

New York State Department of Taxation & Finance

Statewide Labor-Management Committee Meeting Minutes October 8, 2009

Union Agenda

1. Training Issues

A. NYS/CSEA Partnership for Education and Training.

Lisa Carey handed out copies of the outcome of the survey completed by Kathy, Karen and Jackie, regarding the Department's training needs. Lisa stated that DTF has a strong training department and was pleased with our commitment to advertising the Partnership's programs. Lisa will continue to attend the Labor Management meetings so she's available for any questions that may come up in the future.

When queried by Kiaran on employee use of the tuition reimbursement program, Lisa provided the committee with a report showing the statistics since the start of the most recent contract. The report showed high usage in the tuition reimbursement program by DTF employees. DTF was one of the highest users of NYS agencies.

Karen Galarneau spoke to the committee about the Self as Mediator training and stated that classes will begin in November. Karen also stated that the Trainers will be the initial coaches and that the training emphasizes self-mediation prior to going to a coach.

B. Labor Management Committee Training.

Jackie and Kathy are working on the operating agreement draft. The agreement will be finalized and signed very shortly and copies will be provided to the committee members at the next meeting. Kiaran asked if the agreement was going to be posted on the internet. Kathy stated that union internet pages are being considered and she will be meeting with the unions to discuss. Ed Herbert stated that he will provide the Partnership's labor/management committee training recommendation within the next few weeks.

2. Follow up and Management Updates

A. Restructure and title structure changes.

Kiaran stated that the OPTS package was approved by both Civil Service and the Division of Budget. The CCED package is at Civil Service and Kiaran felt they were better prepared for dealing with the majority of their questions as a result of their experience with the OPTS package. Kiaran stated that it would probably be several months before final approval is obtained and we'll provide updates as soon as we know. Guy Dugas asked about FAQ updates and Kiaran and Artis assured him that this has already been done.

B. District Office Counter Closures – Cashiers

Kathy provided the committee with an update. She reported that CCED management stated that while the need for counter duties has reduced, the cashier function is still needed. Each District Office is addressing this issue at a local level.

C. Alternate Work Schedules.

Kiaran stated that the decision to offer nine out of ten or eight out of ten was left up to the District Managers to decide based on the needs of their office. There was discussion if this should be handled on the statewide level at these committee meetings and Kathy stated that this should only be discussed in this forum if there is no resolution at the local level.

D. Workplace Violence Prevention Program.

Kiaran stated that they are close to finalizing the policy on Workplace Violence and the next area that the committee will focus on will be training. There is a workgroup made up of 19 different agencies and there should be a generic training prototype set up within the next month which DTF can use to base their training on. By the end of the year DTF hopes to roll out an online training program for workplace violence.

Kiaran also stated that recently a survey was sent out to all employees that yielded some unexpected results. Some statistics revealed higher potential for subordinate to supervisor threats. Some of the committee members asked if the policy and training would include agents that work in the field. Kiaran stated that it will be part of the policy and the training as it relates to the customer, however it's more focused on the workplace.

Since the WPV committee is a sub-committee of the Health and Safety Committee information regarding the policy and training will be brought up at the next Health and Safety committee meeting.

3. Bomb Threats

A. Employee Notification Procedures.

Tim Ball addressed the committee on this issue. He stated that whenever there is a bomb threat or any other issue that requires an evacuation they rely on the Police Department to tell them exactly what they should do. Based on the partial evacuation of the Queens District Office recently there was some concern from employees that they were not evacuated while other DTF floors were evacuated. Tim assured the committee members that all the proper procedures were followed and that they work directly with the managers at each of the District Offices when there is an emergency of this nature.

Following the incident, employees were directed to call the Emergency Hotline phone number for information on whether or not to report to work the following day. An email was also forwarded to all the employees from Wesley Jefferson updating them on the situation. Tim agreed that in the future, to avoid panic from other employees, all employees should be informed of a partial evacuation even if they are told to stay at their desks.

B. Building Evacuations.

Tim stated that the employee notification of a drill or an actual emergency is the alarm or an announcement over the public address system. OGS has implemented partial evacuation drills and Tim's office will be working with the District Office managers to make sure they have a full understanding of the new protocols.

Pat Metzger asked Tim why there had been no fire drills at 55 Hanson Place for over ten years. She stated that the Fire Marshall has had meetings in the building, however there have been no drills. Tim informed Pat that he will look into this matter and report back to Kathy with his findings.

Management Agenda

1. Teleconferencing and Step 2 Grievance Meetings

Kathy informed the committee members that the CSEA contract encourages the use of teleconferencing for Step 2 Grievance meetings. She also informed everyone that issues would be resolved more timely this way and encouraged local presidents to inform their members of this. Pat Metzger stated that she leaves the decision of whether or not to have a teleconference up to the member. Kathy stated that although we cannot mandate the use of teleconferencing equipment in every situation, it will be suggested on a regular basis and cooperation would be greatly appreciated. Kiaran stated that during this fiscal crisis limiting the amount of travel is a necessity and that the continued use of teleconferencing will help the department in the future.

Karen Galarneau stated that she has received positive feedback from participants of teleconference training programs. She stated that they felt connected to the class and the instructor even though they were not present in the same room.

2. Reminder about the use of EOL

Kathy reminded the committee members that there are specific EOL codes to be used for approved CSEA committee meetings. Not all activities performed by CSEA stewards and delegates are considered EOL. Kathy receives a list from GOER and verifies the names to make sure that EOL is not being used inappropriately. Kathy asked the committee members to stress to their representatives the importance of using EOL correctly.

Post Agenda Discussion

1. H1N1 Virus

Kiaran informed the committee that schools across New York State are sending students home if they have a fever and telling them not to return until they are well. She stated that although we cannot force an employee to leave work, if an employee reports to work ill, they should be asked if they would like to leave and charge their accruals. Kathy stated that if there is an ongoing problem with an employee that will not leave the office when they are visibly ill and possibly contagious she should be contacted in extreme cases only.