



CBE Staff Association Spring Information Meeting

Date: April 27, 2016

Directors In Attendance:	Lois Robb (Chairperson), Leah Arkley, Jen Copithorne, Larry Frandle, Jackie Galambos, Nancy Huizinga, Rae-Ann Royal, Wanda Stevenson,
Staff In Attendance:	Albert Herscovitch (Manager), Mark Johnson (Manager), Dawn Scott (Recording Secretary)
Regrets:	Charlene Barva (Director), Linda Soltesz (Director), Sue Wenaas (Convention Coordinator/Staff Development Fund Admin)

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. The meeting was adjourned for 10 minutes as there was not a quorum present. The meeting reconvened at 7:10 pm 2. GREETINGS & INTRODUCTIONS & RECOGNITION - Lois Robb Lois welcomed the members that came out to the meeting and introduced our Board of Directors and Staff Association office staff. 3. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additions to the agenda. 4. FINANCIAL REVIEW - Nancy Huizinga <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are looking at our current Budget vs. Actual. We are at approximately 73% of our budget. Nancy went through the PowerPoint Presentation and reviewed Staff Association's Budget versus Actual expenditures to the members present. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no questions. 5. REPORTS: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Chairperson's Report - Lois Robb <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lois provided an overview of Staff Association's ongoing member concerns/problems which include: bullying, workplace conflict and staffing issues. We are receiving many calls and e-mails from members with a variety of questions around personal days, compassionate leave and workplace conflict. Lois noted that she firmly believes that workplace conflict has really risen this year due to the stress people are under with barebones staffing and employees being challenged to get everything done in a day. With new schools coming on-board over the next year it is changing the dynamics of some schools quite dramatically with dropping enrollment numbers. We regularly talk about these issues and will continue to talk about these issues when we meet with CBE management. b) Managers' Reports - Albert Herscovitch & Mark Johnson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Albert Herscovitch - report attached. Mark Johnson discussed the "new" transfer/layoff process for support staff members who have been identified for transfer and also provided a status update with regards to contract negotiations with CBE. 	Action Items:
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c) Professional Improvement Fellowship (PIF) – Albert Herscovitch

- Albert reviewed the application process for the Professional Improvement Fellowship, the PIF:
 - The applications come out in the early fall.
 - Staff Association Main Body and Professional Support Staff (PSS) members may be granted a PIF for up to 12 continuous months for the pursuit of university or other formal academic studies.
 - PSS members may also be granted a PIF to enable an employee to obtain specific skills, training or to carry out an approved research project.
 - This year, 13 Main Body members and 1 PSS member applied for Professional Improvement Fellowships. Twelve of the 13 Main Body members were granted PIFs as was the 1 PSS member. The number of Main Body PIF applications and the number granted has increased on a yearly basis as members become more aware of this opportunity.
 - Please refer to Article 18 in our Main Body and PSS Collective Agreements for more details.
 - An employee granted a PIF shall be paid 65 percent of their earnings.
 - The PIF has a maximum of 12 months but no minimum duration. We have had members obtain a PIF for as little as a few weeks.
 - If you need help filling out the application, please contact the office and we will be happy to help, as we have been involved in this process for a number of years and can provide you with assistance in how to write an application that will enhance your chances of being successful in your application.

d) Workplace Relationship Committee - Leah Arkley

- The committee consists of representatives from both CBE and the Staff Association.
- Meetings are held monthly and rotate between locations.
- Matters concerning systemic concerns to promote healthy workplace relationships are discussed.
- It's a very good group of people from both sides.
- This year, this has been a great deal of discussion around Position Descriptions and, in particular, the Science Techs. With new representatives on CBE and an extreme effort by Staff Association, there is progress being made.

e) Scholarships - Jackie Galambos

- This is our fifth year that we are offering scholarships.
- Staff Association offers four (4) scholarships at \$1,500 each based on financial need and three (3) additional scholarships at \$1,000 each with no financial restrictions.
- EducationMatters is our fund administrator to ensure that we have a third party managing our scholarships to avoid a potential conflict of interest.
- Every year we have had more applicants apply for the scholarships.
- The link for scholarship information is available on the *homepage* of Staff Association's website.
- Information has been sent out to all Career Practitioners in High Schools to be passed along to students.
- For those of you that are interested, Scholarship Award information sheets are available here this evening.

Lois conveyed her thanks to the membership for coming out and advised that we had concluded the formal portion of the meeting and if everyone was in agreement that we could adjourn the meeting and move on with the question and answer portion of the evening.

- ❖ The consensus from the meeting attendees was to adjourn and continue with the question and answer portion of the evening.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 7:58 pm



Recording Secretary



Chair

Vacation Pay as Pensionable Earnings

As you are all aware from our FYIs, we have an ongoing issue about whether vacation pay is pensionable or not. As of January 2009, the way vacation pay was administered was changed so that it was provided on each pay. This was done on the advice of Alberta Pension Services (APS), that doing so would make it pensionable. APS, by the way, is the delegated authority that administers LAPP. In August of 2013, APS instructed the CBE that they had made a mistake, and that as of January 1, 2014, vacation pay would no longer be considered as pensionable. When we found out about this from a member in March of 2014, the Staff Association entered into conversations with both the CBE and APS and filed a Policy Grievance. The discussions and several follow-up letters to the APS have not led to any clear understanding of the rationale for this change. The CBE subsequently obtained a legal opinion that based on CRA regulations and the Public Sector Pension Plans Act, vacation pay is not pensionable. APS then accepted the CBE stance without doing their own investigation into the relevant Acts or providing any rationale. We have consulted our legal counsel and have filed for a Judicial Review requesting that the most recent APS decision be quashed and that APS conduct its own due diligence and make a decision consistent with the relevant Pension Acts. We have also retained a lawyer who is an expert in these matters to provide an objective legal opinion. This legal opinion will inform us as to how next to proceed. Unfortunately, if we do proceed with the judicial review, the matter is not likely to be heard for at least a year. Although this is a costly venture, the impact on 10 month support staff is significant and we believe supports this expense.

Member Survey

I am going to provide a brief summary of the Member Survey results. First of all, I would like to thank all of you who responded to the survey sent out from the Staff Association office. We received 1,077 responses. Out of those who responded, 783 indicated previous attendance at Staff Association meetings or sessions. The top three reasons for attending were:

- to hear the information provided;
- the opportunity to discuss issues in the large group; and
- the opportunity to network with colleagues.

Interestingly enough, the comments indicate that you would like more time for large group discussion and also more time to network with colleagues.

Time and location of the events were stated as the main reasons for not attending. Time is a difficult one for us to handle because some members want meetings right after work, while others need to go home first to feed children and family, while still others have numerous commitments after work.

Looking into the future, the activities members perceived as potentially most valuable for the Staff Association to organize are:

- orientation meetings for new members;
- position specific sessions to discuss common issues; and
- sessions to review and discuss collective agreement provisions – many of the comments were in fact related to a desire to understand various entitlements in the collective agreement.

We do appreciate the many comments and wishes that were provided and these will be discussed at the Board of Directors table.

Employee Assistance Program Survey

By now, you should all have received an E-mail to participate in an Employee Assistance Survey. This survey was developed and sent out by the Health and Wellness Committee which is made up of representatives from all the employee groups and CBE management. The intent is to elicit feedback from all employees as to what kinds of services would be most valuable to you. This information will be compiled by Sun Life and sent to the Health and Wellness Committee. The final goal is to develop an Employee Assistance Program that is responsive to your needs. If you have not responded to the survey, please do so and encourage others in your workplaces to do the same. It is not often that the CBE requests meaningful feedback from all of its employees with the goal of using it to design a comprehensive program of services.