

**PEF DOL Statewide Labor Management Chat
May 26, 2021
Minutes**

PEF	MANAGEMENT
Scarlett Ahmed – co-chair	Geoff von Bieberstein – co-chair
Robert Wright	Ed Vargas – Senior Advisor to the Commissioner
Kevin Jones	Mark Cutturini
Mike Singleton	Tracie Covey
Jose Medina	
Lisa Deluca	

A. Introductions

B. Review of previous minutes – The minutes were approved and later posted to the intranet.

C. Health and Safety/Property

1. Re-opening of Career Centers

a. What is the estimated timeframe for re-opening? Management states that this is currently unknown. Reporting patterns will begin shifting but there is not yet any guidance from the Governor’s Office. When Management receives that information they will pass it along to The Union. PEF asked if any preparation to make the offices safer have begun? Management stated that a large number of plexiglass partitions have been shipped to the career centers. There also is a security plan where DOL would be seeking to staff contract security if offices began to be open to the public again.

b. Will vaccinated staff still be required to wear face masks or will NYS follow new CDC guidelines? Management states that right now GOER instructed DOL to continue with current mask guidance. We will eventually follow whatever guidance the Department of Health issues for State Offices. If the guidance changes, employees could continue to wear a mask if they choose to do so.

c. Will there be protocols on social distancing and other safety precautions? Same response as (C.(b.))

2. Follow-up discussion on COOP – Communicable Disease Plans (DOL/UIAB)

– Management states that this document is available. It is a living document and able to be changed as necessary. PEF is concerned that the current plan is not specific enough to give any direction in the event of an incident. PEF also asked why there are two separate plans for DOL and UIAB. Management response was that Chamber had asked for two separate plans to

maintain the UIAB's autonomous unit, but they are basically the same plan.

D. PEF requests discussion of staffing levels and hourlies

- 1. Who makes the decision as to whether a new position is hourly or perm? –** Management states that this decision is not made by one person.
- 2. Is there an update regarding the freeze on permanent hiring? -** Division of Budget put out a bulletin which broadened the criteria which they would approve waivers.
- 3. What are DOL's staffing plans for the next six months? –** The focus has been on UI which will likely continue for the next few months. Behind that staffing in DEWS will likely increase.
- 4. What units will be hiring and how many staff? –** continuing in UI and eventually DEWS.
- 5. Will vacancies that occurred during the pandemic due to retirements be filled? –** Yes, eventually.
- 6. Follow-up discussion of Training and Education test for hourly LSR's and any steps to move long-term hourlies to perm positions? –** Management states that Civil Service is willing to have a discussion. The department is committed to having this discussion but may not be committed to going this route. PEF states that would really like DOL to come on board and support the Training and Education test.

E. DEWS

- 1. When will most DEWS staff be “untethered” from UI projects and return to providing employment services full time? –** Some have already been sent back to their original duties. There is no definitive date, but it will be asap.
- 2. PEF requests discussion regarding staff/management monitoring of RESEA calls via VCC -** PEF states that maybe there needs to be a training regarding the monitoring of RESEA calls. PEF wants to be sure that the monitoring is not used for time and attendance. Management states that they are not using this to discipline for time and attendance.

F. UIAB

- 1. PEF requests discussion regarding staff/management working relationship –** PEF states they have received a lot of complaints lately from the UIAB staff regarding a depressed morale, feeling overworked, feeling disrespected etc. This is coming from multiple offices. What can be done to make the judges happier? Management states that the lines of communication are always open. There has been an increase in inventory recently that caused an increase in the number of hearings per judge. They are currently trying to hire more staff to help

handle the increase in workload.

G. Misc.

1. **Are all reasonable accommodation timeframes extended?** – No.

2. **Will expiration of vacation days be pushed back?** – This decision is made at the GOER level. If employees have a lot of accruals, they should begin making vacation requests.

H. Set next meeting – pre-meeting August 4, 2021 11:00 a.m./meeting August 10, 2021