

Statewide Labor Management Committee (SLMC)

****Special Meeting****

Meeting Minutes

March 26, 2020

1:00 pm

Skype Tele-Conference¹

Members in Attendance:

Co-Chairs:

Saundra Ross Johnson, Cabinet Secretary

Department of Human Resources (DHR)

Michael Begatto, Executive Director

American Federation of State, County &
Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

Secretary Co-Chair Designee

Eric Episcopo, Director

Dept. of Labor Relations and Employment Practices (DHR)

SLMC Members:

Nicole Majeski, Deputy Secretary

Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT)

Joseph Swiski, Chief of Administration

Dept. of Safety and Homeland Security (DSHS)

Jennifer Biddle, Chief Bureau of Administration

Department of Corrections (DOC)

Jeffrey Taschner, Executive Director

Department State Education Association (DSEA)

Nelson Hill, Assistant to President

United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)

Subject Matter Experts (SME)

Molly Magarik, Deputy Secretary

Department of Health & Social Services (DHSS)

Joanna Carlson, Human Resource Specialist III

Department of Human Resources (DHR)

Minute Recorder: Koshema Fassett, Labor Relations & Employment Practices Specialist (DHR)

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Johnson at 1:02 p.m. with roll call conducted by Episcopo. Co-Chair Johnson thanked the participants for their attendance and the importance of continuing timely communication related to the COVID virus to keep everyone informed. Co-Chair asked if C-Chair Begatto had any comments; none at this time. Co-Chair introduced the Subject Matter Experts (noted above).

¹ In consideration of the Governor's declared State of Emergency and directive to apply social distancing as a result of the Coronavirus, this SLMC meeting was held by tele-conference.

II. Status of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

Co-Chair Johnson requested that Magarik provide relevant updates:

- Delaware unfortunately has its first reported death due the COVID virus. The person was an older gentleman in his 60s from Sussex County; he was hospitalized outside of Delaware.
- Unfortunately, this number may increase as there are currently a number of persons in the hospitals whom have tested positive for the COVID virus.
- Encourages everyone to “act as though you have it,” and if you can stay home to do so. Persons are recovering; however, you have to remember that while you may feel well, you could infect someone else and there be a different outcome.
- Co-Chair Johnson’s team has done a good job on the Frequently Asked Questions related to the virus and sharing that information.
- The Governor continues to modify the current State of Emergency to keep its population as safe as possible while minimizing employee’s exposure to the public. Many employees that are not in 24/7 facilities have been relocated to other work locations; which is not always possible for those who are essential or work in 24/7 facilities.
- Department of Public Health (DPH) has mandated all nursing homes to screen everyone coming into their facilities in addition to having a checklist of things to look out for. This requirement also applies to essential business. DPH working with other agencies to streamline this process and ensure compliance.
- Custodial staff has been redeployed to do more cleaning and sanitization.
- Recalled a question from the last meeting about essential personnel continuing to have to report to work. Essential personnel continue to receive compensation, many a portion of the salary is drawn from federal funding, as it justifies the need for the work. The public deserves to receive the same level of service, although it may look different; over the phone or maybe video.
- DHSS will continue to provide support to other agencies and appreciates those that have stepped up during this crisis to continue to offer support at work and with the clients we serve.

Co-Chair Johnson thanked Magarik for her updates and stated that DPH also has a video on this subject which should be available soon. Co-Chair Johnson asked if there were any questions.

Co-Chair Begatto inquired what provisions are being made to the schools; acknowledging the State has no jurisdiction. Magarik stated that DPH has worked with the school districts to provide the latest guidance; and have updated the Public Emergency Guide and posters and signs not just for employees, but for anyone when they someone not following the guidance they can report.

Taschner stated that Magarik is accurate, this is the same information the schools have been receiving. Taschner stated that they are looking into remote learning, but the schools also have a responsibility to DPH and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) about preparing the workforce. Taschner referenced a one page Q&A one essential workplaces from the CDC which may be helpful for our employees.

Co-Chair Begatto thanked Magarik and Taschner for their comments. Co-Chair Johnson inquired if there were any other questions for Magarik; there were none.

Co-Chair Johnson asked for Carlson to provide updates. Carlson presented:

- Thanked everyone for their active participation as the State tries to get answers to questions and craft responses consistent with the guidance that is currently available.
- Recalled that Co-Chair Begatto had a question from the previous meeting pertaining to casual/seasonal employees and if they could be compensated in cases when they are sent for testing or requirement treatment.
 - Carlson indicated that the Statewide Benefits Office group funding does not have the means or provisions to pay for this. Casual/Seasonal employees may refer to the State's FAQs² #6. This section includes the following language:

“Employees who are not covered under a State of Delaware Health Plan should contact their primary health care provider or the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) at (866) 408-1899.”

Co-Chair Johnson thanked Carlson for the update and inquired if there were any questions from members of the Committee.

Majeski inquired with the update to the school closures now being extended to the May 15, 2020, will the fourteen days of Personal Emergency Leave (PEL) will be extended. Co-Chair Johnson stated that they will research and review for a response.

Co-Chair Johnson asked if there were any other Committee questions.

III. Public Comment

Co-Chair Johnson asked if there were any public comments or questions; there were none.

IV. Adjournment

Co-Chair Johnson confirmed that there will be another Special SLMC meeting to discuss new updates and progression of the Coronavirus next Thursday, April 2, 2020. This meeting will also be held via Skype tele-conference.

Meeting adjourned at 1:22 pm. with motion to dismiss by Co-Chair Begatto, second by Majeski.

² The State of Delaware's FAQs on the COVID-19 virus may be found at: <https://dhr.delaware.gov/>