

**MGEC / Mn/DOT Meet & Confer**  
**Friday, April 18, 2008**  
**1:30-3:30 p.m.**  
**Conference Room CO 461**

**Committee Members Present:**

**MGEC:** Dana Wheeler, Joseph Pignato, Scott Pierson

**Management:** Julie Skallman, Karin van Dyck, Keith Shannon (for Rick Arnebeck), Kevin Gray, Lisa Freese, Mary Stohr, Robert Winter, Tim Henkel

**Committee Members Absent:**

Mary Skarda, Rick Arnebeck

**Additional Guests:**

Pam Tschida, Sue Heurung

**Introductions**

Committee members and guests introduced themselves.

**Cost Comparison Between State Employees & Contractors / Consultants**

Cost comparison for Engineering contractors doing similar work as state employees was compared. Management stated that many factors, including wages / benefits, must also be taken into consideration to ensure accuracy when doing any comparison between similar job positions. A figure given was \$156,371 (assumed wages and overhead) for consultants while some where are \$75,000 of r a MnDOT engineer. Karin stated Larry Moser was the contact person regarding the information; she will ask Rick Arnebeck to follow-up with Larry on this issue.

**Mn/DOT Plans for Utilization of New Funding Due to Gas Tax Increase**

Management stated the base increase is currently up 5¢/gallon and will increase by an additional 3¢/gallon over the next three years. In addition, automobile license tab fees will increase and these monies will go to the Highway User Fund. As of July 1, 2009, \$75 million per year (over the next 10 years) will be added to the base appropriation for additional spending. Mn/DOT is looking at budgets and resources to determine how best to utilize the monies. The union asked if these monies can be rolled over to future fiscal years or is it considered "use it or lose it" dollars? Management stated this money is earmarked for the Highway User Fund.

Management added that up to 17% of the department's \$500 million budget is available for program delivery (in-house or consultant fees), including the hiring of more bridge inspectors, bridge maintenance, pavement preservation and safety, etc.

**Mn/DOT Business Manual**

- **Interpretation of Mileage Calculation**

**Chapter 4 – Motor Vehicle Usage** policy from the Mn/DOT Business Manual was distributed. In addition, an example of eligible mileage reimbursement was made available. Pam Tschida stated that managers and supervisors, along with other Mn/DOT employees who travel as part of their job, will be expected to attend upcoming Business Manual training regarding travel expenses and mileage reimbursement. Pam and Sue Heurung noted employees may utilize

online mapping programs and/or odometer mileage readings when claiming travel expense reimbursements. Questions regarding this issue should be directed to either Sue Heurung or Pam Tschida in Business Services.

- **Mn/DOT Policy on Cell Phones**

A copy of **Chapter 9: Cellular Telephones** policy (from the updated February 2008 Mn/DOT Business Manual) was distributed. Pam Tschida stated the IRS considers a work cell phone to be a business-related piece of equipment and personal calls are taxed per IRS regulations. Therefore, Mn/DOT employees who have state-issued cell phones must sign an agreement regarding acceptable cell phone usage. It is each employee's responsibility to review the monthly cell phone invoice and verify if any personal calls were made on the state owned phone. Mn/DOT does make exceptions for limited "emergency-related" personal phone calls, as defined in the manual. MGEC expressed concern that employee will be responsible for incoming calls without a way to control that exposure. MGEC requested that employees wishing to change cell numbers be allowed to do so and Lisa Freese said that MnDOT would do that. MGEC also stated that employees should not find the new cell policy being applied retroactively. Lisa Freese agreed.

The union asked, "What is the supervisor's responsibility for signing off on an employee's monthly cell phone invoice?" Pam stated each supervisor should review cell phone records to check for possible abuse of Mn/DOT's cell phone policy before the invoice is signed by that supervisor. It was stated that supervisors are not expected to make complete reviews of each employee every month, unless merited. Rather, supervisors should conduct spot checks periodically.

- **Summary of Changes**

A March 6, 2008, memo from Mn/DOT Acting Commissioner Bob McFarlin was distributed. The memo addressed recent changes made to the Mn/DOT Business Manual. Supervisor's training on the updated Mn/DOT Business Manual will begin this July. The complete manual is located at <http://ihub.employee/documents/BusinessManual.pdf>. Dana Wheeler requested a courtesy copy be sent to union representatives. Lisa Freese provided Dana with the February 2008 Mn/DOT Business Manual she had in her possession.

**Note:** This agenda item will be revisited at the next MGEC / Mn/DOT Meet and Confer for additional information and clarification.

**Next Meeting: July 18, 2008 – 1:30-3:00 p.m.  
Conf Room CO 461 (unless otherwise notified)**

Note taker: Brenda Machovsky