March 22, 2022

**Participants:**

Commissioners office: Katrina Kessler (Commissioner), Kellie McNamara (Human Resources Director), Chris Everson (Operations Assistant Division Director)

MAPE Members: Claudia Hochstein (Chair, Rules Coordinator), Anne Morris (Vice-Chair, Remediation Division GIS Coordinator), Mel Markert (Watershed Division GIS Analyst), Kristin Mroz-Risse (Green Step Cities & Tribal Nations Coordinator), Shanna Schmitt (Secretary, Brownfield Hydrogeologist), Melissa Wenzel (Sustainability Administor), Brett Nagle, and Joel Peck

**Agenda:**

1. **Return to Office**
   1. **Katrina:** Everyone interested; MMB creating consistency for calling folks back. Telework = sustainable. Trying to encourage more telework, where business needs make sense. Need to continue to evolve as things change (or don’t) and figure out hybrid meetings/work. Want to have some sort of “welcome back” celebration, fun. Regional gatherings may wait until this summer (rain/snow). Want to include a little something for new staff. MMB feedback: people feel disconnected from colleagues and want informal connectivity to colleagues. **ASK: fun activity ideas for return to office.**
   2. **Brett & Claudia:** like having something unique/additional for new staff….outside of union meetings
   3. **Chris:** Roughly: 26% to 55% in regional offices, 50% in St Paul are working full/most time from home. Nothing has changed regarding parking agreements: monthly parking or nothin’. $40 a month. **ASK: Claudia asked if Chris knows how many people have a parking contract.** Chris replied because it’s managed by our landlord, she doesn’t have access to that information. She recommends considering other transit options to commute to work (STT website updated, Metropass subsidy continued to be offered. LP shuttle not running-maybe later?) busing, biking. Indoor bike parking will allow for 24 bicyclists (thanks to STT for managing). 100 “daily use” cubes with and without equipment (some to accommodate laptops, some to have desktops, and some empty). Will have maps online to find these spots. In addition to focus rooms and conference rooms. Monitor/docking station supply issues. 2 different docking stations: HP & Dell**.** Shawn Philips AV help; guidance being drafted. Cafeteria? Open when there’s enough customers (?). May open DHS cafeteria first; don’t need to badge in; open to the (real) public. [Cafeteria at the Capitol just opened].
   4. **Claudia:** What is it going to look like if everyone is trying to come back at once? ***ASK: Consider a phased approach to the “return to work” day if they anticipate as many people coming back at once.***
   5. **Kellie:** We would like to know what you think about messaging about future variants or impacts? Do you want us to message “stay home if sick” or “roll back in office” standards?
      1. Brett: YES-stay home if sick. Public health thresholds?
      2. Claudia: express flexibility for those with increased health concerns, stay at home, etc all good.
      3. Testing requirements continue-policy hasn’t been rescinded. No developments on gathering of booster information
2. **Workload discussion**
   1. **Joel:** Data team especially feeling the pressure. Feeling a lot of it is related to a lack of prioritization (by mgmt). Many are feeling underwater due to the lack of ability (or authorization) to prioritize. Remediation staff and others too. Problem goes up the chain of command. Don’t know (or sometimes feel) if mgmt would support them. People want permission to decline meetings without consequences. Consider Kaizen processes?
   2. **Katrina:** backlog from hiring freeze. With cost savings, focused on EJ, hybrid work (?) and HR-related developments, to hire efficiently/diversely and retaining staff. Let’s continue talking about how things are going with return to work/continued online meetings, and offer messaging for PCA Today.
   3. **Kellie:** 72 Vacancies approved/in process of filling. Will hire a temp/retired worker for reallocations. Carolyn went to each division to talk about vacancies, recruiting, to quicken the hiring process. **ASK: can send division breakdown?** MAPE members: please talk with your supervisors. Please!
   4. **Melissa:** Recognize all types of meetings/in-person/virtual connections; keep the flexibility and expectations similar to telework.
   5. **Claudia:** As staff should go to their supervisor about priorities, **ASK: please encourage management to work with their staff and allow for flexibility especially when they’re asking management for help.** Impacts for high/proficient performers. Please consider workloads and work plans especially with hiring new staff, and be sure to allow appropriate time for training. Many people are only able to work reactively and aren’t able to “get ahead to plan” and want to focus on re-prioritizing one’s work.
3. **Phased Retirement**
   1. **Anne:** During listening sessions, knowledge transfer issues were being expressed (a multi-year common theme). Takes a lot out of existing/new staff. The pilot outlined in the union contract might be a great place to start, and we ask MPCA to lead the charge on this topic, especially as knowledge transfers (or lack of) will increasingly impact newer hires. **ASK: MPCA lead pilot**
   2. **Katrina:** We can work with supervisors who know of staff who may retire and have a unique knowledge set. I wasn’t aware that this topic came up before. We imagine management may feel overwhelmed by this too.
   3. **Melissa:** Doesn’t have to mean JUST hiring someone new; it also is a benefit for retiring staff (and management??) who want to reduce their hours, have a formal off-boarding process at the end of their career, etc. MAPE has a [letter](https://mape.org/mapes-contract-2021-23/letters) that describes the phased retirement pilot.
4. **Bilingual/multilingual/sign language differential pilot update**
   1. **Claudia:** beneficial for the impact for EJ areas, workforce development, retaining staff, etc. Because it’s a MMB pilot, we’re hoping for guidance from them (and having them help seek out who this might be applicable to).
   2. **Kellie:** Can MAPE figure out which positions where this would be a minimum qualification? Differential payment w/$1 more an hour?
   3. **Katrina:**  Are we trying to figure out who could or is using non-english languages for their job? *Claudia-yes-that’s what we’re trying to find….hinting we need your help on that.*
5. **Social media policy follow up**
   1. **Claudia:** Thank you for listening to our concerns and not including it in the DKT system. We request the opportunity to review any future drafts.
6. **Legislative updates:**
   1. **Katrina:** many of the bills of our desired law changes/additions were *just* introduced. Much of our (legislative) efforts have been responding to draft bills we haven’t submitted but involve us (in some way). Support for smart salting course funding. PFAS bills are increasing (and not submitted by us). Clean Cars and other anti-regulation of emissions (of any kind) have been proposed. Bonding requests will likely move forward, like construction stormwater/climate resilience planning, solid waste, etc. And waste reduction and innovative material reuse opportunities. [MPCA legislative priorities online.](https://www.pca.state.mn.us/about-mpca/legislative-priorities)