**DRAFT Meet and Confer Sept 11th, 2024**

**Attendance:**

Katrina Kessler

Kellie McNamara

Peter Tester

Wayne Cords

Kaity Taylor

Brett Nagle

Kristin Mroz-Risse

Shanna Schmitt

Mel Markert

Cindy Osborn

1. **Update on NEO and Let’s Connect Conversations with HR Staff**

HR staff reached out to Meet and Confer to discuss the Let’s Connect Series and New Employee Orientations (NEO):

* 1. Let’s Connect Series
     1. These series have been going well and Meet and Confer members have been meeting with HR staff to brainstorm future opportunities.
     2. All around there is a lot of interest in these programs and continuing them in the future.
     3. The Let’s Connect meetings were a pilot last year and hopefully will continue. Meet and Confer is happy to assist with any planning or input that seems appropriate. We have heard from members that these meetings were well received.
     4. Meet and Confer would like to see more opportunities for training on “who to ask” and connecting staff across the agency.
     5. Career Conference is planned for March 4th and 6th 2025.
  2. NEO
     1. It’s a good opportunity for all staff to learn what’s new or what’s changed at the agency. Things can change quickly and we have heard staff would like a refresher of New Employee Orientation. Meet and Confer has had conversations about what that type of training could look like. We anticipate the agenda would be similar with most changes being in the types of questions asked by current staff.
     2. HR has also thought about how these could be planned and stated that it would be efficient to invite current staff to existing NEO events rather than create a whole new type of event. They are open to this type of event for new and existing staff. It’s also a good opportunity for new and old staff to meet and connect.
  3. Overall good news and interest from everyone to continue and hopefully expand these programs.

1. **Student Loan Reimbursement Program Update:** There is a lot of member interest.
   1. Communication about program with PCA staff
      1. UPDATE (10/21) Agency-wide email from Peter Tester. Application period is open now through Nov 25th
      2. The agency is planning to communicate when the application is ready. It’s still being finalized right now. If more time is needed to finish the application, MPCA management is willing to be flexible about how long it’s open to allow staff time to complete the application. Since this is the first year of this program, there is room for adjustment.
      3. The SOP isn’t finalized yet (9/11/2024), but HR would consider sending an update that the application is being worked on and more information is coming.
   2. Request for updated policy
      1. This will also be shared when updated. (note, policy has been sent to Meet and Confer, available if people want to see it)
      2. The reimbursement will not be taxed since the value is under $5,250. Staff should still consult their own tax specialist if they have concerns.
      3. MNIT and HR were meeting after Meet and Confer for an update on the application.
2. **Environmental Specialist and Environmental Consultant Range reassignment clarifying questions** 
   1. What factors led the PCA to determine this range reassignment was necessary?
      1. Look at which classes have a large amount of people who could be impacted. When the agency considers ways to demonstrate that employees are valued, it was a logical place to start. Making this change is part of attracting and retaining staff.
      2. Looked at levels of turnover and where it was becoming difficult to keep staff.
      3. There really wasn’t any one determining factor, but they had heard for years there were concerns about the ES series.
   2. How did MMB determine the outcomes of range reassignment?  (follow up – can we see the review/report from MMB that outlines decisions?)
      1. Yes, Meet and Confer is looking for specifics about what went into MMB’s decision.
      2. PCA does not have the specific list.
   3. What information (research etc.) was used to determine the range reassignment?  (follow up – which specific factors and can we see the report?)
      1. Kellie advised Meet and Confer/MAPE should ask for this information directly from MMB. PCA does not have the information and is not planning to request it.
      2. There is some information available at this link: [Salary Range Reassignments (mn.gov)](https://mn.gov/mmb-stat/hr-toolbox/002-class-and-compensation/003-compensation/srr-for-toolbox.pdf) and on the Lorax page: <https://lorax.pca.state.mn.us/node/9126>
      3. MMB is doing equitable compensation work as required by statute [Sec. 43A.01 MN Statutes](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/43a.01). This was not part of the ES classification adjustment.
      4. MAPE got the same memo from MMB that the agency did.
   4. Is PCA planning to request range reassignments for other classifications? When? If not, why? (Follow up – the FAQ talks about HR needing to have “data to support these requests”, what specific data is needed to initiate the salary range reassignments? How can MAPE help get that data for you, are you actively looking for that data? Have other agencies reached out about other range reassignments or class studies?)
      1. The agency makes suggestions to MMB about what to review. Generally focus on classifications that will affect a lot of people and where turnover is higher. They do not have a list of how MMB tracks this.
   5. How is PCA planning to address the other inequities that exist for the other classifications that work for the agency? (follow up – specific examples are other classifications that used to be at the same range as ESs SPAs, Planners, Research Scientists, and unclear distinction between exempt and non exempt classes)
      1. PCA has contacted MMB about our agency’s interest in class studies and/or range reassignments for Research Scientist, Research Analyst, and Hydro class series. We don’t know where they fall on MMB’s list. The agency can ask they be looked at, but cannot decide for MMB.
      2. Suggested that MAPE can address some of this in contract negotiations and address inequities in that way.
      3. Several positions were submitted for consideration, but nothing is guaranteed to be changed or adjusted.
   6. Why was MAPE PCA Meet and Confer not told beforehand? What led to the decision to not include us before this announcement was made?
      1. Meet and Confer got feedback that staff were confused about the emails and some thought they might be a scam. We want to assist the agency in getting accurate information to stay and we could have given a heads up had we known before the email went out.
      2. Appreciated knowing that some staff were unsure about the emails and if they were real.
      3. There’s not much room for the agency to be part of the overall decision, it comes from MMB so they don’t have all the information either.
   7. How has this information been received by staff?
      1. We probably hear different things, but the agency is mostly hearing positive feedback. Staff are glad the adjustment was made.
      2. The email box has also gotten some good feedback.
      3. Meet and Confer might hear more of the individual cases where people have concerns, but are also hearing a lot of positive things.
   8. How many staff impacted by the range reassignment got an increase in pay and how many stayed at their current rate?
      1. There are 285 employees in the Environmental Specialist 1-4 & Environmental Consultant classes.
      2. 158 employees received a pay increase - 33 staff received an increase to bring them up to the new range minimum & 125 staff were at the top of the “old” range for more than one year and were eligible for an increase in the new range
3. **Vacancy and Job Filling Update**
   1. Request for agency-wide and MAPE numbers on vacancies and job filling status
      1. There are over 190 vacancies at the agency, 155 are MAPE and at various stages of hiring.
      2. At the time of the meeting 8 people started a new position that day, 4 of them were internal hires.
      3. We are still seeing a lot of internal movement.