

PEF/NYSIF Statewide Labor/Management Meeting

Via MS Teams

4/29/21

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

1.) Minutes – 3/25/21 minutes approved and posted to the NYSIF intranet. PEF thanks management for their timely review and posting of these minutes.

Ms. Carroll introduced Executive Director Mary Beth Woods to the team. Ms. Carroll also advised that Mr. Mullen and Ms. VanCamp are in attendance in Mr. Meister and Ms. Gujral's absence.

PEF welcomed Executive Director Woods, Mr. Mullen, and Ms. VanCamp and thanked management for meeting monthly in the midst of this pandemic.

Executive Director Woods expressed looking forward to working with the union and plans to attend quarterly SWLM meetings.

2.) Next Meeting – Next scheduled meeting 5/27/21 & 6/24/21 at 9:30am for pandemic related concerns, and 7/29/21 at 9:30am for a full agenda.

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.

NYSIF advised to seek out local Business Managers in the interim due to the pandemic.

PEF reported that while this item was tabled, it was discovered that there are some differences in how local offices across the state are reporting local health and safety concerns that are not related directly to the pandemic.

Ms. Carroll advised any issues or concerns can be sent to the business manager for that office, or they may email the Covid-19 mailbox even if it does not relate to a Covid-19 issue. They may also email the property-service mailbox, who will then reach out to the appropriate parties. NYSIF will share the list of persons in charge.

4.) Statewide Staffing Levels

a.) CSR 1 Staffing levels:

White Plains is down 3, Long Island is down 3. PEF appreciates 4 new CSR1's in Buffalo and another posting for CSR1 & CSR2.

- * PEF asks if these positions will be filled in White Plains & Long Island.

There have been four CSR2 promotions in Albany and Syracuse.

- * PEF asks if the remaining CSR2 openings posted will be filled.

Ms. Van Camp advised they are still in the process of transferring the Safety Group claims to the Syracuse office. The case numbers should go down as the transfer progresses. They do review the staffing levels monthly and if there are concerns, they will be addressed.

PEF raised the PHS department and members having many tasks and feeling they are doing only "what they can".

Mr. Mullen reports NYSIF is aware that the last year has been crazy and they understand. Due to Covid-19, manning phone banks and the backlog of audits made members feel overworked. There was also a program shift for small businesses. As a result, the call que shot through the roof and calls in the 4th quarter were around 550 a day. They have come down and are now around 300 a day. Due to Covid-19 our auditors were not in the field doing audits which caused a backlog. In September of 2020 they began doing the back audits. There was a backlog of 30,000 and additional staff were asked to help. It has now been reduced back to regular inventory and levels.

PEF noted many members are retiring and more are expected to retire. PEF asked if NYSIF is planning on replacing employees when they retire.

Management responds that they have been looking at retirements and attrition. When we lose an employee, it is not an automatic back fill. Management takes a fresh look at everything before determining if a position is filled. Premium levels have decreased in the last few years due to competition and the rating board reducing the rates.

Ms. Woods advised that we are currently 100 positions over what has been budgeted for, therefore any back fills of positions will have to be justified.

b.) ITS – Staffing – SSA staffing.

- * PEF requests a status/update on SSA staffing.

PEF reports Binghamton has a longstanding issue of not having a physical SSA in the office for the routine day to day floor tasks. There has been an SSA in NYC that has recently retired, and a member of the networking group is leaving soon to go to another agency. ITS needs more staffing all around as we move to a more virtual remote servicing model, one that affects the ability to support the changes. PEF suggests one physical SSA in every NYSIF office.

Ms. Carroll advised that she meets with Charlotte Griffin regularly on staffing. Binghamton does not have that many people in the office that supports needing a physical SSA in that office. As people return to the office the need for an SSA will be looked at. If there are specific issues that need to be addressed, members should reach out to ITS Management.

Ms. Carroll reports that everyday activities are shifting, it is happening across the board, and it is expected to continue due to Covid-19. Ms. Carroll stressed that communication is key.

5.) Reintegration & Telecommuting –

Effective 3/15/20 & 3/17/20 temporary telecommuting where possible was directed by the Governor. It was again extended to 7/2/21.

Maintaining production in every NYSIF department and quality customer service is a mutual goal. PEF and NYSIF management agree that telecommuting is successful, and that health and safety is a mutual priority when returning to the office.

In addition to physical health and safety, PEF members are reporting many benefits including better focus, increased production, general well-being, and overall improved mental health while telecommuting.

PEF appreciates NYSIF reporting out at this forum, and their on-going updates via NYSIF email, NYSIF intranet, and other communications with PEF. PEF seeks to continue to work with NYSIF on safe reintegration.

a.) Office air concerns:

PEF awaits a list of all building's Make/model of HVAC system. NYSIF reports that any questions about systems and filters are to be addressed by GOER.

This information has yet to be provided by GOER to PEF. PEF asks if NYSIF will reconsider sharing directly with PEF.

PEF again raised member concerns about air quality in relation to Covid-19 exposure and asked NYSIF to share any information they have on the systems. Alternatively, if NYSIF could make an announcement reporting out filter changes and air exchanges, it would help to relieve some concerns.

Management advised that they do not have the make and model of each system in each office. NYSIF has professionals that maintain the systems and management has

assured PEF that they are being performed per system requirements and manufacturer specifications

b.) Telecommuting:

PEF seeks to work with NYSIF on implementing an agency telecommuting program, one that would include full-time telecommuting.

It is advantageous for NYSIF to have a telecommuting agreement in place:

- For when the statewide temporary telecommuting policy ends,
- in the event of another surge in Covid-19,
- in the event of any other disaster to come, statewide or local.
- Reduced number of grievances filed due to minimal in-person presence.

NYSIF's proactive approach to telecommuting at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic is what made our telecommuting imminently successful. PEF urges NYSIF to be proactive and agree to an agency telecommuting program.

PEF SWLM submitted a written Telecommuting Program to NYSIF on 12/17/20 for review and implementation.

PEF requests an agency agreement be in place to pick up full time telecommuting when GOER's SW agreement ends.

- PEF asks the status of NYSIF's telecommuting draft.

Ms. Carroll has gathered several agreements from other agencies and the committees have looked at them. Currently the State's agreement has been extended until 7/2/21. The committee has been working on a draft to make sure it is solid and can be used for a while. The agreement will be tied to metrics in order to be a solid and successful. Management assured PEF the committee is working diligently on the agreement.

PEF inquired if OSC was one of the agreements NYSIF was reviewing and it was confirmed that is one of the agreements they have.

When questioned how many days a week/pay period would be allowed for telecommuting NYSIF advised that has not yet been addressed, but the current PEF contract allows for 4 days a pay period. NYSIF stated that is part of the ongoing conversation. PEF notes that the OCS telecommuting agreement speaks to ending in 2023.

PEF asked if NYSIF is considering consolidating office space due to successful telecommuting and the savings that could be had.

NYSIF reports that they do not expect that members will be 100% remote. To maintain social distancing, the extra space will be needed for in-office members.

PEF asked about the status of the RFP for the Albany office building.

Management advised at this time it is in the evaluation stage and the bids are back, but NYSIF is still in the restricted period and cannot discuss at this time.

c.) Conference rooms, Training rooms, and Huddle rooms:

- PEF inquires what management's vision is of using these rooms going forward when more members return to the office.

PEF notes that when first returning to work it was reported common rooms were not to be accessed. At this time, it appears that has changed as people are using the common rooms.

Ms. Carroll advised it has changed a bit. Guidance from the state is changing all the time and policy will be updated accordingly. PEF advised Buffalo IT was booted out of the server room and are now on the public floor, noting that they work with private information such as passwords. Ms. Carroll advised they reach out to IT management.

6.) *Tabled*** 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 workflow.

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

7.) NYSIF Budget in the midst of COVID-19 –

PEF queries NYSIF on their Financial Business Plan and projections for the agency.

- PEF would appreciate Ms. Gujral provide an updated presentation of the information presented in January.

Mr. Mullen previously spoke to the future of NYSIF's business plan. Although premiums are down due to competition and the rating board lowering rates, this is not a concern

at this time. The workers' compensation market is extremely competitive, reporting historic low combined ratios that have not been seen in 40-50 years, and it is not just NY, it is the entire country. Given the reduction in premium due to decreased rates and competition, NYSIF is looking closer at expenses.

Management Concerns:

Ms. Carroll asks that if any members come forward with any issues or concerns regarding returning to work, NYSIF is trying to make it as easy as possible. They welcome all members back. Members should email the Covid-19 mailbox and their supervisor to get approval. More members are returning weekly.

Regarding the cleanliness of the cubicles, some IT staff did come in and clean up their cubicles. It is important that we keep them neat & tidy.

NYSIF asks that those members accruing vacation leave be encouraged to take some time off with supervisory approval. We currently have the extension on the use of vacation hours; however, it will likely end, and we do not want employees building up vacation and then everyone requesting to take vacations at the same time.

8.) PEF invites Executive Director Marybeth Woods to our 7/29/21 meeting.

Executive Director Woods was in attendance for this meeting and plans to attend quarterly SWLM meetings.

PEF requests NYSIF bring concerns, issues, and anticipated changes to SWLM for input prior to implementing. Thank you.

Cliff Meister 05/18/2021
Cliff Meister, NYSIF Co-Chair

CL Browning 05/19/2021
Charles Browning, PEF Co-Chair