agenda item to the meeting with a time certain. All agreed to adding Comms as a standing agenda item for this meeting with a time certain.

**COVID vaccine**

Director Solo remained for this discussion. Last month, President Dayton requested EC members with constituencies (councils, M&C, ERC) to gather feedback on whether and how MAPE should communicate with members regarding the COVID-19 vaccine.

VP Phan (ERC) – lengthy discussion and came to a consensus that chief stewards do not want to push for MAPE to make a recommendation for mandatory vaccination, but maybe have a page or some sort of forum to allow for testimonial (someone who got vaccinated could provide for testimonial) and maybe a specific page for people to have necessary info to make a decision.

PC Chair Cotter (PC) – sent out the questions for brainstorming and are going to talk about them on Friday. Did get one response: vaccines are about advocating that state workers who are on the front line are on the priority list for the governor, but also need to recognize that there is historical trauma and must help leaders of color speak to their constituencies, but need to take a backseat; will update after the meeting.

OC Chair Evans (OC) – heard similar things from the OC. Acknowledging trauma of people of color about vaccines; members concerned about mandates; ensuring access where it is needed (equitable access) and being at the table where we can to ensure that those who need it have access. Is there a chance to have input on those discussions? From public health perspective, very concerned, but also cognizant of the issues. Maybe when we are further along we move from education to advocacy. Did a quick search to see if other unions are advocating for vaccination and they are. [MA’s essential workers will get COVID vaccine priority. Are labor unions prepared to endorse the shot for members? (boston25news.com)](https://www.boston25news.com/news/health/mas-essential-workers-will-get-covid-vaccine-priority-are-labor-unions-prepared-endorse-shot-members/52RRJ7CIMFBQZJ66NFUCI2PLSA/)

Speaker Terrill (M&C) – heard a lot of support for putting out a message; the Speaker recommended a legal review of whatever we put out, and recommended caution as not everyone trusts the vaccine. How do we both advocate for personal choice, but also advocate for good public policy – do we get vaccinated publicly or highlight our own vaccination stories? Important to incorporate a diverse or equity lens to strategies, and also be sure we aren’t segregating our members of color. Advocated for plain language.

Secretary Butcher – don’t have a defined constituency, but members in DCT are interested in getting vaccinated through the state; in favor of advocating for good public health policy – need to pay attention to the priority that the governor places on state workers over other constituencies. Need to also consider the shifting landscape – UK response to the new strain in their country, election results in GA, seditious coup attempt that is ongoing and will take place on January 6. Whatever messaging we provide, we need to ensure we have a good understanding of the whole landscape.

Treasurer Maki - What happens if it becomes a mandate? Are there options for us to explore to support those members who say “No” – how do we advocate for them while complying with the requirements of our employment.

ED Jamoul – MMB has indicated they are not leaning toward a mandate, but things are constantly changing and so needs to be updated. There is a lot of misinformation that is designed to promote active distrust of public health and public policy, public institutions. Likes the idea of interviewing members from MDH; suggested looking into shifting the focus to the role of MAPE as producers in terms of vaccinating other Minnesotans (using state buildings for mass vaccination attempts; using MAPE volunteers to administer vaccinations); could be a generational opportunity (wear your MAPE shirt while vaccinating others) pictures would last generations.

Speaker Terrill expressed frustration that MDH has not sufficiently addressed disparity of impact – majority of children who have died are children of color – and wondered if there is a role for MAPE to push MDH to be responsible for all families in their response. Suggested that rather than create our own content, MAPE pressure MDH to put out accessible and representative information that MAPE could then share with our members and communities. Information and accountability for accuracy is left to the state, but we become a partner in the dissemination of that information. We have a direct window with the MMB meetings, but see an opportunity to ask if there are other ways to support MAPE members engaging in other ways. No need to take on the risk for possible wrong information.

Chair Evans said she would look into the guidance that MDH is giving to organizations and will share that back with the committee.

Employer preparation

[ADA and Title VII issues regarding mandatory vaccinations](https://www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-covid-19-and-ada-rehabilitation-act-and-other-eeo-laws#exclude)

[Can employers require that employees receive a COVID-19 vaccine before returning to work?](https://www.fmlainsights.com/can-employers-require-that-employees-receive-a-covid-19-vaccine-before-returning-to-work/?utm_source=Jeff+Nowak+-+FMLA+Insights&utm_campaign=6951e6846f-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_9098bf1ba8-6951e6846f-72795289)

Director Solo summarized the conversation: general slant towards pro-vaccine, pro folks getting it, but also pro-choice and pro-prioritizing front line workers; that role that a number of folks said about being a space of good solid information for folks is good and really like the point about not reinventing the wheel but rather that what the state is producing is good and diverse and we are able to amplify that. Interested in timeline & approval process (board)

President Dayton requested a written summary of the discussion to have something to put before the board for recommendation. Basic for board packet: This is what we’d like to do and timeline/resource needs.

VP Than brought forward additional concerns from chief stewards if there is no mandate: specifically if those who are vaccinated will be able to have options to not work in the same workspaces as non-vaccinated workers.

Speaker Terrill requested that we continue regularly ask questions on prioritization in our discussions with MMB, both overall for the state and specifically for the state workforce.

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

President Dayton requested the committee’s thoughts on the request from a member to bring attention to potential legislation at the national level to establish a truth and reconciliation commission to examine racial disparities.

Speaker Terrill urged that MAPE focus on our own equity work, and cautioned that this topic may be provocative without spending time to educate the membership and take the time to gain buy-in.

Secretary Butcher suggested that these types of requests, either for MAPE endorsement or even highlighting of causes that are important to individual members are likely to continue, and we should determine a process for evaluating them that is objective, as well as develop options for responding to such requests. Additionally, we should evaluate whether these requests might be opportunities to engage members in the political process, whether MAPE endorses the issue or not. There may be ways to highlight the member and allow them to bring forward an issue without specifically endorsing the issue, assuming the issue is broadly aligned with MAPE’s strategic priorities.

President Dayton requested ED Jamoul engage with Comms to talk about potential highlight of the member that might allow for a highlight of the interest. Secretary Butcher requested ED Jamoul also request feedback from Comms on a potential process, including the pros and cons of having a process, to help guide discussion and decision-making at the board for when these requests come in.

ED Jamoul questioned whether MAPE was receiving enough of these requests to warrant the development of guidelines. Clarification was provided that an objective evaluation process that is applied to all requests would allow us to help members understand why the request is or isn’t approved, and feel supported, especially if the process includes tools (social media campaign info, organizing training, information on talking legally to coworkers, etc.) that they will remember and be able to use when MAPE needs them to act.

Speaker Terrill reiterated that it is important to get to know the member as part of the process and that should be part of the decision-making process: how much work has the person done, how are they invested, how are they involved in the union and have they been organizing their fellow members. President Dayton agreed that that should be part of whatever solution the board endorsed, and also that she is looking at it from the perspective of bringing in new members and having them feel supported. Will add to the board agenda.

**Acumen Academy training –** [***Systems Practice***](https://acumenacademy.org/course/systems-practice?_hsmi=103977143&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-_EFfGlWDAkFBgbVS4kqtWSsfWvcPH3xWzfVzrkM_j0FNDx3oBqapdOx-scdElI7CaJoaRrMvwapFb7RAB9JQRCMl2efC6P79Xq31a20h5r0hebAwY)

Secretary Butcher suggested the group take the free Acumen Academy training on Systems Practice together both as a professional development and team development opportunity. The course would run for 11 weeks and does require a weekly time commitment, but it is asynchronous.

Lina shared a link to business architecture for non-profits as an alternate opportunity. [Home (google.com)](https://sites.google.com/tcbaf.org/a4g/home) as well as [Krista Tippett on the Art of Conversation (acumenacademy.org)](https://acumenacademy.org/course/krista-tippett-on-the-art-of-conversation)

The committee agreed to evaluate the opportunities and make a decision on whether or which one they would like to pursue by the week of January 11.

**Strategic planning discussion at the Board**

ED Jamoul walked the committee through the plan again. Start with purpose – what the purpose of discussion is at the board. Three main things:

* 1. Strategic planning is one of the primary responsibilities of the board – purpose of the board is to have them fulfill their primary responsibilities
  2. Develop capacity for strategic thinking (stakeholder analysis)
  3. Get agreement from the board on the process to follow (draft agreement) for strategic planning

The committee provided feedback. ED Jamoul will update the document to expressly point to where the board fits into the plan and will send out the updated plan to the EC prior to inclusion in the board packet.

ED Jamoul suggested flow of board discussion:

1. Some presentation of the work and discussions so far as an executive committee – may need a strategic planning 101 (what is it, why is it important, what is the role of the board)
2. Jam board exercise that the EC did with the board (small groups)
3. Stakeholder analysis
4. Layout process document to the board and have a discussion that includes the board’s role.

Speaker Terrill suggested including story telling around our environment – what are the hard facts that we as leaders of the union need to hear in terms of the context of the ever-shifting environment. ED Jamoul suggested that might be a way to set the ground for a deeper discussion with the board as part of their role in planning. Secretary Butcher suggested that ED Jamoul include the board discussion topics when she updates the planning document. Treasurer Maki pointed added that it is important to think about and set expectations for the documentary product of the planning process, and that whatever is produced will need to be accessible and useable: do we end up with a 200-page document or a 2-page executive summary?

**Updated organizational development review**

* Treasurer Maki and Secretary Butcher provided feedback on how yearly reviews work in their agencies and the pros and cons of yearly vs. anniversary date
* Secretary Butcher requested more specific metrics in order to objectively evaluate performance, specifically around conflict management.
* Speaker Terrill suggested specific schedule for review completion so that that completion could evaluated as part of the ED evaluation. Argued for rolling evaluations based on roles.
* The committee discussed how best to communicate the plan. What is the audience for the document? Need to be able to share and discuss with board, with managers, with OPEIU and staff, but not sure what that looks like.
* Chair Evans identified the need to determine what the board and executive committee role is in supporting the plan.

**OPEIU request for seat on exec and Board**

The committee discussed the request in preparation for the March M&C.

**IAF contract**

The committee discussed the contract in context of the current environment. President Dayton will meet with IAF to discuss what they can offer based on our current strategic needs and will share that discussion next month.

**Follow up from onboarding homework**

Committee members shared some of the broader onboarding needs they’d identified:

* Reading Bylaws, Constitution and policies
* For councils: dealing with financial stuff like lost time forms for committee members (process)
* Robert’s Rules
* How to post minutes, prepare agendas, run a meeting
* Making the transition from a member to a higher-leadership role and the need to change one’s mindset; statewide policies from MMB to be familiar with, in addition to MAPE policies.

**External organizing**

President Dayton provided a brief update on the assessment for outside organizing opportunities. This came out of the Strategic Planning class she and ED Jamoul took. Have had initial discussions with IAF to explore opportunities. This is a long-term project.

**Board agenda**

**Meeting evaluation**

**M**(Butcher) **SP** to adjourn at 5:02 p.m.