

# Agenda: MNIT Meet & Confer

Date: 5/4/22

## Introductions & Housekeeping

* Tess Flom has retired from state service

Attendees:

* MNIT: Rachel Dopson, Chad Thuet, Yia Her, Shanna Vah, Shawna Hennek
* MAPE: Axelina Swenson, Frank Cave-LaCoste, Kassie Church, Greg Naumann, Andi Morris, Jed Becher

## Agenda Items

### Work Evo/Covid

* Any updates from management?
  + Employees can return as they’re comfortable – proof of vaccination attestation policy still in effect
  + Don’t want to make concrete plans due to the nature of Covid
  + Recognize the workplace has fundamentally changed. There will be more opportunities for telework, full-time telework, and possibly remote work.
* Any Return to Office Committee meetings planned?
  + None, but not for lack of trying. Haven’t found the right mix of what to do moving toward.
  + Utilizing Gartner Consulting contract for planning.
  + Jon Eichten is open to topics for that group.
* Workplace exposure to Covid – use of Admin Leave?
  + If someone tests positive but has no available leave, what are the options?
    - Most of our employees are able to telework so that would be the first option if they’re able to work
    - Will assess any situations that come up
  + Have supervisors been told that they can’t deny vacation if someone is using it for Covid (but is out of Sick Leave)?
    - Haven’t come across this yet and hope that supervisors would understand this as part of MNIT’s connected culture
  + Possible MOU?
    - Management doesn’t feel it’s necessary due to minimal need for in person work
* How long will Employee Status updates be required?
  + Not sure. Have discussed only requiring it for those entering the workplace.
  + Status is overwritten each time it is updated by the employee.
  + MMB has talked about simplifying the set of questions, but not sure what that will look like. Commissioner Tomes is working with MMB on this.
  + Want to have an idea of how many people are coming in but checking badge records is complicated due to many locations.
* If an employee is being told they need to return to the office, but they are refusing and can complete their job duties through telework, what is the recourse?
  + Telework policy indicates telework can be modified by management at any time, including the right to assign and direct employees.
  + If management is requiring someone to come in, there’s a business need for them to be there. Management feels that there’s some business value in an employee being there in person as opposed to virtual.
  + Disciplinary steps per the contract
* Will testing continue to be required without proof of vaccination?
  + At this time, it is still required per MMB policy. In a constant state of reconsideration.
* Remote work opportunities
  + At this time, positions would need to be posted if they are going to change to remote work vs telework

### Listening Session Feedback

* Some people are being told that if they want to continue teleworking, they will need to provide their own equipment for their home office. What is management’s stance on this?
  + Employees with approval to perform telework *may* be provided with equipment to work from home.
  + It comes down to budget with providing two sets of equipment. There are hotel cubes available at most locations, trying to expand that.
  + MAPE has heard of people teleworking only who are being told they need to return equipment. Will follow up with Chad/Jon on this.
* Security positions are continuously not being filled – what is being done to try to fix this?
  + Student loan reimbursement pilot, sign-on bonus, referral bonus.
  + New classification is at MMB for approval (27E salary range)
  + Open to ideas
    - Can we create feeder programs from places like MN State Colleges & Universities?
      * Utilize a federal program Scholarship for Service, which is based out of Washington DC
      * Business partners and their needs don’t necessarily align with entry level security work so it’s difficult.
* Wages are a serious concern. New grads in IT are turning down positions with $80K+ salaries.
  + Everyone is struggling. The market is especially hot for IT
  + Few people are leaving for pay (according to exit reviews)
  + Consideration of demonstratable skills rather than experience alone

### Staff Exchange Program

* This is different from Tactic 5
* Staff at one agency were told about this program
* Who is included in this program? What classifications are they at?
  + Aware of a program in the desktop support team, in part to help stand up an enterprise service, gives employees opportunities to work in different areas with different business partners.
  + Believe that this is limited to the Desktop group
  + Classifications in that group are typically ITS1, ITS2, and ITS3
* Is this optional or required?
  + As far as management is aware, this has been voluntary
* Who will conduct employee performance reviews?
  + [Not discussed at the meeting]

\*\*MAPE will send additional information to management and we will follow up before the next meeting. HR requested names of supervisors involved.

### Consolidated Staff

* Some staff in the current round of consolidation effort have been referred to as Remote Workers by management. Are they truly Remote Workers, or are they Teleworkers?
  + Perhaps supervisors and managers could be reminded of when it is appropriate to use Telework vs Remote Work.
  + This has been corrected via email with the agency staff. There are no remote workers, but they may exist in the future. It is expected they will be very limited opportunities given the criteria under the policy, specifically:
    - Need for highly specialized employees for difficult to fill positions; and
    - Whether work can only be completed in a specific geographical location
* In the future, we would appreciate being informed ahead of changes like this, particularly when reporting structures and potentially job duties are going to be changing.
  + Clarified that employees were informed but the M&C Team would like to know in order to address questions/issues that come up.

### Length of Service Credit for Vacation Accruals

* When an employee’s length of service is reviewed for purposes of vacation accruals, is it documented why they were or were not granted credit?
  + There is a procedure that spells out the steps for determination of service credit
  + Reasoning for approval or denial is not documented
* Can credit be revoked/removed?
* Is there a way to dispute the decision?
  + No, it’s a discretionary part of the contract
  + Can always request a review from a new agency

\*\*Axelina will reach out to Chad about a specific situation.

### Out of State Telework

* Axelina would like to talk about the committee
  + This was a great experience – thank you for including a representative from this team.
  + Business cases for approvals were well documented
  + Have gotten good feedback from those approved saying how much of a difference it has made for them
  + There is concern about some of the people who were approved have moved out of state would potentially not be able to continue telework long term. Some of these positions are hard to fill.
    - Chad will need to work with MMB on a resolution
* Password reset issues for those working out of state
  + Reset of a laptop password requires the laptop to be in person with a Service Desk staff member

### Vacation

* At smaller agencies, particularly those not under the Enterprise Service Desk umbrella, staff tend to have higher vacation balances (often only 1 or 2 IT staff)
* Is there a plan to help them get below the contract maximum so they don’t lose vacation time due to staffing issues?
  + Staff can request an exception to the maximum
* Work-life balance is also important, and being able to fill in for someone upon staff exiting state service

### Temporary Expanded Public Loan Forgiveness

* Could management communicate this to MNIT employees?
  + Yes, management is willing to do this. MAPE will send the announcement from MAPE to Chad to get that out.

### Achievement Awards – brought to the table by management

* Employee Recognition Committee has gotten permission to move forward with a permanent program.
* There will be quarterly awards and folks can submit recognition at any time.

### Employee Recruitment – brought to the table by management

* $1,000 referral for MNIT employees who refer people to certain jobs
* $5,000 sign on bonus for certain jobs
* Ask for MNIT employees to work as job ambassadors