DLI Meet and Confer

Minutes

Date: June 29, 2021

Time: 1:00 PM

Location: ZOOM meeting

Attendees: MAPE representatives: Cyndi Benjamin, chair (OSHA), Debra Heisick (ADR), Frances Li (ADR), Nell Nere (ADR), Dave Skovholt (Labor Standards), Laura Suess (Labor Standards), Bonnie Frisk (Labor Standards), Daniel Engelhart (MAPE Business Agent), Thai Heu (Labor Standards)

DLI management: Commissioner Robertson, Deputy Commissioner Nicole Blissenbach, Assistant Commissioner Kate Perushek, HR Director Laurie Jandro, HR Consultant Mary Babaya, HR Consultant Sandi Arvin

**I.** **Introductions** of participants.

**II.** **Budget Update:** CommissionerRobertson is confident the JOBS bill will pass. It was asked what are the impacts on DLI: CAMPUS funding carried forward, OSHA Compliance adjustment in budget for the addition of 9.5 new positions, LS will keep existing staff, one new position in apprenticeship, Helmets to Hard Hats Program, MN Virtual Program, Logger Safety Grant for trainings, and tuition.

Funding starts 7/1/2021; no cuts and base funding continues.

**III. Return to the office update:**

* **Work from home – possibility:** CommissionerRobertson said that no one will work from home FT.It is expected that there will be a two days per week minimum, of workers to be in the office. Employees need to be available for our customers. Deputy Commissioner Blissenbach said that some employees want to come back and some do not. She suggested that supervisors will meet employees at where they are at. Employees have the option to continue wearing masks if they elect to. She suggested that collaboration with co-workers in person, is beneficial. The goal is to meet the job functions.
  + **Is the Dept. granting any exceptions (to 2/3 day at the office requirement)?  Why are some exceptions being denied, even some with supervisory support?  Are ADA related exception requests being handled differently?** Deputy Commissioner Blissenbach said exceptions are rare and ADA requests are being followed as usual.
  + **If someone is in the field on an “office” day, why would they need to return to office if they are closer to home at the end of their shift? Or start their day at the office if the field assignment is on the way to the office or in another direction.** Deputy Commissioner Blissenbach said field work is notteleworking. There are liability issues that had to be considered. Also, an employee that picks up a car in the morning must return the car to the office at the end of the workday. MAPE asked if an employee could make up a workday if “out”? Deputy Commissioner Blissenbach responded saying a field workday is the same as an office day so no make up day is needed. MAPE asked about the situation of a workday with a 10AM staff meeting and asked if the employee needed to come in at 8:00AM that day? Deputy Commissioner Blissenbach said there will be some deviation based on the priority of the work, and there may be some flexibility but talk to your supervisor.
  + **Why won’t split shifts (office/home combo) work on the same day if the person is willing to travel home during their lunch break?** Commissioner Robertson said that we need to put business needs first, and it is two days minimum not two days maximum. MAPE said they were not comfortable with the transition plans. Commissioner Robertson stated the unplanned/individual situations may present and should be reviewed by/with the supervisor for consideration.
  + **Parking options for those working less than a full week at the office.** No changes to parking options currently.
  + **Training for staff to use meeting room tech to connect meetings between staff in meeting rooms and those in telework status. How will meetings be conducted.**

**IV. Labor Standards Update**

Concerns about difference in positions and pay for Senior Labor Investigator and Labor Standards Investigator. There was a study regarding reclassification of the position(s). Deputy Commissioner Blissenbach responded saying if individual feels their position has changed enough, they should ask for a reclassification audit. The MAPE Business Agent referred to the MAPE contract Article 16, section 5, and it instructs employees on how to proceed, and MAPE should be able to assist.

MAPE asked how will the hybrid telework policy be measured? Deputy Commissioner Blissenbach said we will see how it is working on a unit level and an individual level. We will be asking if we are meeting the desired level of service to our customers/public. This might be a yearlong process. Commissioner Robertson commented that we must consider if we are meeting the needs of the stakeholders and we must figure out what works. Everyone must be flexible. We don’t have all the answers but will continue to listen and learn.

**V. Department COVID Preparedness Plan Update:**

**Mask requirement for field staff:** Deputy Commissioner Blissenbach said employees can continue to wear masks if that is what they want to do.

**Will vaccinations be required:** No.

It was suggested that with the return to the office plan that there should maybe be a limit to the number of people that are in the building. Asked if there was any focus on limiting density, now through September? Currently there is no plan in bringing in fewer staff.

**VI. Flexible Scheduling- summer schedule update:** Cyndi thanked formaking it possible.

**Other Business:** Budget plan approved during meeting**.**