Meeting Minutes: Meet & Confer

Date: 10/28/2021

Minutes prepared by: Frances Li

Location: TEAMS Meeting

## Attendance

* DLI management: Commissioner Roslyn Robertson, Deputy Commissioner Nicole Blissenbach, Assistant Commissioner Kate Perushek, HR Director Laurie Jandro, HR Consultant Sandy Arvin, HR Consultant Mary Babaya
* MAPE representatives: Cyndi Benjamin, chair (OSHA), Dan Engelhart (MAPE Business Agent), Debra Heisick (ADR), Frances Li (ADR), Dave Skovholt (Labor Standards), Bonnie Frisk (Labor Standards, Mankato); Alexis Lohse (Labor Standards)

## Meeting Notes

1. **Introductions** of participants.
2. **Return to Work Update -** Commissioner Robertson states that DLI will continue to rely on the CDC and the Governor’s office for guidance relating to Covid 19 policies. Any return to work plans will depend on the current virus incidence data. At this time, the plan still points to January as a focus for employees returning to the workplace. In the meantime, if we can work from home, we should do so, but it will also depend on the specific unit’s business needs. Deputy Commissioner Blissenbach states that CCLD will start in person licensing exams in November. As a result, there will be more employees working in the building. The plan is to be flexible. The agency will provide sufficient notice to employees when work schedule changes are needed. There is no specific date planned to open the building to the public. Currently, it is by invitation only.
3. **Covid tests for employees -** HR Director Jandro indicates that those employees who are subject to Covid testing have two options. The employee can schedule an appointment with a metro testing site, or the employee may order an at home testing kit from the Vault. The kit is mailed to the employee’s home and the test results will be mailed back. Several kits are mailed out to the employee so s/he will have sufficient tests available.

Several employees were seen in the office building without wearing masks.Cyndi Benjamin suggests that a reminder be put on the Intranet to ask employees to put the mask on whenever they are in the building.

1. **Technology update**

**Agent Lines / Softphones -** Deputy Commissioner Blissenbach states that MNIT has been working on challenging issues relating to the agent lines and topic lines for Labor Standards and OSHA. The use of Softphone sounds promising with the topic lines but not as promising with the agent lines. There are continuing discussions at the unit levels as to who needs cell phones, desk phones and Softphones depending on the specific needs of each unit level. Currently, it is not an option to assign a specific investigator on a specific day for the topic line. It now rings to all investigators on that topic line.

**Technology assistance -** Dave Skovholt indicates that Labor Standards are still struggling with hybrid meetings. Issues include room echoing and other technical difficulties during hybrid in person/Teams meetings. He would appreciate any technical help to make the meetings go smoothly and more efficiently.

1. **Building security update** - Commissioner Robertson states that the glass panel to the front door is repaired. They are also considering applying a film overlay on the glass to make it shatter proof. The Commissioner is exploring ways to extend security coverage with other Lafayette Park agencies. She has also spoken with the DLI security guard and asked that he be more aware of blind spots during his patrol, i.e., areas where the cameras would not cover. The Commissioner is also exploring adding more camera coverages for those blind spots. Overall, improvements have been made. Security continues to be a priority for the agency, and she will get coordinated responses regarding facility security from the other Lafayette Park agencies.

Regarding the homeless person whose white vehicle is parked on the street adjacent to the 443 building, The Commissioner comments that it is on a public street over which the Department has no control. However, if the individual poses a threat to DLI employees or if a specific incident is reported, DLI will address it.

**Mankato** - Bonnie Frisk reports that there were issues regarding drug use and homeless persons in the Mankato office in the past. The safety committee recently met, and no other safety issues have recently surfaced.

**Rochester -** Deputy Commissioner Blissenbachstates that the Rochester offices have moved. DLI is sharing security guard coverage with MPCA. She is waiting to receive feedback.

**Turnstile update -** Deputy Commissioner Blissenbach reports that the wrong glass was delivered, and we are still waiting for the correct glass to arrive to complete the installation.

1. **New MAPE contract on bilingual bonus pay** - Dave Skovholt requests that the agency implement the bilingual bonus pay pilot program from the new MAPE contract. It is a recognition of the bilingual and multilingual staff’s contribution to the agency. It will also increase equity, fairness, and diversity for the agency. There is significant interest among the DLI employees. The suggested plan is to pay qualified bilingual employees an additional $50 per paycheck on a recurring basis. It is also recommended that those employees who use a second language on a sporadic basis be paid a bonus of $1 per hour for each event/activity. Dan Engelhart asks the agency on behalf of MAPE to implement this differential or bonus pay pilot program and set up a timeline for its implementation. Commissioner Robertson indicates that this is a good opportunity to acknowledge the benefit of language skills among the staff. The agency will embrace this pilot program and will look at ways to implement it. HR Director Jandro states that DLI will follow MMB’s lead. DLI will get a working group together with other agencies. It is anticipated that an agency policy will be presented to the agency leaders for review sometime after the new year. Deputy Commissioner Blissenbach applauds MAPE on bringing this topic up. However, the agency will wait until the policy is in place before making any announcement to all employees. It is anticipated that the agency will consider all those employees using a second language at work even though language skills are not in the job description.
2. **Student loan reimbursement -** Dave Skovholt request that the agency continues the discussion in order to come up with a definitive plan.