

LFWA

6007-20 (COS)

26 August 1998

Distribution List

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LAND FORCE
WESTERN AREA LABOUR MANAGEMENT RELATIONS
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE LAND FORCE WESTERN AREA
CONFERENCE ROOM AT 0900 HOURS ON 20 AUGUST 1998

Chairpersons:

Col T.J. Grant - Chief of Staff

Mr Brian Molsberry - Vice President - Manitoba and Saskatchewan

Members:

Mr F.W. (Rick) Brick - Director of Human Resource Management

Capt T. Brooks - ASD Coordinator/MEO Core Team Member

Mr Steve Covell - Vice President - Alberta and the North

Major A. Miller - Area Comptroller

LCol E.F. Parker - 1 ASG Chief of Staff

LCol A.C. Patch - G4/1 ASG MEO Coordinator

Ex-Officio

Mr Ian Hamelin - Director - Civ Pers Service Centre (Prairies)

In Attendance:

Mr Blair Cairns - UCS Coordinator

Ms Caroline Kern - CLS/DLP 5

DISCUSSION

ACTION BY

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

1. Col Grant opened the meeting and introduced himself to the group. Col Grant has replaced Col Capstick as the Chief of Staff for Land Force Western Area.
2. Col Grant indicated this was his second LMRC as he had attended our previous meeting. He introduced Mr Hamelin and Ms Kern and welcomed them to LFWA.

OLD BUSINESS AND STANDING ISSUES

Adoption of the Minutes

4. As there were no errors or omissions, the minutes of the previous meeting were adopted as printed.

Civilian Personnel Reengineering

5. Mr Brick recommended that this issue be removed as a standing item on the LMRC as it has been largely completed. He went on to advise that Ms Brenda Stouffer has been replaced as the ASU Shilo HRBM by Mr Neil Dubyts. Ms Stouffer has taken on responsibilities as the HRBM for 17 Wing/ Winnipeg.

6. Mr Hamelin discussed the organization of the Civilian Personnel Service Centre (Prairies). He reviewed the overall organization and the recent efforts to migrate "transactional" civilian personnel processes and resources to the Winnipeg office. Mr Hamelin agreed that the restructure of Civilian Personnel was largely completed. What was still continuing he reminded the committee, was the reengineering of personnel programs. There has been limited progress in that regard, except in a few notable matters such as the introduction of PeopleSoft.

EAP Update

7. Mr Brick advised that in Mrs McCubbing's absence he would provide the report.

8. EAP in LFWA remains vital and successful. One referral agent will be trained on the next session. LFWA and 1 CAD are starting preparations for the annual Rap Session.

9. Mr Brick stressed that given the uncertainty surrounding employment these days, the need for EAP is intensified. As discussed at the last meeting, Mrs McCubbing and her 1 CAD counterpart are exploring the possibility of setting up an appreciation program for the fine work done by the referral agents.

10. Mr Molsberry echoed the fact that referral agents are becoming more involved lately with the effects of employment uncertainty. This is creating an increase in their workload. The union is examining this issue and looking for solutions.

1 ASG Update

11. LCol Parker spoke to the efforts that formation has underway to

examine potential to save money. He mentioned the hospitality study which has potential savings of perhaps \$800K. Some elements of the report will prove more difficult to implement, but other aspects will be put in place shortly.

12. LCol Parker went on to mention that the study determined there were too many FOSs given the Army structure. In addition, there were other conclusions, such as looking at efficiencies with our cleaning program.

13. Col Grant mentioned that the standards within food service were in some cases a hold-over from the Air Force days. As such, they were not reflective of the Army reality. An example of this is the table service in the Officers' Mess which is often observed on by other organizations as it is somewhat anachronistic. However, LCol Patch noted that there were no national standards in such areas.

14. Mr Molsberry stressed that before changes are implemented, we need to know what the "rules" are. For example, the reason we have too many civilian FOS staff, is the high number of food staff within the Army's military ranks. In the absence of a decision on core/non-core, how can we decide what should be eliminated? Management needs to put its efforts on having such basic matters as "what is core" decided.

15. Mr Molsberry also spoke to the issue of using studies and comparisons that already exist. Given the timeframes we are facing, such options need to be explored.

16. LCol Parker provided Mr Molsberry with a copy of the hospitality study he previously mentioned. Mr Molsberry re-stated the need for employees to have input into such reviews. It was suggested by LCol Parker that the union representatives read the study and if they then had concerns over the levels of staff involvement or any other issue, to contact him.

NEW BUSINESS

Universal Classification System (UCS)

17. Mr Brick outlined the status of the UCS project. The first phase has been largely completed within LFWA. Work description have been examined for currency under the existing system. Those that required amendment have been referred to the classification staff in Winnipeg. DHRM commented that management had done an excellent job in meeting the assigned timeframes.

18. The number of work descriptions submitted was significantly higher than anticipated. It appears that as many as 40% of the positions have been submitted for review in some cases. This has created an immense workload for the classification staff and some delays may occur as a result. Mr Hamelin advised that about 40% of the submitted work descriptions have now been classified.

19. The second phase of the UCS project will commence shortly. Managers will be trained on the new classification system to familiarize them with the format and procedures. Following that, management will write work descriptions for all civilian positions using the UCS format. As mentioned at the last meeting, the work descriptions will then be forwarded for classification by committee. Those committees will involve managers.

20. Managers will participate on model work description writing committees where they will be trained in the new classification system. Those committees will develop models that should apply to the majority of positions across the department. Managers will be assisted in matching the model work descriptions to their requirements. Work descriptions will be forwarded for classification evaluation by committees involving line managers. To assist with coordination, Mr Blair Cairns has been hired and will be working with LFWA managers.

21. Mr Brick distributed a copy of a letter he had forwarded to LFWA managers advising them of the project's progress. Attached to that letter was the implementation order and instructions provided by the Assistant CLS. DHRM provided the union representatives with copies of the UCS standard and the writing guide.

22. Mr Molsberry advised that a recurring concern voiced by union members was the fact that employees were being asked to write their own work descriptions. They often do not have the skills or background necessary to accomplish that task. This could affect the classification level and is a source of concern. Those comments were echoed by Mr Covell who informed the committee that such problems were not restricted to National Defence but seemed common across the Alliance.

23. Ms Kern relayed to the LMRC how the model work descriptions were being developed. In response to a query, she outlined that National Defence was taking the lead on a number of operational positions.

HR Working Group

24. Mr Molsberry stressed the need for the subject group and Human Resource (HR) planning in general. He asked what the future plans were for the group.

25. Mr Brick advised that it was the intent DHRM of LFWA to continue with the HR Working Group. Currently being examined is a meeting of the local UNDE presidents and HRBM staff to ensure all parties are aware of potential activities and have the opportunity to participate. It was suggested by Mr Brick that early fall was the anticipated timeframe for the meeting.

26. Mr Molsberry related that a number of valuable lessons had been learned by the Moose Jaw experience. It is critical that management identify the employment skill sets that are required. In addition, we need to be able to catalogue what other existing skills employees may have.

27. Mr Molsberry and Mr Brick stressed the importance of ensuring that employees understand that these HR initiatives are not a foreshadowing of imminent job loss. They are in reality, what any employer needs to do in today's employment market.

28. Mr Covell asked if the apprenticeship DHRM program still existed. Mr Brick advised that it did and in fact CFB Suffield was currently active with this program. Mr Covell suggested that there was a lack of knowledge about such resources and he recommended that managers be reminded. Mr Brick advised that he would forward an e-mail to managers to ensure they were aware of such tools.

29. Mr Brick concluded his remarks on this topic by stating that the LFWA HR plan identified the need to train HRBMs in skills such as MBTI and Strong Inventory. Such tools are critical for HR planning.

Employability Strategy

30. Ms Kern spoke to this subject. She started her comments by mentioning that the union was to be briefed on 24 Aug 98. As such, she did not want to pre-empt that meeting.

31. Ms Kern advised that National Defence was looking at how to ensure the continued employability of our civilian workforce. NDHQ has allocated \$1 million this fiscal year and the same amount for next fiscal year to help with this objective. The money will be available soon and Commands are preparing submissions to access those dollars.

32. The issue of where we spend those funds is important. It is critical that we look at supporting the right activities and not just throw money at the problem. For example, there may be activities we could look at to support the hiring, development and retention of CS staff. Ms Kern also stated her expectation that CF members may well see some positive effects from these initiatives.

33. Mr Molsberry expressed that he feels time is of the essence. If money is available, get it into the managers' hands and do not retain it in Ottawa, hold endless meetings to discuss the matter or make it administratively burdensome.

34. Mr Covell and Mr Molsberry stressed their view that funding should be provided for existing practices. This will ensure money is well spent. Committee members agreed. Col Grant said that the critical mass for this funding needs to be remembered. For example, to allocate \$10.00 for each employee will accomplish nothing. Rather we must look at specific projects/activities.

35. As a related side issue, Mr Molsberry said the fact that new technologies were often introduced without training works to everyone's disadvantage. Col Grant concurred and stated that the number of stovepiped computer systems that are delivered without training support is truly amazing.

36. Mr Hamelin relayed that current fiscal restraints have made it difficult in some cases to free employees for training. LCol Parker agreed, stating that money for training is great, but there is a reality of limited staff time and rising work expectations.

37. The committee was reminded by Mr Molsberry of the fact that training increases employee productivity. He cited the example of Wainwright, which identifies essential training as a "must do" given that very fact. Col Grant stated that for a formation or unit to not provide the necessary training for its staff is simply unacceptable.

MEO Review

38. UNDE had been briefed at length the day before by LCol Patch and Captain Brooks. This reduced the general discussions on this topic.

39. LCol Patch stated that the MEO Review Team's main objective was to work at staying one step ahead on the SSSP Review. Currently that review is expected to start in Sep 98. Any movement in the SSSP timeframes will potentially cause a movement in the MEO timeframes.

The MEO process will develop options and risk assessments. The decisions will then be taken by the Commanders.

40. The review has started but it will take time. Even overcoming the initial inertia is a time consuming activity. Col Grant commented that BGen Ross is committed to having our staff do the review and make the changes rather than having an external organization determine our future. The advantages of that approach are recognized by both management and the union.

41. LCol Patch mentioned that the review team was scheduled to report in Nov 98. That is quite ambitious and a preliminary report may be all that is available by that time. Staying ahead of DGMRS was the key factor. The team would be examining both site and system approaches.

42. LCol Patch relayed that \$5 million has been identified as target with the MEO review. It is imperative that we exercise good stewardship of the "public purse". Any savings achieved could assist us in meeting our training and operational objectives.

43. Mr Molsberry outlined his view that we must look at the money we spend simply to support our support operations. Management must be willing to look at all aspects of how we do business and ensure all staff are involved and able to participate.

44. Mr Molsberry advised that at the 4 Oct 98 meeting, the DMC will be asked to provide direction on core and essential positions. It is hoped some headway will be made on this matter as it is critical.

45. Mr Molsberry commented that the union is not necessarily sold on the Employee Take Over route. That being said, there have been some discussions with private sector companies on potential partnerships. The union is aware that private sector companies have visited each of the sites as has the union.

46. Mr Molsberry stated that he felt the MEO review was being done for the right reasons. The union will cooperate as much as feasible except, if and when management looks at potential deletion of civilian positions. While it may be viewed as necessary by management, the union cannot participate in such a review.

47. The union members indicated that they want to see an MEO team established at ASU Edmonton. The importance of having a union representative on each team was stressed. Mr Molsberry commented such involvement was a "two way street" and they would share any

information they have as well. In addition, civilian staff will likely be quite active in any reviews. LCol Patch agreed that such involvement is essential.

48. Mr Molsberry stated that there was some hesitation to participate on the part of the staff given all they have been through. It is important to overcome that if management wants the full involvement of employees. Townhall type meetings are an effective method of communicating with staff members. Within LFWA, we are fortunate that there are no bad relationships between union and management that would have to be overcome.

49. Mr Covell stated that it may be wise to look at shorter service contracts. This would ensure we do not identify potential improvements but find we are locked into a contracted procedure. LCol Parker advised that most contracts are only being let for one year. LCol Patch commented that on occasion, longer contracts can bring lower costs.

50. Mr Covell asked about a \$4.5 million shortfall faced by ASU Edmonton. LCol Parker advised that this figure is based on what was requested versus the assigned budget. Col Grant stated that this will result in some user pay situations.

Suffield Study

51. Col Grant mentioned that there were ALFR concerns with the progress of the study. A business case may well not be developed by November. Col Grant indicated that the LFWA OPI, Major Jeff Porter, was currently away. If further information was available on his return, he would advise the union members through the DHRM [Civ].

52. Mr Molsberry advised that in a briefing by Colonel Gendron, the possibility of an increase in civilian staff at Suffield was mentioned. This may occur due to a reduction in British military support staff.

GS-CS Numbers

53. Mr Molsberry asked that the union be provided with GS numbers. In addition, they would like to know where the support positions are, what rank and trade they are, those that are considered military essential, etc.

54. Capt Brooks advised that he was ASD Coord currently gathering such data as part of the MEO review. Col Grant questioned when the information would be available. Capt Brooks stated that it should only be a matter of a few weeks. Col Grant directed that the information be forwarded to the union through the DHRM [Civ].

55. LCol Parker mentioned that the ASG had developed an initial listing of military essential positions. That listing was very preliminary and tended to vary a great deal depending on what site did the analysis. The listing has not yet been validated and is quite subjective. Before it could be released to the union, it will have to be verified and approved by Col Selbie and BGen Ross.

56. Mr Molsberry stressed the need to harmonize the "real world" needs with the GS requirements. The union intends to raise this with senior staff in a meeting scheduled for 4 Oct 98. It is expected that there will be some debate on military essential, core and DND essential. The union has no hidden agenda in this area and their views are well known.

Civilian Employee Numbers

57. Mr Brick advised that he has requested DHRM the report from the Service Centre and expects to have it in the near future. He will forward it to the UNDE representatives when it is

received. Mr Brick reminded the committee that the PeopleSoft implementation has made obtaining statistics from DPIS impossible.

58. Mr Molsberry stressed the need for the figures to ensure all parties are talking with the same information.

Budget Numbers for LFWA

59. Mr Molsberry asked for budget numbers for LFWA. He stated that it seemed the SWE numbers keep declining but wondered if the other budget elements were being subjected to the same degree of scrutiny. Col Grant informed the committee that his staff was visiting the various formations and examining their budgets and expenditures. Any required adjustments would be made.

60. Mr Molsberry asked if LFWA could provide A Compt the union with a listing of the funding we received from other CCs, even if such monies were not used in support of LFWA. In addition, the union would like details on expenditures for contracts and consultants. Major Miller indicated that he would attempt to obtain that data but it would be quite difficult and he could not make any promises. The Land staff will be asked for their assistance.

Secretarial Note: Land staff have advised that such information is not available at our or their level. They recommend that the union raise the matter at the National LMRC, which has representation from most CCs.

61. Major Miller distributed the LFWA funding model. He indicated that most elements had remained the same or suffered a minor decrease. The budget allocation to the field force was increased. The budget protects money for a potential Public Service wage increase.

62. Next year's budget is expected to be similar to this year's with some increases on the militia side. 1 ASG has been asked to look at a reduction of \$5 million. Those funds, if the reduction can be achieved, may be able to be used to meet other Area needs. Although 1 ASG has been assigned that target, all formations will be examined.

Pay Equity Update

63. There is nothing definitive on this matter as of yet. The government has until 28 August 1998 to decide whether to file an appeal against the tribunal's decision. The fact that the government has responsibilities as both the employer and the government was noted by Mr Hamelin.

64. Mr Hamelin outlined the communication strategy the Service

Centre has devised for this issue. A 1-800 number has been established, although the calls have been reasonably limited with only 73 received to date.

65. Mr Hamelin went on to advise that he has created a pay equity cell in Winnipeg that is starting to work on this issue. The workload is potentially onerous. Col Grant asked if paying the existing staff would have priority. Mr Hamelin relayed that the current employees are relatively easy given the existing database. However, there are potentially 8,000 former employees who could be affected as well, not to mention estates, etc.

66. The fact that some employees were already spending the money based on their expectations was discussed. The committee discussed the need for employees to exercise prudent financial care.

Detachment Dundurn

67. Col Grant provided the committee with the background on this issue. The responsibility for Dundurn was moving from 15 Wing to 17 Wing. The two Air Command units were engaged in a difficult discussion regarding the associated costs. LFWA is in no hurry to get into the debate and it is up to the Air Force to resolve the matter. ADM (Mat) is a key player as well.

68. The Army sees Dundurn as a semi-austere training area that will continue to be used by regular and reserve forces. The training area is valuable and not expected to close.

Responsibility for Winnipeg South

69. Mr Molsberry advised that his members had expressed concern over staff relations activities at Winnipeg South. There seemed to be a need for some training on managing civilian employees. In addition, concerns were raised regarding the staffing of kitchen employees at that location and the ratio of terms and casuals being employed.

70. Mr Brick stated that he would follow-up DHRM on this with the HRBM for 17 Wing and the Service Centre staff.

ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

71. Mr Molsberry relayed that Mr Covell will pick up increasingly more union responsibilities. He extended his thanks to all the people involved with the LMRC for their commitment to this process.

72. Col Grant reminded the committee of the need to ensure that lines of communication are kept open.

73. Ms Kern thanked the committee for allowing her to participate in the meeting.

NEXT MEETING

74. The next meeting will be scheduled for DHRM after Col Grant returns on 4 December 1998. Mr Brick was tasked with making the necessary arrangements. It was expressed by both co-chairs that there would likely be a need for more frequent meetings in 1999 given the various expected activities.

CONCLUSION

75. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting concluded at 1140 hours.

Recommended for approval:

F.W. Brick
Director of Human Resource Management
Executive Secretary

Approved/Not approved

T.J. Grant
Colonel
Chief of Staff
Co-Chairperson

Approved/Not approved

Brian Molsberry
Vice President (Manitoba/Saskatchewan)
Co-Chairperson

Distribution List

NDHQ/DGPR
CPSC (Pac)/Director
CPSC (Pra)/Director
CLS/DLP 5
VP BC
VP AB & the North
VP MB & SK
List A
List B
LFWA UNDE Presidents

