MAPE- MANAGEMENT MEET & CONFER

November 2, 2018

Attending for MAPE: Cyndi Benjamin; Nell Nere; Frances Li; and Dan Engelhart (MAPE Business Agent)

Attending for DLI Management: Ken Peterson, Heather McGannon, Scott McClellan, and Chris Leifeld from the Commissioner’s Office; Sandi Arvin, Mary Babaya, and Laurie Jandro from DLI Human Resources; and Jim Krueger from OSHA.

1) Welcome to New Human Resource Staff. This was the first Meet and Confer that included our new Human Resources Director, Laurie Jandro.  MAPE welcomed her, and introductions of the participants were made.

2) Safety Issues

a) October 10, 2018 Flooding Issue at the Duluth Office MAPE presented concerns about how the long it took for a Management response to the building and grounds flooding at the Duluth office on October 10, 2018.  Photographs of the flooded exterior grounds and parking lot and stairwell were shared.  The pooled water   externally made the exterior grounds a slipping and tripping hazard; the city removed manhole covers in the flooded Canal Park area creating additional hazards; and the flooded basement and stairwell was an electrical shock hazard.  It was reported to MAPE that the Revenue, DNR, and MPCA offices were closed by 10:30 a.m. on that day because of the risks associate d with the rising waters, but OSHA staff were not released early.  Management responded that staff were told early in the day that they could use leave time if they wanted to, but then by 1:30 p.m. decision was made to close the office.  MAPE pointed out that almost a year ago to the date, there was another flooding event in the building.  In light of this experience, it should not have taken so long to assess the need for office closure.  **Management agreed to update the business continuity plan (which addresses how services are delivered in other emergency and disaster situations) for the Duluth office to include procedures for flooding.  The Assistant Commissioner’s office is responsible for the contingency plan for the agency.**

b) 443 Lafayette Building Security – Visitor Accountability

Security measures for visitors have become a concern for MAPE.  The procedure for years had been for visitors to sign in and sign out of the building; and for visitors to wear a visitor badge/sticker.  MAPE pointed out that over time the procedure has changed such that visitors are no longer issued visitor tags, and they do not have to sign out of the building. In comparison to other agencies in the Lafayette Park area DLI seems very lax about knowing who is in the building and when they leave. Management indicated that they are developing a procedure for all visitors who will be in the non-public areas of the building to be issued hard plastic badges to wear during their stay in the building.  Management also said would look into the practice of signing visitors out of the building.  Visitors to the public areas of the first floor will not be required to be escorted or were visitor badges.  **Management agreed to issue reminders to DLI employees not to let other people pass through security doors behind; remind DLI employees to wear their ID badges; remind DLI employees that all visitors must be escorted in ton non-public areas of the building.**

Another topic of concern in building security expressed by MAPE is **w**here other agencies have their security guards placed prominently in their lobbies, the DLI guard was moved back behind a desk and boxed in such a manner that one can’t really see if the guard is there.  (And, when in the lobby, if we can’t see the guard then it is not likely the guard can see who is in the lobby.)  MAPE encouraged Management to consider placing the security guard station more prominently it he lobby.

c) St. Cloud.  MAPE thanked management for their action to resolve all of the items that were brought to management attention at a prior meeting.

3) DLI Budget    DLI submitted a proposed budget to the governor’s office.  There were no significant changes in comparison to the existing budget.  The prosed budget will not be made public until early December 2018, by Minnesota Management and Budget office.  The new governor will have until late February to make a budget proposal.

4) Renovation project at 443 Lafayette      Management gave an update on the building renovation project.  Details have been regularly posted on the DLI Intranet page.  (MAPE commented that this was very effective and appreciated. It made it easy to find relocated workers in the building so our work could flow a little more smoothly between the work units.)  The renovation is expected to be wrapped up in February, or even the end of January if all goes well.  **MAPE asked if a map of the final layout of each floor which shows which work units occupy which areas could be made available.  Scott McClellan indicated that these already exist and can be made available.**

5) Workers Compensation Modernization    Management provided an update on the new computer system that is being developed for the Workers’ Compensation Division.  Overall, it is a 20 million dollar project and has recently entered the phase where code is being written.  It will provide a new electronic file system for the Workers’ Compensation Division files, as well as updated and enhanced electronic work processes for the division’s work. It will integrate with the OAH filing system. The projected end date for the project is July 2020

6) Flexible Work Schedules Many DLI work units work compressed schedules (such as four 10-hour days); and many have the option for variance in the start and end times to their work day.  This has always been handled on a unit-by-unit basis.  While management has generally been positive in their response to this topic at past Meet & Confers, MAPE asked that senior management specifically ask the unit managers to open to discussion about this with their employees.   **MAPE believes the unit management in some work units might not be aware that there is a commitment on the part of upper management to workable schedules that positively contribute to work-life balance.  Management agreed to let the supervisors know about this.**

7) Professional advancement opportunities MAPE noted that attracting and retaining younger workers is a current a topic within Minnesota state employment, and training and advancement opportunities can be part of the plan for recruiting and maintaining a strong workforce in Minnesota state government.  MAPE encouraged management to remember that it is essential to make sure these opportunities are available to established employees, as well.

Another concern brought forward by MAPE was the recent process by which a temporary supervisory vacancy in the building was filled.  MAPE observes that DLI has many women in leadership positions in the agency, from supervisors up to Assistant Commissioners.  However, in one Workers’ Compensation Division unit, all women and people of minority heritage were excluded from consideration for this leadership opportunity.  The only candidates approached and offered the opportunity were white males.  MAPE requests that DLI senior management take a more active hand when future vacancies are filled, making sure that junior managers understand that it is unacceptable to exclude entire employee demographics, particularly those who have been historically disadvantaged in rising to leadership positions in the workplace.