**March 13, 2024 Meet and Confer Meeting Notes**

**Attendance:**

Katrina Kessler

Kellie McNamara

Peter Tester

Ryan Ricci

Wayne Cords

Nicole Green

Kaity Taylor

Kevin Mustonen

Brett Nagle

Kristin Mroz-Risse

Shanna Schmitt

Mel Markert

**Meeting Items:**

1. **Meeting logistics - note taking and communication.** 
   * Meet and Confer team will continue to take notes at the meetings and send them for approval before posting. We will expand the list of people they are sent to, to include: Kellie, Peter, and Wayne.
2. **Recurring topics**
   * No update requests from the Meet and Confer team at this time.
   * Progress is being made with many of the reoccurring topics we’ve spoken about in the past. Including continued meetings about ER Command Response, Student Loan reimbursement, length of service credits, and accommodations.
   * Thank you for working with us on these issues and for all the progressing being made.
3. **Overview and group discussion of listening sessions: communication and recognition**
   1. Information from the communication and recognition listening sessions was compiled and presented in a PowerPoint, which can be shared.
   2. Staff appreciate when they can find information on the Lorax or in PCA Today. They see both as great resources for them to find information for themselves without having to make inquiries.
   3. Staff would like more information about who and how to contact people. Especially with people onboarding in virtual work world, having a place (maybe on the Lorax) to find who to contact about common topics would be useful. Wayne said something like this might already exist and might be something that could be shared more widespread.
   4. Staff appreciate the strategic planning information and would be happy to see more. This could be presentations or posted on the Lorax.
   5. Some staff felt that their technical expertise was not being fully utilized. One example of that was when information was needed for legislative sessions. Katrina did offer that she makes a point to touch base with the experts. This might be specific situations throughout the agency rather than a common occurrence across the board.
   6. Some staff felt that they are not getting information effectively through the trickle-down method. How can we make sure leaders are passing along all the important information?
   7. Staff want information about “big topics” the agency is dealing with. Staff are the face of the agency to people in their lives and often get asked about actions the PCA is taking. Staff would like the opportunity to be more prepared for those topics to come up, as it might not be something they are familiar with in their own work. This might be something to incorporate into the PCA Today “In the News” section.
   8. These topics warrant further discussion. Leadership and Meet and Confer are open to more conversations, especially after looking over the PowerPoint. If Meet and Confer does have specific situations or topics that can be addressed that is helpful. This might be a topic to include Myrna and to explore some alternative options. For example, a lot of companies are using AI to help direct people to answers or points of contact, maybe that is something to explore to help staff identify who points of contact are.
   9. Recognition is something everyone feels differently about. Some people want to be recognized in front of others, some want a one-on-one scenario, some just want it recognized that their workload is heavy and they are appreciated while their supervisor helps to protect their time.
   10. Financial recognition gets a lot of interest. Staff would like to know if there are opportunities for this and how they can be obtained.
   11. Recognition is another topic to circle back to and have continued conversations. It is difficult to address since everyone has a different preference.
   12. Donya has been working on a project to send cards of recognition.
4. **Upcoming listening session.** Meet and Confer team are starting to plan a listening session around the hybrid work environment and the vision for work environment post covid. Are there topics you would like us to ask our membership about?
   * What is working well? What isn’t? Would it be possible to address the difference between people who have been onboarded in a virtual work environment compared to people who have been with the agency longer? What resources are the staff aware of that have worked well or that we could incorporate into agency telework? Is there something the agency is missing?
   * MPCA leadership recognizes that staff at the MPCA may feel that they need permission before acting or sharing input about the agency and notes that Leadership does want to hear from staff, especially about ideas that could improve the hybrid work environment. MPCA Meet and Confer listening sessions are an opportunity for staff to provide this input to Meet and Confer and MPCA Leadership.
5. **Student Loan Reimbursement:** Thank you for sharing the draft policy language and for the chance to review and ask questions. Kellie gave an overview of the policy and walked through it during the meeting.
   * The Meet and Confer team was given the opportunity to review the policy prior to the meeting. Several questions and thoughts were presented for consideration.
   * The policy will continue to be developed taking into consideration some of the questions brough up during the meeting.
   * It should be noted each bargaining unit has different language concerning student loan reimbursement and the policy is trying to address each of those contracts.