



**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY**

Board of Directors

*Human Resources and Labor Relations
Committee*

*Wednesday, March 14, 2012
11:00 a.m.*

1. Call to order Anthony Griffin
Chair
2. Team Blue Communications.....Christopher J. Carew
Chief of Staff
Information Item:
 - o [State of Labor Relations at DC Water](#)
 - o Communications with all employees
3. Executive Session
4. Adjournment.....Anthony Griffin



DC WATER LABOR RELATIONS PROGRAM

Christopher Carew, Chief of Staff
March 14, 2012

LABOR RELATIONS PROGRAM

“The world...cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”

- Albert Einstein

“Whatever course you decide upon there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

WORKING TOGETHER TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

The Authority resolves most labor issues at the department level of management.

- ❑ Most issues resolved without involvement of the GM or Labor Relations Department.
- ❑ Issues that do require labor relations intervention are often resolved quickly through an informal process.
- ❑ Issues that cannot be resolved through an informal process result in grievances that are usually resolved through a formal settlement or action that results in the union withdrawing the grievance.
- ❑ Arbitration is the result of the rare instance when both labor and management possess principled assessment of an issue and have agreed on the need for a third party resolve the matter.

COMMUNICATION IS THE BRIDGE TO RESOLUTION

- ❑ Assistant general managers maintain an open-door environment that encourages informal dialogue.
- ❑ Each department has developed a culture and labor-management rapport that is driven both by the nature of the environment and the personalities of labor and management leadership. When this process is working, the Labor Relations Department does not interfere or attempt to change the model.
- ❑ Assistant general managers maintain communication through monthly labor/management meetings.

Consumer Services

Charles Kiely, AGM

Union – AFGE Local 872

- ❑ Chuck Sweeny, Director Water Services (126 union employees)
- ❑ Cuthbert Braveboy, Director Sewer Services (126 union employees)
- ❑ Lauren Preston, Director Customer Service (92 union employees)



COMMUNICATION IS THE BRIDGE TO RESOLUTION

- ❑ Each Director in Consumer Services holds monthly labor-management meetings.
- ❑ Monthly meetings are:
 - ❑ The foundation of the formal labor-management relationships.
 - ❑ An opportunity for union officials to resolve issues prior to filing a grievance, when other informal efforts have not been successful.
 - ❑ An opportunity to collaborate on routine safety, resource, and work process issues.
- ❑ Sewer services has created subcommittees to address training, equipment, work process, and technology concerns.
- ❑ Customer Service and Water Services have utilized monthly meetings to address training, equipment, work process, and technology concerns.

Engineering and Technical Services

Len Benson, Chief Engineer

Union – AFGE Local 631

- ❑ David McLaughlin, Director
Engineering and Technical
Services (83 union employees)
- ❑ Brian McDermott, Acting
Director Permit Operations (8
union employees)



COMMUNICATION IS THE BRIDGE TO RESOLUTION

- ❑ The Chief Engineer is responsible for two departments with union employees: The Department of Engineering and Technical Services and the Permits Department.
 - ✓ The Director of DETS holds monthly labor-management meetings as well as an open door policy with union leadership to enable prompt resolutions of issues.
 - ✓ The Permits Department is a new stand-alone department, now remotely located, and still has an acting director. Once this position is filled, the labor-management relationship will mirror the one in DETS.

Wastewater Treatment

Walter Bailey, AGM

Unions – AFSCME Local 2091 and AFGE Local 631

- ❑ Aklile Tesfaye, Director Wastewater Treatment (87 union employees)
- ❑ Salil Kharkar, Director Process Engineering (16 union employees)
- ❑ Anthony Mack, Director Maintenance Services (70 union employees)



COMMUNICATION IS THE BRIDGE TO RESOLUTION

- ❑ The Wastewater Treatment Department recently reorganized and created a new director post, and the Maintenance Services Department has a relatively new director . During this transition, labor and management have worked together to resolve issues in an amicable fashion.
- ❑ Each of the directors in wastewater treatment maintain open door policies and resolve most issues without any formal process.
- ❑ The new director for Maintenance Services has established a standing monthly meeting on shop issues and a monthly meeting specifically to address safety issues.

Support Services Katrina Wiggins, AGM

Union – AFSCME Local 2091 and AFGE Local 631

- ❑ Steve Caldwell, Director
Facilities and Security (43
union employees)
- ❑ Rosalind Inge, Director
Procurement (20 union
employees)



COMMUNICATION IS THE BRIDGE TO RESOLUTION

- ❑ Support Services directors hold monthly labor-management meetings, which have been used to:
 - ✓ Create flex schedules for warehouse workers during the summer.
 - ✓ Discuss and coordinate safety, fire protection and evacuation procedure training for warehouse staff.
 - ✓ Obtain safety gear not normally issued but requested by staff - uniforms with safety striping instead of an additional vest; prescription safety eyewear for staff who wear glasses.
 - ✓ Work collaboratively to resolve pay disparities for trade positions in facilities.

COMMUNICATION IS THE BRIDGE TO RESOLUTION – EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The tone for communication, collaboration and resolution is established by the Office of the General Manager.

Upon arrival at DC Water, General Manager Hawkins immediately identified the need to improve internal communications as a top priority.

COMMUNICATION IS THE BRIDGE TO RESOLUTION – EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

OGM BREAKING COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

- ❑ Office of the General Manager literally and figuratively opened its doors, redesigning office space to accommodate employees visiting, unlocking doors separating departments, encouraging employees to visit OGM and HCM (HR).
- ❑ All DC Water employees now have their own email address; access to computers enhanced.
- ❑ 40 meetings with the Chief of Staff within first months on the job to discuss how to improve communication within DC Water.
- ❑ Comprehensive report identified a list of over 200 action items to improve workplace communication between all levels of staff; more than half have been implemented or otherwise progressed.
- ❑ Departments' staff and management participated in the Team Blue Challenge, which identified further immediate solutions to improving daily operations.
- ❑ Full-time internal communications manager hired.

COMMUNICATION IS THE BRIDGE TO RESOLUTION – EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The General Manager's Office connecting with union leadership:

- ❑ Quarterly meetings with general manager, chief of staff and union presidents.
- ❑ Union briefings and written explanations of Team Blue projects and Team Blue PACT pledge – input sought from union leaders on how to define expectations for management behavior and decisions.
- ❑ Chief of staff has held numerous individual meetings with union presidents, including one-on-one lunch and breakfast meetings.
- ❑ Chief of staff had union presidents write first draft of a staff notice regarding fair and equitable treatment in the disciplinary process, edited and finalized by management but ultimately reflecting union language and objectives.

COMMUNICATION IS THE BRIDGE TO RESOLUTION – EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

- ❑ **Facility-Safety Tours:** One repeated issue raised in the Team Blue Project was that of safety and facility improvements at DC Water worksites. In response, the Chief of Staff led tours of the major DC Water operational facilities (Bryant Street, O Street, Blue Plains). These tours were led by union-designated staff members and included department managers responsible for resolving any identified issues (including Facilities, Maintenance, Finance, Water Services, Sewer Services, Wastewater, and Engineering).
- ❑ **Voluntary Leave Donation Program:** Establishment of a voluntary leave donation program had long been requested by DC Water employees. The Unions approached the enterprise at a Joint Labor Management meeting with a proposal and negotiations commenced resulting in joint development of a new program.

COMMUNICATION IS THE BRIDGE TO RESOLUTION – EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

- ❑ **Duty Station Incentive Program:** In response to staff concerns about increased training and responsibilities, DC Water and AFGE 631 collaborated to offer a Wastewater Treatment Operator Incentive Pay Program. This program rewards operators who pursue Operator III or IV level licenses and/or process area proficiency. In exchange for obtaining and maintaining this advanced level of knowledge, employees can receive an increase in compensation.
- ❑ **Issuance of new ID Badges and Parking Passes:** After being notified by several of the unions of concerns regarding the upcoming issuance of new badges and parking passes, Human Resources met with representatives from AFGE 631, AFGE 872, AFGE 2553 and NAGE. DC Water and the Unions agreed to modify procedures that required that employees provide their car registrations when receiving the new parking pass. The compromise reached provides the Unions the privacy they sought while providing DC Water with a mechanism to ensure accurate information from employees is on record.

LABOR RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

When matters cannot be resolved informally at the Department level, the Labor Relations Department manages resolution of the issue. The Labor Relations Department is comprised of:

Clifford Mustaafa Dozier, Esq., SPHR
Manager

Deborah Leahy, Esq.
Labor Relations Specialist
AFGE 631, NAGE R3-06

Charles Zamstein,
Labor Relations Specialist
AFGE 872, AFGE 2553

Christal Mims Williams, Esq.
Labor Relations Specialist
AFGE 872, AFSCME 2091

LABOR RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

- ❑ Provides counsel to management on interpretation of collective bargaining agreements, laws, regulations and Authority policies.
- ❑ Provides training for management on collective bargaining agreements and Authority policies.
- ❑ HCM provides training on topics not covered by Labor Relations. Topics include compliance issues (FMLA, EEO, Drug Testing, Leave and Attendance).

LABOR RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

- ❑ Seeks to settle matters based on interpretation of the collective bargaining agreement, applicable laws, regulations and Authority policies.
- ❑ The unions and management are able to resolve most issues before it becomes necessary to hold an arbitration and have a third party issue a binding decision.