

Meeting Minutes: Meet & Confer

Date: 10/7/2022
Minutes prepared by: Kriystauhl Fitchett
Location: TEAMS Meeting

Attendance

Present:

- DLI management: Commissioner Nicole Blissenbach, Deputy Commissioner Kate Perushek, Assistant Commissioner Kate Daly, Interim Assistant Commissioner Kristy Swanson, HR Director Sandi Arvin, HR Consultant Shoua Tran, HR Consultant Ashley Shanley
- MAPE representatives: Kriystauhl Fitchett (M&C Chair), Dan Engelhart (MAPE Business Agent), Debra Heisick (ADR), Frances Li (ADR), Dave Skovholt (Labor Standards),

Absent:

- Bonnie Frisk (Labor Standards, Mankato); Alexis Lohse (Labor Standards), Vikki Sanders (OSHA)

Meeting Notes

I. Introductions

II. Covid-19 Updates:

- a. **Health Concerns** - Commissioner Blissenbach informed everyone that according to the projected resurgence of people becoming ill with the flu in the Fall, Administration has refocused their attention on booster shots. Costs should be covered under the employee's insurance. All employees are encouraged to get their booster shots. The Mall of America is also administering booster shots and currently does not require a scheduled appointment to receive them.
- b. **Health Screenings moving forward** - due to the decline in covid cases, the Administration's executive order is no longer in effect and DLI will discontinue the required online health screenings and remove the link from the department's homepage.

III. Legislative Update:

- a. **Point Person** – Commissioner Perushek provided an update about DLI's current policy initiatives within the appropriations bill. On January 3, 2023, legislators will reconvene and take up budget policy concerns.

Current initiatives are as follows:

- i. MNOSHA Federal Penalty Conformity,
- ii. Prevailing Wage Education and Compliance,
- iii. Paid Family and Medical Leave,
- iv. Apprenticeship,
- v. Growing Youth Skills Training
- vi. WESA Outreach,
- vii. Combative Sports Health and Safety Improvements; and
- viii. Energy Efficiency Improvements.

- b. **Passage of MAPE contract (post contract)** – the current contract language is up to date on the MMB website.

Governor Walz committed to meet with MAPE as part of the endorsement process and during that meeting; committed to allocating funding for more compensation for those positions. MAPE requests that DLI be consistent with their request. Commissioner Perushek confirmed that Governor Walz did allocate additional resources to attract and keep good talent in support of departmental goals.

- c. **Frontline Workers Pay program** – leadership confirmed that payments are currently being processed for the final number of recipients identified at the recent press conference. Commissioner Blissenbach gave a huge “thank you” and congratulated staff for making the process work well. The process for emails and acceptances that went out for the bank account cards helped to process all the payments in a timely manner.

IV. **Telework Appeals Process:**

- a. **MAPE appeals process update for denied telework requests** – the appeals process has been settled and there is currently no “common language” for a departmental process to be put in place. Employees should work with their manager and/or supervisor to determine and complete a telework form to identify a schedule that works within the employees’ respective work units. Teleworking will continue to be an ongoing process.

V. **Building security/safety:**

- a. **Protocols for arriving/leaving the building** – during the September all-staff department meeting, employees shared increasing concerns about employees using public transportation fears surrounding the proposed location for the homeless housing that will be located on Lafayette and 7th Street. Commissioner Perushek stated that leadership is currently working to develop norms for future staff meetings and the “Respectful Workplace” policy. Dave S. stated that there is a wide range of opinions about this topic and that environment around the DLI work site location has changed. Some of the employees’ concerns were:
 - i. Fear of the unknown
 - ii. lack of knowledge about the new neighbors (homeless community)
 - iii. the new facility would increase the number of people in and around the work location

Deb H. asked if there were any suggestions made by the safety committee? Other members mentioned that the state is doing a better job of respecting the humanity of employees as it relates to safety. Leadership encouraged members to engage the Safety Committee to look into solutions that help to strengthen DLI building security.

The Safety Committee recently met on Tuesday, October 4, 2022. Sandi and Klye H. are current members and attended the meeting. Sandi provided an update about the following suggestions that stemmed from the meeting:

- i. Review meeting minutes posted on the DLI intranet to discover the current protocols that are currently in place
- ii. a staff security guard can help to provide escorts to vehicles whenever there is concern

VI. Parking:

- a. **Snow/Ice removal** – DLI contracts with Colliers for parking and to remove snow from the lot during the winter months. Group discussion recognized that the current contractor is better than the previous year’s contractors. While the current contractor removes snow proactively, issues surrounding a safer parking lot remains an ongoing concern.
- b. **Tabled parking pass discussion** – this matter brings additional concern for increased costs associated with parking and has been tabled for the time being.

VII. Student loan reimbursement:

- a. Discussion is tabled until the next meeting

VIII. Other – New Topics:

- a. **Membership Reimbursements** – Members collectively expressed confusion surrounding the inconsistency for language about memberships and requested that information be posted on the Intranet to help employees understand the policy to take advantage of the benefit. Highlighting what qualifies a membership and what trainings could be reimbursed would address the confusion. Sandi stated the HR/LR 1373 prohibits the agency from paying for job-related licenses and license renewals. Contracts and plans provide for reimbursement of memberships. (Update: the following week management posted an update about membership dues on the intranet)

IX. Updates:

- a. **Bilingual Pay** – Dave S. provided an update about the pilot program which has been in existence for six months. He states that DLI is the first agency to have the program up and running and that has employees that currently receive the pay. Other agencies such as MDH, DNR, DEED and DOC hope to model the DLI policy language for their agencies to adopt the program.

- X. **Next Meeting:** Due to the November election, the next meeting will be scheduled after new Administration has been designated. Meetings will continue to be scheduled every three months.