



Executive Committee Minutes

14 January 2022

Present: President Megan Dayton, Vice President Angela Halseth, Treasurer Todd Maki, Secretary Michael Crider, Political Council Chair Cathleen Cotter, Organizing Council Chair Lauren Siegel, Interim co-Executive Director Leah Solo, Interim co-Executive Director Mike Asmus

Meeting held via email

Department of Human Service Direct Care and Treatment recruitment and retention incentive MOU

M(President)SP to recommend for a vote of the general membership the DHS/DCT recruitment and retention incentive MOU as drafted. **Passes 5/0/1**

Yes: President, Vice President, Secretary, Organizing Council, Political Council

No: none

Abstain: none

M(Political Council)SP to approve the MOU without a membership vote. **Passes 5/0/1**

Yes: President, Vice President, Secretary, Organizing Council, Political Council

No: none

Abstain: none

DHS-DCT currently faces staffing shortages and anticipates continuing to face these shortages in light of the spread of COVID-19 and a national shortage of workers. The 2021-2023 labor agreement between the employer and MAPE does not provide the ability for DHS to respond to actual or potential staffing shortages by offering current staff or new recruits additional financial benefits. The employer and MAPE are interested in providing DHS the authority to offer additional financial benefits to retain and attract staff positions.

The MOU provides that DHS may, at its discretion, create and use incentive program(s). In order to offer incentives, the agency must first develop a policy that governs the eligibility and parameters of the program and must obtain approval from MMB. With MMB approval, DHS may create and use incentive program(s) that consist of one or



more of the following: hiring, referral, retention, or reassignment incentives with dollar values no greater than \$10,000.

Early in the morning on Friday, January 14th, Amanda Johnson with MMB emailed Interim co-Executive Director Leah Solo a draft MOU for recruitment and retention incentives for people in DCT. This was the 4th MOU that MMB had sent us in the last few weeks as they try to pass things through the SER before session begins. MMB let us know that AFSCME and MNA had already signed a similar MOU and we had until mid-morning to either sign or decline.

IcED Solo immediately notified the Executive Committee and we dropped everything to figure out the correct path. We realized the following things: 1) this was a terrible position for MMB to put us in. We were frustrated that they had already reached agreement with other unions and hadn't bothered to communicate with us until the last minute. It felt disorganized at best and retaliatory at worst; 2) if we didn't sign, our members would be in the position of not being eligible for incentives while people that they work side by side with would be eligible; 3) DCT has had incredible difficulties with staffing levels in the last couple of years, and with Omicron raging, the situation promises to get worse.

While we are incredibly disappointed with MMB, we felt that the inequity that would be created between our members and other employees in DCT would be too great if we didn't sign this MOU. Additionally, we note that our members in DCT are reaching a breaking point in so many ways, we cannot ignore an opportunity to get them additional resources. Consequently, we voted to approve the MOU without a vote of the membership. It has been signed and sent to MMB. It will be taken up in the January 18th SER meeting and, if passed, will be in immediate interim effect.

Coming out of the January 18th SER meeting, we believe that MMB needs to pause this path they have been going down of negotiating by last minute MOUs. MOUs need to be thoroughly negotiated with our members and we are sure with the proper time, this MOU would have been better with our member input. Our next steps coming out of this flurry of MOUs will be to ask MMB for a meet and confer about this process, why they have taken the actions they took, and how we can make this better.