

# MEET & CONFER MINUTES



**Date:** Tuesday October 25, 2022

**Time:** 1pm

**Facilitator:** Meet & Confer

## In Attendance

**Management Attendants:** Vikki Getchell, Rachelle Schmidt, Suzanne Tillman, Kiara Robinson.

**MAPE Attendants:** Kristine Moody, Ann Adkisson, Joe Sullivan, Jeff Gintz, Emily Moen, Joel Kreiner, Brian Fischer, Nikki Engen, Chris Determan, and Nic Frey.

## Approval of Minutes

Meet & Confer Committee

Senior Management

## Budget Request - Kristine

### Budget Request - Kristine

**Background:** At July Meet & Confer meeting we requested the reinstatement of the MN Revenue Budget overview. These use to be provided by Pete Skwira. We look forward to these updates as general information for employees.

### Ask:

*Does management have a Budget update?*

**Action:** Informational/Decisions

- Kristine – In the past the former CFO would give a budget overview during meet and confer, we found this helpful and informative. Were you able to dig up some budget updates?
- Vikki – We don't have any for this meeting, but our new CFO is pulling together budget information for the next meeting. Do you have any guidance of the format?
- Nic – He didn't give out handouts, it was mostly verbal/high level, items that impact employees are useful

## Guidance from Governor Walz - Kristine

**Background:** Statewide officers met with Governor Walz's team to discuss employee concerns over administrative budget planning. Governor Walz reflected back state workers are demanding pay increases to keep workers in their current jobs. He recognized that many agencies are tired and understaffed and that we need to have competitive pay to hire into these positions. He specifically mentioned that for some positions, he knows people can drive less than 10 miles and get paid more for the same type of work, and that is a problem for retention. Governor Walz promised to give directive to the state agencies to include, "significant, meaningful, and competitive wage increases that keep up with inflation in the budget that the administration is planning right now."

### Ask:

*Has senior management been given guidance to include competitive wage increase to keep up with inflation? If not, is this issue being taking into consideration at our agency?*

### Action: Informational/Decisions

- Kristine – If we don't consider raises as part of budget planning, we won't be able to fund meaningful COLAs, Gov asked agencies to consider these costs in budget moving forward. Has management heard from MMB regarding this?
- Vikki – Hadn't seen this before, took it to SMT, hasn't heard anything or guidance from MMB at all. SMT said we need to hear something from MMB about this because this is the first time, we're hearing about this.
- Kristine – Not surprising, election year etc. Just curious if there was anything that had gone out yet. We'll keep this on the agenda going forward.

## Supplemental Negotiations - Kristine

### Topic: Supplemental Negotiation Mental Health Initiative

**Background:** Vikki Getchell brought forward a concern regarding a potential mental health crisis identifying a need for an emergency mental health internal resource. While the [Employee Assistance Program](#) offers great general assistance, they lack a crisis line. During my conversation with Vikki, we talked about opportunities to provide additional resources to employees in crisis. We talked about potentially adding this in supplemental negotiations in the event MMB did not approve agency spending.

### Ask:

*Was management successful in working with MMB to create this service? If not, we welcome working together on contact language to provide this much needed service for employees at DOR.*

### Action:

- Vikki – Not a possibility, don't see person at agency having the needed expertise in this area. If you call the counselor number at EAP it is open 24/7 and considered a crisis line.

They have trained mental health counselors who will always answer and can speak regarding suicidal ideation, if they feel there is a risk the employee, they will call 911 if they feel it is a crisis. Looked on Rspace and found 988 is the suicide crisis line, 911 is the emergency response line, 211 is the new emergency information line, there are also more individualized suicide hotlines for various identities/groups. I am going to talk to health and wellness committee if we can get all these resources posted in a visible place easily accessible to employees and look at having trainings for suicide preventions. Found EAP website very confusing, the coaching number was helpful.

## Telework Procedures - Ann

**Topic:** On February 15, 2022, management said they planned to roll out a Telework policy by the end of February. Management was waiting for approval.

**Background:** During MOU negotiations we were provided a draft of the Telework Procedures and Overview policy specific to Agency needs based on concerns from employees impacted by office closures. Employees approved the MOU with the understanding that that this policy was to go into place shortly thereafter. During the July meeting, senior management mentioned that you were actively working on updating the procedure document and that it most likely won't change from the draft originally proposed. Management was looking into an electronic form as well, but it may take a little longer. The ETA was early Fall.

**Ask:**

*Is there an estimated time of completion for the Telework Policy? Could we be provided a draft of the policy 10 working days prior to posting pursuant to [Article 28 – Work Rules](#)?*

**Action:**

- Ann – Looking for update on telework procedures, can we see a copy of the draft prior to posting?
- Rachelle – We are actively working on it, think it should be rolled out in the next month or so, we are actively working on how we will actively facilitate the telework acknowledgement.

## MN Veterans Training/Apprenticeship Program Opt-In - Chris

**Topic:** Upon the expiration of the hire freeze, we were told on the October 28<sup>th</sup> meeting that management would begin the implementation of this program.

**Background:** The agency can receive \$2,000 to hire and retain veterans through this program; \$1,000 upon hiring the veteran after the eligible veteran has applied for the benefit, and \$1,000 after a year of training. This program benefits the men and women that have served our county and provides a pathway to hire more veteran employees. Management stated that they plan to hire staff to be responsible for partnering with community partners, including this program and implementation. Additional information can be found here:

<https://mn.gov/mdva/resources/employment/ojtapprnticeship.jsp>

**Ask:**

*Does HR have dedicated staff to implement this program? If so, when can we expect to see this program become available to veterans applying to our agency?*

**Action:**

Chris – we were told

Suzanne – We have hired a recruiter with knowledge of this program, has been told she will be diving into this to see how to get it going, hoping soon they will have more information to share.

## Bi-Lingual Stipend - Joe

**Topic:** MAPE Bilingual/Multilingual/Sign Language Pay Differential

**Background:** The Multilingual Pay Differential was negotiated as part of the 2021-2023 collective bargaining agreement between the State of Minnesota and MAPE. This program compensates eligible and approved employees for use of language skills other than English, in the performance of their job duties or while performing pre-approved work or services during special projects and events. A memo was release by MMB to all state agency payroll, HR, and Accounting Staff on October 26, 2021. This memo outlined the approved compensation pay and earnings codes. At the February 15 meeting, management confirmed that there are positions at Revenue that would qualify for this program.

**Ask:**

*When will the Bilingual/Multilingual/Sign Language Pay Differential go into effect? Will this include retroactive wage adjustments per the memo?*

**Action:** Informational/Discussion/Requires Action

- Suzanne – New recruiter, Nicole, is already diving into this, reaching out to different agencies to see how they have implemented it, hope to see progress on this soon.

## HR Hiring Practices – Brian/Joel

**Topic:** A few employees came forward with concerns about not receiving feedback during the hiring process by HR.

**Background:**

One employee applied for an MA2 position in Collections that closed July 1. Prior to applying for the position, they shadowed the position and had their supervisor review their resume to ensure they met the minimum qualifications. This employee didn't hear anything until they ran into the manager of the Division of the division hiring. Within the conversation the manager asked why they didn't apply for the position and confirmed that their resume was not passed along to her. The employee e-mailed Mrs. Lee in HR asking for feedback and did not receive a response. Morgan (hiring manager) in HR stated that HR never responds back to employees that do not meet the minimum qualifications. The position still showed that it was open in Self Service even after a person was hired for the position. Finally on September 28<sup>th</sup> the employee received an e-mail from HR stating this employee did not meet the minimum qualifications.

**Ask:**

*We request an outline and or procedures for new hire internal applications, review, and hiring process. What is the typical timeline for HR to respond to internal candidates and when does self-serve get updated?*

The second instance was brought forward by Joel. We invite Joel to outline his issue. Brief synopsis: He applied for a position and like the situation above, did not receive a response from HR. Joel reached out to HR requesting additional information about where his application was and did not receive a response.

*Is HR implementing MN Statute 43A.11 Subd. 9, ““If the appointing authority rejects a member of the finalist pool who has claimed veteran's preference, the appointing authority shall notify the finalist in writing of the reasons for the rejection.”*

*If HR is implementing the law, explain why it wasn't followed in Joel's case.*

**Action:** Informational/Discussion/Requires Action

- Sean – We do have procedures for all of our hiring steps including review of qualifications and routing of applicants. In terms of minimum qualifications each applicant is looked at individually by staff, there is supposed to be communications for each individual that doesn't meet it. Without being able to look at this deeper I wouldn't be able to elaborate on this, however I'd be fine looking at this more if the individual affected would reach out, there shouldn't be any fear of retaliation, I would hope people are comfortable reaching out to us. I'm open to meeting to discuss this.
- Brian – Yeah, I can work on setting up a meeting. Follow up question, is it worth appealing the min qual decision? The position is already gone, is it a waste of time?
- Sean – That's a difficult one to answer, it would be up to division heads, can't say a new position would be created, I don't have an answer for that right now.
- Vikki – I want to reiterate that retaliation isn't tolerated by our management team. If an employee didn't get an answer back, I would highly encourage them to come forward and find out exactly what happened.
- Megan – We did have a session on applying for promotions in partnership with health and wellness
- Vikki – We're looking at career development for our employees both within the agency as well as pathways to other state agencies.
- Megan – If we have preferred qualifications it would be to the benefit of the applicant to list their preferred qualifications as well.
- Joel – I've applied for several positions over the years, I can only recall one time that I've received a written explanation for my rejection. There is a written response requirement for veteran's preference under state law, if this isn't being followed, is the DOR not following other veteran's preference requirements.
- Sean – Without having any background knowledge, I can't dive too much into it. When you apply did you provide DD214?
- Joel – Yes, I've provided it multiple times, every time I've been asked, however HR hasn't always asked me to provide it.
- Sean – This is something we'll have to look at further to ensure we are following procedures.

- Kristine – Is it my understanding you're unclear of the M.S. implementation?
- Sean – Being new I want to communicate to my team, look into this more, and provide them with an answer.
- Kristine – This is givable, but we'd prefer not to go down that road, the more transparency we can provide to members the better, it is state statute and is a big deal, it would be nice to have transparency in the process. If you could get back to us a solid answer that would be great.
- Megan – we do have a process in place but we haven't been able to connect the staffing specialist who was directly working this requested fill because they are out but we do have a process where we notify the RSV applicant in writing after the position is filled. We do have this in place, not sure why it was missed in Joel's case so we're going to follow up with her when she is back.
- Kristine – Please provide email response so we can include this in the meeting minutes. Brian is also going to follow up with his person to see if they are comfortable with meeting.

## Next Meeting

January 24 | 1PM, Teams

Motion to adjourn was made at 2:30pm unanimously.