

July 13, 2009

TO: Locals - DFO
National Executive
National and Regional E.O. Representatives

RE: **DFO - UMCC - JUNE 26, 2009**

The DFO UMCC met on June 26, 2009 with Brother William Pynn, National President, Sister Irene Berube, National Vice-President, and Daryl Hoelke, Executive Assistant, attending. The following is a synopsis of the discussion.

Several follow-up actions resulting from the previous meeting were reported upon. A handout was provided.

Public Service Employees' Survey

The Department is planning on verifying the survey results from information gathered over the summer from its employees. Once the information in the survey is verified, the Department will be consulting with the bargaining agents and a formal announcement/request to consult will be sent to them. It is expected that an action plan will be designed and ready for the Fall.

The survey initially identified several areas of concern within DFO; i.e.,

- Career opportunities within DFO appear to be very limited.
- Workload and stress continue to be a concern.
- Harassment from individuals with authority over them is an issue.
- Discrimination from individuals with authority over them (higher on grounds of sex, age, mental or physical disability) is an issue.
- Age/retirement concerns (75% to plus 50% of employees in many regions within DFO are in a position to retire in the next two years.

The bargaining agents strongly suggested that the Department gather and discuss information at the regional and worksite levels through the labour-management consultation process.

Classification

Classification continues to be a concern for all bargaining agents and more specifically, to members of UEW. Although DFO provided an update on the progress to date, our members continue to be frustrated with the long delays and the lack of clarity regarding current job descriptions. Members are not only concerned about the delays but also the generic style which results in the uniqueness of the described work being lost. DFO indicated that steps would be taken to improve the process.

Sunset Programs

The Department is attempting to address the issue of sunset terms through a very thorough review relating to the use of sunset programs and by instructing managers to use the HR Plan to address situations where sunset terms exist more than three years by questioning the need for long-term sunsets, recognizing the valued resources by a sunset term and possible placement of a sunset term who has noted valuable skills.

National Labour Relations' Symposium

The bargaining agents noted the lack of union input into many aspects of the Symposium and the final report. All agreed to proceed to the next Symposium with caution and to consider a Symposium every two years; however, there was also agreement to hold the next Symposium in February 2010. The unions agreed to exchange ideas as to who would be on the organizing committee and report back to DFO before the end of July 2009.

Budget Alignment and Strategic Review (BASR2)

BASR2 is in advance of the required once every four year spending analysis which is to identify a 5% savings and align the money spent with the required activities.

Program relevance and performance will be assessed with consideration and regard to the clarity of the relationship of the Program. The report will be presented to and discussed by the Departmental Management Committee (DMC) over the next few months.

Chronic funding pressures continue to exist and re-allocation continues to meet the shifts to deal with funding shortfalls.

The purpose of conducting the BASR2 now is to assist with the development and testing of the methodology for the official review next year.

The bargaining agents took this opportunity to express their concerns with respect to a lack of consultation and in this instance, with the communiqué which was distributed to all employees prior to any consultation with the bargaining agents.

It appears that consultation with the bargaining agents is a low priority within DFO and this has been a concern expressed on a number of occasions. It is important that the Department ensure that consultation is initiated with bargaining agents on issues that have an impact on their respective membership. Consultation after the fact is not acceptable and UEW will continue to encourage the Department to modify its stance with respect to consultation at future meetings if there is a need to do so.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the above, please do not hesitate to communicate with the national office.

Yours fraternally,

William Pynn,
National President,
Union of Environment Workers.