

**PEF Statewide Labor/Management Meeting**

**Remote conference**

**4/30/2020**

<u>PEF</u>	<u>MANAGEMENT</u>
Charles Browning – Co-Chair	Cliff Meister – Co-Chair
Dan Warren	Sadhna Gujral
David Dubofsky	Patricia Carroll
Lisa Wells	Alyce Siegel
Chris Rampe, PEF recording secretary	
Patty Mason	
Clifvon Jones	
John Babich	
Jeff Hutchinson	
Kathy Czachorowski	
Brandi Loveday-Chesley	
Prashant Singapura	
Radhakrishna Mohan	
Bradley Kolb, PEF Field Rep	

Ms. Czachorowski reported that PEF is very pleased with telecommuting; NYSIF has outdone every other agency in every aspect; communication, implementation, progression. NYSIF should be a telecommuting model for other agencies.

Mr. Browning seconds this sentiment. Mr. Babich stated that Hearing Reps were up and running immediately. Mr. Warren spoke to the ITS effort; acquisition and deployment of equipment and upgrading of NYSIF infrastructure that was undertaken with great alacrity. Mr. Mohan speaks to the prior telecommuting pilot and how that impacted the agency's capability to respond. Mr. Singapura thanks management for their genuine concern.

Management thanked PEF for their words. Ms. Carroll was glad to see everyone healthy, and glad everyone came together as a team to make this happen. Ms. Carroll thanked PEF for the kind words and will be sharing those sentiments with Executive. Praise goes to staff at every level due to communication and assessing needs. Ms. Carroll stated that PEF members and Management working together is what made this possible.

Mr. Meister reiterated management's thanks, and also recognized that PEF members and Management working together is what caused NYSIF to be the best performing agency with regard to telecommuting.

Ms. Czachorowski proposes monthly meetings while the "pause" is in effect. Ms. Carroll is amenable. Thursday, 5/28/20 at 9:30am was accepted.

Proposed date of July 30, 2020 will remain scheduled as our next "full" meeting.

**1.) Minutes** – 4/30/20 minutes submitted to management 5/18/20.

**2.) Next Meeting** - PEF proposes June 24, 2020 at 9:30am.

**3.) Local L/M Meetings** –

Due to NYSIF's departmental reorganizations, PEF requests SW organizational charts for all departments for proper communication of local LM and H&S issues.

NYSIF advised that employees with local concerns should go to the highest rank of the respective department. NYSIF to provide a listing of top ranked management for respective offices.

- PEF requests the SW list of managers that will be handling local LM/H&S meetings.
- PHS emails dated 3/3/20 and 3/9/20, "Business Continuity – Work from home test", directed PHS employees to test their personal equipment for NYSIF use, when using personal equipment is voluntary. Inaccurate communications gone uncorrected cause unnecessary confusion.

Ms. Carrol advised that the pandemic caused an upheaval and reports that the Business Manager system is in place for now because of the fluidity of the situation. Mr. Meister states that if there is a health and safety or L/M issue at any site, he is willing to be an intermediary so that issues can be solved.

**4.) Statewide Staffing Levels** –

- a.) Hearing Reps - PEF queries NYSIF re: the amount of hearings and depositions statewide that are being assigned to outside counsel in lieu of hiring hearing reps statewide. NYSIF has been compiling data regarding the number of hearing reps vs the amount of claims in particular offices. From 6/1/17-6/1/19 SIF has spent \$6,321,993.40 statewide on outside counsel. PEF argues that it would be more cost effective to hire hearing reps.
- PEF requests NYSIF report out on their "Think Tank" and update PEF on the hiring of NYSIF Hearing Reps.

Mr. Meister reports that management would prefer to use our own hearing reps rather than outside counsel. An analysis was done and Claims Administration is proposing to Executive that more HRs be hired. Geographic distribution is being considered; technology obviously plays a part, as most hearings can be done remotely. Within 30 days, we may have a better idea of how many items and the geographic distribution of same. Outside counsel is to be used for special cases and overflow. Also, NYSIF must look at direction from the Governor for staffing/reduction.

Mr. Warren calls attention to the fact that with a promotion of a HR to CSR 2 in the Buffalo office, Buffalo has lost 5 HR in the past 18 months. Mr. Meister advises that Ryan McGrath has been tasked to review/monitor the data.

b.) ITS – Staffing – SSA staffing.

-PEF requests SSA's be adequately staffed SW.

-PEF requests NYSIF fully implement the 2016 Call Center/Help Desk/Call Transfers LEAN project.

<http://sp.nysif.com/sites/lean/LEAN%20Projects/Call%20Center%20%20Help%20Desk%20%20Call%20Transfers/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

- PEF notes Binghamton still has no SSA.

Mr. Warren advises that Binghamton does not have an SSA. Syracuse lost their SSA to another agency. White Plains is down to one SSA, and they have not been refilling the SSA lines in the Albany office as they are transferred to other groups.

c.) CSRI staffing –

- PEF notes Binghamton has three more CSR1's retiring in the next 3 months. PEF queries re: NYSIF's succession plan.

No hires for CSR1's in Binghamton in the last 12 years. Mr. Browning speaks to 3 CSR1's recently leaving the Binghamton office which results in staffing issues.

Mr. Meister states that Mr. Nolte generates a Spotfire list of staffing/caseloads monthly and this list is reviewed/monitored and workloads are adjusted accordingly. Cases are being relocated. Michelle Van Camp will be the point person on staffing in the Binghamton office.

Mr. Meister will report back as to the specifics of the movement of the cases. CSR3s should run SpotFire reports regularly to monitor and adjust case loads.

#### d.) MCR staffing –

-PEF notes a steady decline in SW MCR's.

-PEF notes there are no current Civil Service MCR exams, no current MCR list, and that currently per CS, MCR hires are "resume based", making it much easier for NYSIF to hire MCR's.

- PEF requests a status on the Principal MCR position and when MCR staffing will be determined.

Mr. Meister reported that Lauren Zimmer and Paige Wright are the new PMCRs. They have reported that the staffing levels are currently adequate, but they are aware that retirements/promotions will cause the need for backfills in the future. Long Island MCRs managing Covid-19 claims, and they are integral to NYSIF's response to these claimants. Given that next week is "National Nurses Week", Mr. Meister adds that NYSIF loves their Nurses.

#### 5.) Telecommuting –

PEF submitted a telecommuting memo outlining the history of telecommuting at SIF and included additional suggestions for consideration and hopeful PEF involvement.

Effective 3/15/20 & 3/17/20 temporary telecommuting where possible was directed by the Governor.

Maintaining production in every NYSIF department and quality customer service is a mutual goal.

NYSIF's emails commending staff speak to the value and positive aspects of the current telecommuting.

- PEF requests an update on Ms. Carroll's telecommuting committee.

- PEF requests NYSIF's overall assessment of the current temporary telecommuting program.
- How many are telecommuting?
- How many are essential?
- How many are not telecommuting? Why?
- PEF requests NYSIF's plan for employee reintegration to the work place.
- PEF requests NYSIF's plan for employee health and safety after reintegration.
- PEF requests that management bring concerns, issues, and anticipated changes to SWLM for input prior to implementing.

Ms. Carroll advised that the telecommuting committee is on hold due to the pandemic.

Ms. Carroll advised that the overall assessment of the current telecommuting is positive, Management and staff have nothing but positive things to say, it is successful.

The majority of staff is telecommuting. NYSIF has approximately 2100 staff and over 2000 are telecommuting. The NYC mailroom is not telecommuting – they are coming into office a couple times of week. Some are not telecommuting due to illnesses, some are on leave, a couple are technology-challenged, and a few others have administrative related jobs and do not translate well to telecommuting. They are being given other types of work that can be done remotely in order to help them remain productive.

Very few people have been deemed essential. About 20 – and they are not essential on a full-time basis, but rather 1-2 days a week. They may need to report physically to an office to pick up a package. There are also 5 or 6 in IT that are deemed essential. SSAs may be deemed essential to troubleshoot hardware issues on an as needed basis. Mainly IT and DCC staff are essential. DCC was essential 100% of time but this has been reduced to 3 days a week. Ms. Carroll states that management's goal is to keep as many people out of the office for as long as needed.

Regarding reintegration, a committee has been formed and they have been tasked with many things to consider. Will we reintegrate regionally? Will state offices mirror private industry? 25% of staff? 50% of staff? One thing Management is prepared to deal with is the social distancing. Our goal is that every employee will be 6 feet away from each other. Masks will be provided and worn when social distancing is not possible. Many questions are presently unanswered and there is uncertainty at this time.

NYSIF is investigating what type of masks/PPE will be needed, and researching updated technologies such as touchless toilets, water faucets, automatic door openers. NYSIF is looking at all possibilities in order to allow for social distancing such as continuing using MS Teams for meetings, limiting the number of people in the elevator, reconfiguring break rooms and conference rooms. There are a myriad of concerns and no concrete answers at this moment.

NYSIF is reaching out to experts in the field. There will be a suggestion email box. Health and Safety is the priority of management. PPE has been ordered. PEF will be consulted as the agency moves forward.

Ms. Czachorowski proposes that telecommuting be allowed to continue as each NYSIF office reopens, and those who would prefer to not work in the office be allowed to telecommute. This would automatically assist in social distancing. Ms. Carroll states that the telecommuting agreement currently expires on 5/14/20, that it is going to have to be amended, that the unions need to address the telecommuting issue first, but that nothing more can prove the success of a program better than doing it, and NYSIF is doing it. This is proof telecommuting is successful.

**6.) ITS Concerns** – PEF ITS staff have brought specific concerns re: reduced security, training concerns, various specialties, staffing, networking, servicing, and OOT work to this forum with suggestions for better work flow.

- NYSIF's compartmented departments, fragmented ITS specialties, and unequal distribution of work should be reviewed and assessed.
- NYSIF's SSA career path is stagnant.

Mr. Warren reported that SSA training is happening and training seems to be relevant to positions. Mr. Warren is hopeful that additional training specific to various technologies will continue to allow ITS to respond to NYSIF's technological issues.

Ms. Loveday-Chesley speaks to ITIL training and that it has been beneficial. Last technology training was on Windows XP. There are now virtual classes which eliminates travel and hotel costs. It is new technological training.

Ms. Loveday-Chesley advises that server admin security training is on hold because they want to do it live; she suggests that they do it live online and not wait further. September is the earliest proposed date of an in-person training, and Ms. Loveday-Chesley feels that waiting is not in the agency's best interest.

Since Ms. Endries has been made aware, it seems that trainings have been addressed. Pete mentions that downstate hasn't seen any trainings. Mr. Mohan would like to see Safari access granted to all ITS and more technical classes offered for ITS so ITS can keep up with the technology that NYSIF wants to implement.

Ms. Carroll states that direct supervisors should be contacted first.

**7.) Reasonable Accommodation file.**


- PEF requests what the procedure is to view your RA file.

Ms. Seigel reports that Mr. Okafor advised that some RA files are in paper form and some are now electronic. He says a request to him is sufficient.

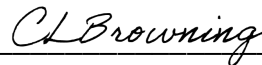
**8.) NYSIF Budget in the midst of COVID-19.**

- Does NYSIF have to cut their budget due to the pandemic/NYS budget deficits?
- Since NYSIF is off budget, are we exempt from layoffs?
- Does NYSIF foresee any layoffs?

Ms. Carroll advises that we are operating business as usual as far as budget is concerned. Two days ago, DOB put out a bulletin ordering a hiring freeze and discretionary spending. NYSIF is uncertain what that means for them. There may be changes that come up. Layoffs are uncertain at this point, the hiring freeze and moratorium on discretionary purchases was just announced, but NYSIF's fiscal responsibility has us in a good position for what is happening.

 5/27/2020

Cliff Meister, NYSIF Co-Chair



Charles Browning, PEF Co-Chair