

Meeting Minutes: Meet & Confer

Date: 02/1/2023
Minutes prepared by: Kriystauhl Fitchett, Dave Skovholt, Cyndi Benjamin
Location: TEAMS Meeting

Attendance

Present:

- DLI management: Commissioner Nicole Blissenbach, Assistant Commissioner Kate Daly, Interim Assistant Commissioner Kristy Swanson, HR Director Sandi Arvin, HR Consultant Ashley Shanley
- MAPE representatives: Dan Engelhart (MAPE Business Agent), Kriystauhl Fitchett (M&C Chair), Dave Skovholt (Labor Standards), Debra Heisick (ADR), Frances Li (ADR), Cyndi Benjamin (OSHA), Vicki Sanders (OSHA-MNOSHA), Alexis Lohse (Labor Standards), Bonnie Frisk (Labor Standards)

Absent:

- Deputy Commissioner Kate Perushek

Meeting Notes

I. Introductions

II. Legislative Update: In the absence of Deputy Commissioner Perushek, Commissioner Nicole Blissenbach provided an agency overview and summary for the upcoming legislative session noting that there are currently about twenty-two (22) budget items to be presented which are top priorities for Governor Tim Walz. The following topics are being considered during the legislative session:

- a. Nicole Blissenbach Confirmation hearing
- b. Sick & Safe Leave
- c. Bill Amendments (180 days to 6 months)
- d. Paid Family Leave – A priority for Governor Tim Walz. House and Senate bill: 1st state to pass this type of bill. So far, five hearings in the Senate.
- e. Agriculture Worker Protection – Labor standards
- f. Work Comp Advisory – To date, no items have been passed due to housekeeping changes scheduled for next week. Labor Standards has a proposal.

M&C Committee members asked if the following items were being considered: 1) across-the-board increases; 2) prevailing wage staff increases; and, 3) budget proposals prepared by DLI staff.

- III. Telework vs Remote:** HR Director Sandi Arvin, advised that DLI Employees who have a designated home office are identified as “*remote workers*” and those employees currently work in the Construction, Codes, and Licensing unit. All other employees work under “*telework agreements*” and 443 Lafayette Road is the designated permanent work address.

*****Employee Telework Agreements – Remote Agreements** are tied to the work position, not the employee***

- IV. Building security/safety:** The safety committee will work to explore potential training for all DLI staff members’ participation. Staff training could focus on ways employees could learn to protect themselves while at work and strategies to get out of sticky situations.

- V. Parking:** M&C Committee members introduced employee concerns about the parking lot and an opportunity to explore and review the Colliers International Parking Contract (“CPC”) to address and partner on new resolutions and the possibility of updating terms and conditions of the parking contract. Commissioner Blissenbach stated that the department is open to exploring new ideas and recommendations to address employee safety concerns. The following line items were presented for discussion:

- a. Parking lot safety
- b. Overnight parking
- c. Parking Contract
- d. Use of State Vehicles

CPC reads: “*User shall park at their own risk and User acknowledges that the parking area is operated without constant security or staffing.*”

MAPE labor union agreement Article 22, Sec 1 - Health and Job Safety reads: *It shall be the policy of the Employer to provide for the health and safety of its employees by providing safe and healthful working conditions, safe work areas, and safe and healthy work methods.*

HR Director Sandi Arvin, reminded members about the use of car rentals for work activities that could be delivered to the employee’s residence if they are working from home. Frances L. asked about parking lot patrol; HR will check on the security parking lot patrol and provide an update to the committee. The committee continued with a productive discussion about overnight parking and approving designated staff members to take state vehicles home with them and a next-day return of the vehicle as a possible resolution to avoid late-night parking lot transitions, whenever necessary and whenever appropriate.

The committee expanded the conversation about DLI’s parking lot which has cameras affixed on the front and back side of the building and if the video was currently being taped. The addition of more cameras could provide security guards with the ability to monitor the lot 360

degrees and could improve safety concerns and employees' ability to observe monitors located throughout the DLI building to address concerns. Commissioner Blissenbach added that the safety concerns should be fielded through the safety committee.

VI. Student loan reimbursement: The M&C Committee researched the tuition reimbursement program and identified state agencies that currently implement the program. MAPE employees will be surveyed sometime in the month of March to determine employee interest. Sandi A. advised the need for funding to support the initiative.

- a. Upcoming Employee Survey – to be conducted in partnership with MAPE.
- b. Policy Language – Sample applications and policy language are available for HR review and adoption.

VII. Supplemental Bargaining: The M&C Committee provided the list of opportunities that could become an initiative for supplemental bargaining and the need for senior leadership and MMB to meet with M&C at the meetings, with a request for three meeting dates for bargaining to begin sometime in late March, mid-April, and mid-May.

- a. Tuition Reimbursement
- b. Annual MAPE Luncheon
- c. Workload Retention Bonus
- d. Work out of Class
- e. Membership Reimbursements
- f. Supervisor Reviews
- g. Probationary Period Check-Ins

Other – New Topics: Commissioner Blissenbach recognized the department's successful response to the Frontline Worker Pay and shared her vision to speak with different units to get to know the people that work for DLI and think through building pipelines to support additional employee training opportunities and the agency's strategic plan for the next four years.

Commissioner Blissenbach expanded on the following opportunities for engagement:

- a. Career Pathways
- b. Employee Training(s) Opportunities
- c. Strengthening Facilitation to Bring People Together
- d. Partnerships and Building Interrelationships to Reach Common Goals

Beginning in the next upcoming months, she plans to look for opportunities to visit various staff meetings to hear more about the work that is being done department-wide and a chance to meet with new staff. As a priority, the agency is currently working on initiatives to improve the IT system and the upcoming strategic planning survey as well as the department's need for staff feedback. The more staff members who participate and fill out the engagement and inclusion survey, the more informed the agency will be about staff priorities and ideas for improvement. Sandi A. noted that in high numbers, DLI employees have consistently engaged in their response to department surveys and that HR relies on staff input to support the work at DLI.

Dave S. inquired about improving the annual review process to allow management to spend more time thinking about training and promotional opportunities to help create more long-term staff buy-in. Sandi advised that as an initiative, HR is currently working to improve the performance review process, and moving forward, HR will work to invite MAPE to new hire orientations.