

WSIAT Labour/Management Committee

Minutes of the meeting held:
September 15, 2005
2:00 pm
Hearing Room 5, 7th floor

Chairing: Deborah Lecuyer
Present: Jonathan Bennett (Alternate), Stacy Persad (Alternate), Bob Rowe, Wolfgang Skeries
Absent: Julia Martinez, Chinedu Ijoma, Holly Williams
Minutes: Shelley MacLellan

ITEM

PRESENTER

Members present

D. Lecuyer advised that J. Bennett and S. Persad were in attendance for this meeting as alternates, to replace C. Ijoma and H. Williams who were on vacation.

D. Lecuyer welcomed B. Rowe as the new co-chair of the Labour Management Committee, representing the employer.

1. Outstanding Business

D. Lecuyer explained that now that B. Rantz has left the Tribunal, there are a number of outstanding items that were under her control and asked if B. Rowe could update the committee on the status of these issues.

1.1 Vacation Policy

Mgmt

B. Rowe advised the committee that he had gone through the previous minutes of the Labour Management Committee, as well as some discussions that had taken place at the Senior Managers' meetings, in order to identify the status of and issues around the Vacation Policy.

One of the issues that has been identified is the amount of notice time required for a vacation request, and staff have indicated that they would like some flexibility in this. B. Rowe suggested that the policy should make reference to a normal amount of required notice, but that situations will always come up unexpectedly for which advance notice may not be possible. J. Bennett suggested that on discretionary issues, management has always been very flexible in this regard and inquired if there could be the same flexibility for regular vacation days, such as having the policy state that normally X days notice is required, but with a list of exceptions. B. Rowe suggested that there could be a

concern with getting bogged down if the policy tries to list all possible examples, but that the issue could certainly be dealt with in the policy in some fashion.

B. Rowe raised the question of seniority in granting vacation requests, and said that it was his understanding that this is something that the union does not want.

W. Skeries pointed out that vacation requests also have to be considered in the context of making sure that the operational needs of the department are still met.

B. Rowe advised that another item that had come up at the Senior Managers' meeting was how far in advance vacation requests are made and approved, and suggested that timeliness of approval is an issue. D. Lecuyer agreed that this is a concern. B. Rowe suggested that approvals done on a first-come-first-serve basis may not be the best, because for example people may put in requests at the start of the year for peak times, and perhaps there should be something in the policy to cover that as well.

J. Bennett raised one other point, regarding the extension of vacation time; for example, if someone is already on vacation and for whatever reason has to come back later than planned. J. Bennett inquired if the policy will also address this; B. Rowe noted this issue.

B. Rowe advised the committee that he would like to undertake to write a policy and take it to the Senior Managers' meeting for discussion, and hopefully have the policy approved and implemented by the end of the year.

1.2 Reciprocal Staffing Agreement

Mgmt

B. Rowe advised that he has talked with B. Rantz about this issue, and the message she has given is that the government is not granting reciprocal agreements at this time. B. Rowe requested clarification from the committee as to who is requesting the agreement and why, as it seems from the minutes of the committee that the union is somewhat ambivalent about it.

D. Lecuyer agreed, and explained that the union feels there are both pros and cons to the agreement. The pro would be that WSIAT staff could apply for jobs throughout the OPS, while on the other hand, the OPS staff could apply for WSIAT jobs. D. Lecuyer suggested that part of the reason that the Tribunal does not currently have a reciprocal staffing agreement is that the Tribunal is fairly young, and could be flooded with OPS workers under such an agreement. W. Skeries suggested that this is only in the case of restricted competitions, as WSIAT staff can apply in open OPS competitions. J. Bennett suggested that this is where the "pro" side won out, as the majority of WSIAT competitions are open anyway while the majority of the OPS are closed.

B. Rowe suggested that from an H.R. perspective, it could mean an influx of applicants from the OPS, as well as opportunities for promotion within the Tribunal would be open to a greater number of people. W. Skeries pointed out that there could also be an impact in having to vet competitions through the surplus list, which could be a negative in this case.

B. Rowe pointed out that in the last committee meeting, B. Rantz had also mentioned that now is perhaps not the best time to pursue an agreement, with reference to the ADP conversion.

J. Bennett clarified that it had been decided at the last meeting to seek out the agreement anyway; D. Lecuyer confirmed this and advised that B. Rantz was going to pursue the issue and see what, if any, agreement could be made. D. Lecuyer suggested that B. Rantz had been waiting to meet with the MBS on this issue; B. Rowe advised that he is

not aware of any meetings that had been scheduled. W. Skeries explained that B. Rantz had been making inquiries but was waiting for them to get back to her.

J. Bennett suggested that even if it ultimately goes nowhere, the union would like to try and pursue an agreement until there is a definite "no" from the MBS. J. Bennett clarified that the union would not be locked into an agreement at this time, and W. Skeries and B. Rowe confirmed this. B. Rowe explained that some sort of letter of agreement or minutes of understanding would have to be signed.

B. Rowe advised that he should be able to identify the status of this for the next meeting, and advised that he would make some calls if nothing has yet happened with the MBS.

1.3 Move to ADP from WIN and Corpay

Mgmt

B. Rowe advised that this is proceeding as expected at this time, and that the change should be invisible from an employee's perspective.

J. Bennett inquired if there is an estimated time for implementation of the move, if this is known yet. B. Rowe advised that H.R. and finance staff are currently going through the process of inputting all the data into the new system, and that the goal is to have everything entered and vetted in order to go live with ADP for the first pay in October. **(Editorial Note: It was not possible to achieve the originally planned implementation date. It is now expected that conversion to the new payroll system will be early in the new year.)**

D. Lecuyer clarified that the upcoming pay increase would be processed through WIN; B. Rowe confirmed this.

S. Persad inquired if there is anything that employees need to do in preparation for this change, such as any training. B. Rowe advised that there is really nothing that employees need to do; as discussed at the last meeting, the only change will be that attendance will go back to a paper-based system. S. Persad inquired if staff would manually write out their hours and submit it to a designated person to give to H.R.; B. Rowe confirmed this. D. Lecuyer suggested that there could be an issue with confidentiality, in that the person who collects the form would know other staff's attendance, and explained that this was an issue in the past before the introduction of WIN. W. Skeries suggested that attendance could be submitted directly to the manager. D. Lecuyer suggested that the practice of submitting the attendance form directly to the manager should be established with all staff, including members and managers.

D. Lecuyer inquired if staff will still be able to read their WIN paystubs, and if not, should they print them out. She explained that the concern is the need to make sure that the first pay in the new system is correct, by comparing it to WIN. B. Rowe advised that the employer has the same concern, and that a ghost pay run will be prepared by ADP as a test and would be compared to the payroll generated through CORPAY, to ensure that everything is correct before the new system goes live.

New Policy and Personal Identification numbers with Great West Life

D. Lecuyer raised a question regarding the recent enrollment forms that staff were required to fill out for Great West Life, with a new policy number and new personal identification number. D. Lecuyer inquired if these needed to be used from October 1st, and suggested that staff need to be advised as soon as the change happens as there was an issue in the past where the policy number changed without notice and this

caused problems with the processing of claims. B. Rowe advised that new claim forms with the new policy number would be provided, and advised that communication should go out to staff.

1.4 20th Anniversary Activities

Mgmt

B. Rowe advised that this is proceeding as planned, and that there is a small planning group in place that has met to begin thinking about and planning the celebration. B. Rowe advised that the venue has been booked, and the date for the function will be Friday, October 21st.

D. Lecuyer inquired if anything has gone out to the Tribunal as a whole; B. Rowe advised that it has not yet, and the plan is to send out invitations about three weeks in advance.

2. New Business

2.1 Probationary Employees and Training

OPSEU

D. Lecuyer explained that the members have noticed that some of the people hired under a probationary situation have been let go just before the end of the probation time, and it seems that these people were taken completely by surprise. She explained that the union would like to get some commitment from the employer that probationary employees will be treated fairly, and be given proper orientation, training, feedback on performance, and so on. It is important that probationary employees have the same rights and chance to do their job properly as other employees.

B. Rowe agreed that this is important. He explained the employer does provide orientation, training and feedback to new employees, and that a great deal of time and effort has been put into management training in this area in the last few years. As well as an emphasis on training, there will be an increased emphasis on orientation to the Tribunal in the future, and the employer is dedicated to improving in this area.

D. Lecuyer agreed that this is good, and suggested that the union has a role to play as well in keeping in touch with probationary employees and making sure that they feel comfortable.

S. Persad inquired if an individual is approached during the probationary period if they are doing something wrong. B. Rowe confirmed that this is done, and explained that each manager approaches it differently; for example, some may have formal meetings throughout the probationary period while others provide feedback on a day-to-day basis as things come up. W. Skeries suggested that there are also some relevant clauses in the administrative manual, such as the development of a performance plan within the first sixty days of employment.

J. Bennett inquired if it would be possible to look into shortening the probationary period, for example to make it six months instead of nine months. B. Rowe suggested that this could be discussed at the Labour Management committee, but any shortening of the period would have to be done in collective bargaining. D. Lecuyer inquired if every member that is hired is automatically on a nine-month probation period, as the contract stipulates "up to nine months"; B. Rowe advised that he is not aware of any exceptions to the nine-month period. D. Lecuyer inquired if the probation period applies to employees that are new to the Tribunal or new to a particular position; B. Rowe confirmed that it is employees new to the Tribunal.

D. Lecuyer inquired if the union could receive a list of the employees currently on probation; B. Rowe agreed this could be provided.

2.2 WSIAT Directory on the Intranet

OPSEU

D. Lecuyer explained that the members are always interested to know where everyone is, and would therefore like to ensure that the directory is up to date, especially with all of the recent changes. B. Rowe advised that the directory seems to be as up-to-date as possible.

3. Other Business

Coverage of Human Resources issues

OPSEU

D. Lecuyer advised that she would like to bring up one more issue, the handling of human resources matters now that B. Rantz has left the Tribunal. Prior to B. Rantz's hiring, there was a period of almost seven months without a Human Resources manager and all HR issues went through the Tribunal Executive Director, which was not satisfactory as issues ended up not being covered or being put on hold. The union would like to ensure that this does not happen again. D. Lecuyer advised that she does not think it will, as B. Rowe is providing support in this area. B. Rowe explained that it is his responsibility to ensure the continued operation of the Human Resource department.

J. Bennett said that he would like it to go on record that the union appreciates that the employer is communicating openly with the members; even if things cannot always be changed, the communication is appreciated. S. Persad seconded this.

Next Meeting

D. Lecuyer inquired if the next meeting should perhaps be bumped to October instead of the usual schedule of every two months, due to the upcoming ADP conversion and possible issues from that. W. Skeries and B. Rowe suggested that the committee stick to the schedule for now, and agree to meet earlier if necessary at any time.

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, November 16th at 10:00 am.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Signed:

Deborah A Lecuyer
Deborah Lecuyer

November 25, 2005
Date

Robert Rowe
Robert Rowe

25/11/05
Date