

## OTDA PEF Labor Management Meeting

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**Date:** January 10, 2024

**Location:** OTDA, 40 North Pearl Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Albany, NY

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

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### Introductions

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### Agenda Items

#### 1. Agenda Item – Recruitment of Hearing Officers

New Business       Old Business

**Description:** Previously Labor was advised recruitment and hiring efforts began for Hearing Officers. Please provide an update regarding these recruitment strategies. Were these efforts successful? Additionally, please provide an update regarding current Hearing Officer vacancies.

**Response:** OTDA worked with Civil Service to have Hearing Officers included in Hiring for Limited Emergency Placement (HELP). That increased the candidate pool significantly. OTDA received approximately 115 resumes and interviews are underway. OTDA is posting the positions on State Jobs NY, Indeed.com, Monster.com, and directly recruiting known attorneys.

**Action Item:**

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## 2. Agenda Item – Retaining Hearing Officers

New Business     Old Business

**Description:** What has OTDA Management accomplished in attempts to retain Hearing Officers within the past year? What is the current number of Hearing Officers that are no longer with Agency within the past calendar year?

**Response:**

- Shut down hearings for three days to gather all OAH attorneys together for a conference. Management dedicated time and resources to speakers who addressed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, appreciating rural, suburban, and urban differences and similarities, mental health, working with people struggling with mental health, and work/life balance.
- Conducted Statewide monthly training and made all resources available on SharePoint.
- Updated PA, SNAP, Managed Long-Term Care, and HEAP scripting tools to improve decision drafting.
- Adjusted calendar size based on feedback from line ALJs and SHOs.
- Developed initiative for ALJs to volunteer to serve as mentors for newly hired ALJs.
- Revised the Hearing Officer Procedural Training Institute (HOPTI) to reflect remote hearings.
- Updating and upgrading workspaces in New York City and Long Island with announcements coming soon.

**Action Item:**

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### 3. Agenda Item – Overtime Hours 2022, 2023 and Projected Staff

New Business     Old Business

**Description:** PEF requests Management provide:

- The amount of overtime hours for 2022 broken down by program area.  
**See attached**
- The amount of overtime hours for 2023 broken down by program area.  
**See attached**
- Current list of approved positions to fill broken down by title, program area and location.  
**See attached**
- The projected FTE (full time employee) staffing for 2023-2024 (SFY).
- Current FTE fill level.

**Response:** Attachments are provided for the first three bullets. As of December 6, 2023, OTDA's FTE count is 1,863. The current FTE fill level for OTDA is 1,922. The projected FTE level for fiscal year 2025 remains at 1,922 but is subject to change.

**Action Item:**

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#### 4. Agenda Item – Hearing Officer Calendar

New Business     Old Business

**Description:** Labor requests an update on Management's efforts in reducing the high calendar caseload for Hearing Officers. Labor believes 24 is too high for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and PA (Public Assistance). The numbers for other types of cases are also too high. Returning to the A/B calendars resulted in a higher caseload than the 3/2 calendar and has exponentially increased workload. What effort is Management taking to address the high case load concern?

**Response:** OTDA Management directed a reduction in calendar assignment and will continue evaluating.

**Action Item:**

FINAL

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## 5. Agenda Item – DEI Strategic Plan

New Business     Old Business

**Description:** Discussed at the last meeting, the DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) office was to post the Strategic Plan on the Intranet for all staff to view. What is the status of the posting? Also, can Labor have a copy of the finalized operational guidelines for the DEI committee? If not finalized, when will Labor receive a finalized copy?

**Response:** The DEI Strategic Plan was posted to the OTDA intranet site for all staff to view in October 2023. OTDA launched the DEI Advisory Committee in December 2023. All staff were provided with a finalized copy of the operational guidelines.

**Action Item:** A finalized copy was emailed to Labor on January 23, 2024.

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## 6. Agenda Item – Employee Safety

New Business     Old Business

**Description:** What is the status of installing a direct phone line for public visitors to OTDA’s Main Office? Has there been any update to reviewing security protocols for other OTDA offices? What does the report include if completed?

**Response:** The dedicated phone has been received and it is anticipated that it will be installed by January 22, 2024. Contact information sheets for the security guard’s use are in final development. OTDA reviewed the protocols for scheduled and unscheduled visitors at other OTDA locations and will look to incorporate those into the emergency action plans. This item will be referred to the Statewide Health and Safety Committee.

**Action Item:** Update – Installation of the dedicated phone line was delayed. The phone was installed on January 30, 2024.

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## 7. Agenda Item – Buffalo Snowstorm Accruals

New Business     Old Business

**Description:** What is the status of restoring accruals that Buffalo employees used/lost on December 23, 2022, while the County was under a State of Emergency? Was this issue added to the November Civil Service calendar? This agenda item has been on the agenda for a while, please resolve, or provide us the means of who to contact to resolve this.

**Response:** OTDA's request to restore accruals for seven (7) Buffalo employees who did not work on December 23, 2022, was denied at the Civil Service Commission meeting held on December 13, 2023. The two (2) outstanding grievances related to this issue are currently being addressed by OTDA Labor Relations.

**Action Item:**

FINAL

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## 8. Agenda Item – Current OTDA PEF Titles

New Business     Old Business

**Description:** PEF requests an updated list of current employees, including titles, appointment status, full-time or part-time, work location.

**Response:** See attached.

**Action Item:**

PEF/OTDA



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## Informational Items/ Accomplishments

PEF has been strongly advocating for NYS to modernize the Civil Service Pay Structure. At PEF's urging, the Executive Budget included \$2.2 million to develop a job evaluation system to review the Statewide Civil Service Title Structure in which ensures: meeting employer's needs, align with the current job market, consider title pay equity, and level the playing field with the private sector. Management supports this effort and will continue to work with Civil Service and Labor to see this through.

Management met with Labor regarding the 2024 Teleworking Policy on December 6, 2023. The Telecommuting Policy will remain the same for 2024.

\*\*\*Management will provide a link regarding the Telecommuting Policy\*\*\* See below.

[APPM Chapter 1 Section 40 – Telecommuting Program](#)

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## The following individuals were present at the OTDA PEF Labor Management Meeting held on January 10, 2024.

### Labor

Carl Anderson (Remote)  
Leslie Apacible  
Pam August  
Sharon DeSilva  
Jennifer Dickerson  
Danielle Freeman  
Germaine Greco (Remote)  
Mickey Heller  
Diane Herrmann  
Peter Maurer (Remote)  
Jill Poeller  
Joyel Richardson  
Martin Robinson  
Scott Staub  
Ryan Stoliker

### Management

Donnovan Beckford  
Barbara Guinn  
Kadijah Jenkins  
Jim Ryan  
Eric Schwenzfeier  
Samuel Spitzberg  
Jared Tallman  
Felicia Valle Job  
Kenneth Wells-Crannell

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## Next Meeting/Date & Place

- April 25, 2024, at Homewood Suites, 216 Wolf Road, Albany.

EMMA