

MGEC / HR Meeting Minutes
August 6, 2008
10:00 – 11:30 a.m.
Conf Rm CO 421

Present:

MGEC: Dana Wheeler, Joseph Pignato, Peter Buchen, John Siekmeier

Management: Emma Corrie, Jodi Mathiason, Karin van Dyck, Mary Skarda,
Mary Stohr, Theresa Johnson

Absent: Jolene Forman

Guests: John Siekmeier

Introductions were made of all those present at the meeting.

Mileage

Karin is waiting for a definitive explanation from Pam Tschida or Sue Heurung for determining the mileage charges formula. Dana asked if he could sit in on any future discussions about this issue. Karin will arrange for a follow-up meeting and invite Dana. Peter stated staff are dealing with expense reimbursement issues every day and need to know if they are doing so correctly.

To Do: Karin will arrange for a follow-up meeting with Sue Heurung, Pam Tschida, Dana Wheeler and herself.

Promotion to Senior Engineer upon Passing PE

Dana provided an overview and history of the past agreement reached between MGEC & MnDOT in the Meet & Confer process. The prior agreement addressed “engineers” without making the distinction MnDOT makes between Grad 2 Engineers and Engineer Trainees. Theresa said the current practice is that Jolene Forman contacts the Grad 2 Engineer’s supervisor. She needs to be notified the GE2 passed (was licensed) within 30 days of the licensure. Theresa also noted the Grad Engineer training plan was approved by DOER. A probationary Grad 2 was specifically created for the grad trainee program and there is a gradual assumption of duties before movement to Senior Engineer.

Joe clarified the Graduate Engineer Trainee is on rotation; Grad 2 is off rotation. Generally, a trainee spends two years in that capacity, achieves the first phase of the Engineering Registration (FE), and then is non-competitively re-compared and converted to a probationary Grad 2. A Graduate Engineer Trainee may, if qualified, compete for a Senior Engineer vacancy. He suggested the November 10, 1993, letter to DOER in the current MGEC contract (page 85) be updated to reflect changes.

Theresa noted Jolene has compiled a list with time periods between upgrades and promotions for MGEC staff.

Emma suggested the possibility of proposing a one year rotation to feed Senior Engineer / Grad 2 positions. She commented that Mn/DOT may be receptive to this plan; however, monetary issues would need to be addressed first.

To Do: Dana will revise notes from 2006 that clarify the process regarding the progression of Engineers and will provide that information for discussion at the September 11th meeting.

Dana also requested a sub-group be formed to draft a proposal on an Engineer trainee program. Emma Corrie, Mary Stohr, John Siekmeier, and Peter Buchen volunteered. In addition, Theresa suggested Jolene Forman be included. Dana will find another MGEC rep.

Alternate Holiday

Dana brought up the example of an MGEC employee who worked on a state holiday and earned an alternate holiday (under the 2005-2007 MGEC contract). However, the employee didn't use the alternate holiday before the end of that contract. The employee was informed by Payroll staff that he had "lost" the extra time as the issue is not addressed in the new contract. Dana stated that the employee had no previous discussion(s) about losing the time and believed he still had the hours since they continued to show as available on his timesheet under leave balance. Further, Dana stated the applicable contract language is that contract in effect currently which provides the employee who worked a holiday with cash payment or a choice to take the hours holiday as vacation leave or compensatory time.

Karin suggested this issue go back to the grievance process. Mary Stohr asked for some additional time to gather more details / information.

To Do: Mary Stohr will contact Dana within the next two weeks for additional discussion / action.

35W Bridge Site Visit

Dana stated that MGEC members wish to tour the 35W Bridge construction site. He suggested the possibility of offering multiple tours as educational opportunities for MnDOT engineering employees. He requested the tour be designed with an educational focus for employees, with time allotted for a Q&A session. Such a tour is already being provided for consultant employees who receive continuing education for the experience. Karin has talked with Jon Chiglo and Kevin Gutknecht and they are open to the idea.

- **To Do:** Karin will follow up with them about the specifics of the site visits.

Theresa asked if continuing education credits could be given to tour participants. Dana stated MGEC would be receptive to continuing education credits. Peter added the union's Board has to approve continuing education credits and would need to see an agenda and a list of attendees.

Other Items:

Engineer Principal Posting

Dana brought a copy of a recent Engineering Principal posting. At the bottom of the posting was noted that “women are encouraged to apply.” Dana asked for a discussion on the appropriateness of that statement. The group had mixed reactions: some thought it was perfectly acceptable while others felt it sent a message that only specific groups were being targeted.

Emma stated the language may have been incorporated as a result of the Leadership Institute. She asked for feedback on the issue. Peter expressed concern about the language and felt postings should only state “equal opportunity employer.” Others endorsed the language. Emma added that consistency was needed across the board in all posting language.

To Do: Theresa will check on this particular posting. She suggested there may be a disparity of women applying for this level of position.

Emma stated a draft Recruitment Plan will be presented to HRPG in mid-August. Mn/DOT is working with AFSCME and would also like to have an MGEC input source.

- **To Do:** Dana will get back to Emma with an MGEC contact’s name.

Layoffs Due to Budget Cuts?

Dana asked if Mn/DOT was projecting any upcoming layoffs due to budget cuts. Karin stated that vacant positions will continue to be looked at on an individual basis before filling. However, no layoffs are expected at this time due to budget reasons.

Unilateral Health Reimbursement Account

Dana mentioned the \$250 unilateral health reimbursement account which will be in effect for all state employees starting in January 2009. A debit card will be used for flexible spending. He noted that currently only about 30% of state employees take advantage of this option.

Workforce Planning / PIMO Presentation

Karin stated she would invite Trent Weber and Sue Mulvihill to the next meeting for a presentation on workforce planning and PIMO.

- **To Do:** Karin will talk to Trent and Sue and ask them to make a presentation at the September 11th meeting.

Compensation Study

Dana gave an update on the MGEC compensation study. There is a survey that is in the second draft stage. The final is expected by September 3, with results anticipated by the end of the year.

Emma told Dana that Mn/DOT owns high-level software and she would be willing to work with Dana if he’s interested in utilizing that software for the study. Dana responded he has two other electronic survey options available but would keep this in mind.

Work Out of Class Clarification

Dana and Mary Stohr are working together on this issue and will continue to do so.

Next Meeting: September 11, 1:30-3:00 p.m., Conf Rm CO 421

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