

USDA Labor Management Forum

November 13, 2013 Minutes

Draft

I. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

The USDA Labor-Management Forum Meeting was called to order at 1:07 p.m.

Member Roll Call:

Labor and Designated Alternates:	Management and Designated Alternates:
Steve Hollis, AFGE	Bryan Knowles, DM, Management Co-Chair
Chris Berry, NFFE	Dan Kline, DM
Linda Williams, NTEU	William P. Milton, Jr., DM
Christopher Ketner, AFSCME	Marilyn Holland, APHIS
Jim Triebwasser, NAAE	Jacqueline Myers, FSIS
Dave Mergen, AFSA	Steve Placek, NAD
Clay Combes, AFGE	Marilyn Holland, APHIS
Marcus Washington, AFSCME	Edna Primrose, RD
Melvin Hawkins, NTEU	Gayle Barry-Norman, NRCS
	Frank McDonough, FNCS
	, FNCS
	S. Moore, OGC
	Arthur Bryant, FS

Other Attendees: Chris Nelson-OSEC, Cheryl Cook-OCIO, Brant Lindsey-NTEU, Kenneth Lescallett-OO, Sue Bussells-OCIO, Dianna Parker-NFC, Jocelyn Somers-AFGE, Trina Liddell-AFSCME, Shantelle Gordon-AFSCME, Arthur Bryant-FS, Tammie Edmonds-NRCS, Noreen Joice-FFAS, Francesca Yabraian-OSEC Duane Williams-AMS;

Note Taker(s): Cara Wattanodom/Myron Greenhow

II. DISCUSSION

Introduction: The **USDA CHCO William P. (Billy) Milton, Jr.**, called the quarterly meeting to order. **Dan Kline** introduced the new Acting Employee and Labor Relations Officer **Kevin McGrath**. **Dan** requested a motion to accept the minutes if there were no objections to them. **Arthur Bryant** made a motion to accept the minutes. **Jacqueline Myers** seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted.

Update on the Blueprint for Stronger Service: **Chris Nelson** gave an update on the four initiatives the ABIC has been working on. He re-emphasized the need for more involvement from the labor organizations. Chris briefed on four priorities:

- 1) Space Management
- 2) Worker Compensation

- 3) Strategic Sourcing
- 4) Marketplace for Administrative Services

Chris noted that efforts to streamline Workers Compensation system across USDA shows promise. Jacqueline Myers' team has reviewed 59 cases that revealed approximately \$300,000 worth of savings are attainable by streamlining.

On Space Utilization, **Chris** proffered this began with a need to freeze the footprint, but now we need to squeeze the footprint. If we can effectively reduce the footprint we stand to realize over a \$1 million in savings over the year.

On Strategic Sourcing, it was acknowledged that more work is required. The goal is to realize over \$5,000,000 in savings through effective bundling of services and further elimination of unnecessary contracts.

On Marketplace for Administrative Services, the goal is to create a work environment that's transparent in how services are delivered. Also, we hope to erect the Centralized Servicing Center of Excellence as a model for other executive agencies.

Our next steps include:

- ❖ Strategic Sourcing, getting contracts in place.
- ❖ Space Utilization, completing the surveys.
- ❖ Marketplace for Administrative Services, populating data.

Chris noted that three of the four initiatives are directly supported by labor representatives. He made a renewed appeal for one or two labor representatives to engage the working group on addressing the Marketplace for Administrative Services. **Chris Ketner** in response asked how labor representation would work. **Chris Nelson** noted that they would have equal representation as part of the working group.

Jacqueline Myers noted that there would be Beta Testing of a new Workers Compensation process in August lasting through the fall 2013. The plan is go live sometime in 2014. **Jacqueline** offered Labor the opportunity to participate on the team or a sub-team supporting this effort.

Billy motioned the agenda be adjusted in view of **Cheryl Cook's** absence, **Arthur Bryant** seconded the motion.

Dan gave his presentation on the PDI policy documents, developed by the Forum PDI Working Group, requiring joint submission of accomplishment data. **Dan** shared that the Labor Relations Officers were advised of the new expectation. All that remained is the development of a one page guidance document. Reporting is expected to commence in October 2013 (fiscal year

2014). **Billy** related that PDI has not been defined by OPM. **Dan** noted that PDI is determined by how the parties define it; and, the Department often holds its Forum Charter out as a model to inquiring parties.

Dan intimated the Department's Labor Relations Office would be getting out of the business of policing PDI issues and concerns between the parties and leaving it to the parties themselves to resolve. **Brant Lindsey** expressed his concern that most agencies have a different definition for what PDI is. **Dan** pointed out that where there is not a joint understanding, this is where the groundwork should begin.

HSPD-12 - Turnstile and Lincpass Update: There being no further questions concerning the PDI policy initiative, the floor was turned over to OCIO's, **Kenneth Lescallett** to brief the Forum on pending Turnstiles Implementation and noting the reasons for delay. **Kenneth** shared that Turnstile implementation is targeted for August; contractors are expected to have them installed within 30 days once they commence installation. **Kenneth** noted that a familiarity period may be afforded affected employees once the turnstiles are in place.

Further, **Kenneth** stated the Advisory Council has been re-established and that a slot for union representation is available. **Billy** suggested that **Dan** approach **Steve Hollis** for a volunteer to serve on the Council.

Dan recounted to the Forum earlier efforts to initiate turnstile implementation.

Billy questioned building access for employees that work after hours. **Kenneth** responded that employees can access afterhours; guards will have handheld devices where there are no turnstiles at available access points. **Francesca Yabraian** wanted to know what access employees without the gold chip will have once the turnstiles are in place. **Kenneth** stated such employees would typically receive a site pass.

Chris Ketner wanted to know if this would result in fewer security guards; **Kenneth** indicated that it will result in one less guard per entrance. **Melvin Hawkins** asked the same question as it related to Kansas City security staffing. **Kenneth** did not know at the present time. **Billy** thanked **Kenneth** for his no notice availability in **Curtis Wilburn's** absence.

Billy turned the meeting over to **Cheryl Cook** for an update on Lincpass implementation. **Cheryl** deferred to **Sue Bussells** for the actual update on the progress being made in increasing Department-wide participation in the use of the Lincpass. **Sue** informed the Forum that some agencies were nearing the 50% mark; others were approaching the 100% mark, yet others still had considerable work to do.

Statement on DOMA Decision by OPM Acting Director: **Billy** gave the Forum a brief update regarding the OPM determination to extend benefits coverage to same sex partners. He shared that agencies have 60 days to implement the new guidance. **Billy** suggested that anyone

with questions should contact the Benefits Coordinator **Darla Bullard**. **Edna Primrose** expressed her appreciation for how quickly the guidance was communicated to the agencies.

(The Forum took a break for approximately 10 minutes; the meeting resumed at 2:37 p.m.)

Feds Feed Families: **Billy** introduced Associate General Counsel **Arlene Leland** to the Forum after the break. **Billy** drew attention to the Secretary's belief that the Feds Feed Family Initiative belongs with the Department of Agriculture, "we feed families." It's was noted that one in four children suffer from hunger in the U.S. during the summer months. The USDA provided over 2.7 million pounds of food in support of the 2012 food drive. The Federal government on a whole accumulated over seven million pounds last year. Since the program's inception, four years ago, the Federal government has accumulated over 15 million pounds of food.

Billy shared that USDA would be issuing an advisory allowing the excusal of employees from their regular duties to glean in participating farms and warehouses to support this Feds Feed Families Initiative. At this point, **Billy** introduced **Duane Williams**. **Duane** led the Government Feds Feed Families Initiative last year for the Federal government. **Duane** informed the Forum of the August Pledge-athon. **Billy** made sure everyone was aware he would be competing in the Chili Cook-off. **Duane** stated there would also be an upcoming golfing event. The event is scheduled to take place in Crystal Manor Golf Course, Bristol Virginia on July 28, 2013.

Improving Employee Morale - Employee Viewpoint Survey: **Billy** wanted to know what specific questions Labor had regarding the 2012 EVS Results. **Dave Mergen** asked how the information is used to improve employee morale given that USDA did not fare well in the results. **Billy** emphasized that the Secretary had tasked him to develop metrics and action plans based on ten questions from the EVS to address this concern. This is effort is being undertaken through the Cultural Transformation Action Plan. A union representative served on the working group at one time, but none serves at present.

Frank McDonough noted that each agency is responsible for coming up with an action plan. It should address:

- how did you do that;
- what did it take to get there;

Frank pointed out, we scored well for childcare, yet we don't have a facility. He suggests what these action plans may have done is so thoroughly alienated employees it compelled a response. **Sue Bussells** asked if anyone brought in outside expertise. **Jacqueline Myers** shared that **Dr. Angela Kelly** held a meeting regarding the FSIS Action Plan; it was encouraged to have others share their action plan with our organization. **Billy** noted there are real issues with the OPM EVS; it does not promote a level playing field. The Department did reach out to the Department of Transportation which had received impressive scores in the recent EVS.

Billy pointed out that the moratorium on Awards would continue and that another \$24 million must be absorbed in FY 2014.

Confirmation of Meeting Dates: The Forum confirmed the next quarterly meeting for October 23, 2013.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

DRAFT