



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
HUMAN RESOURCES AND LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE
JANUARY 14, 2026
(via Microsoft Teams)**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

1. Jed Ross, Principal, Chair, District of Columbia
2. Howard Gibbs, Principal, Vice Chair, District of Columbia
3. Christopher Herrington, Principal, Fairfax County
4. Robert Hawkins, Alternate, District of Columbia

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

1. Unique Morris-Hughes, Principal, District of Columbia

DC WATER STAFF

1. David L. Gadis, CEO/General Manager
2. Lola Oyeyemi, Interim Chief Financial Officer & EVP
3. Kirsten Williams, Chief Administration Officer and EVP
4. Amber Jackson, Chief People Officer and EVP & Interim Chief Legal Officer
5. Barbara Mitchell, Associate General Counsel and Director of Government and Legal Affairs
6. Michelle Rhodd, Secretary to the Board
7. Shawn Allen Brown, Vice President for Employment, Labor & HR Compliance

I. CALL TO ORDER

The DC Human Resources and Labor Relations Committee meeting was called to order by Chairperson Jed Ross at 9:35 AM. Board Secretary Michelle Rhodd called the roll.

II. UNION TOPICS

Reorganization within Engineering

Jermaine Quattlebaum, AFGE 631, raised a concern about reorganization within Engineering, including moving employees' work locations or supervisors without advance notice to the unions.

Shawn Brown, Vice President of Employment, Labor, and HR Compliance, agreed that material changes to union members' working conditions should be communicated to the unions in advance. He highlighted two recent occasions when the union was informed about a change in employees' second-line supervisors. However, he acknowledged recent instances when supervisory changes may have been made without prior notice to the union. He stated that the managers responsible were reminded to report all such changes promptly to HR and Labor Relations.

Chair Jed Ross noted Mr. Brown's commitment to ensuring future changes to working conditions are duly reported to unions.

DC Water's Failure to Implement the Union's Sick Leave Code

Jonathan Shanks, AFGE 872, and Barbara Milton discussed DC Water's lack of adoption of the union's sick leave code. Chair Ross stated that DC Water's definitions for unscheduled and scheduled sick leave align with industry standards and the practice of the District of Columbia.

Committee member Howard Gibbs stated that the CBA contains all necessary information to address the issue, and a third-party arbiter may be consulted for interpretation if there is continued disagreement.

There were no further questions from the unions. Chair Ross observed that AFGE 872 could exercise options under the agreement to escalate their request if the response of management was not satisfactory.

Interference with Union Representation

Mr. Quattlebaum reported that the VP of Labor Relations did not allow a union representative to join a meeting about a member's promotion complaint, which he argued limits union support and denies employees' access to unbiased representation. He cited Article 5, Section B of the CBA, affirming the union's right to attend such meetings. Additionally, the member was told his complaint outcome could be affected if he refused to meet without union representation. Mr. Shanks also mentioned a case in his union where the chosen representative was barred from a neutral party hearing.

Chair Ross noted that Mr. Shanks' issue had been raised with management, which was completing analysis of the issue.

Mr. Brown responded to Mr. Quattlebaum stating that Article 5, Section B, did not apply to the meeting in question. He clarified that the meeting was an investigative interview intended to discuss the employee's personal knowledge regarding certain allegations. He emphasized that the employee's Weingarten rights had not been triggered as it was not

reasonable to expect disciplinary action against them to result. Therefore, union representation was not required. He also noted that investigative meetings are now and will continue to be confidential, consistent with best practices.

Regarding Mr. Shanks' inquiry, Mr. Brown stated that he continues to disagree with the union's interpretation but will engage outside counsel to research the CBA's requirements concerning whether the union may have representatives who are not union officials, nor DC Water employees, present at wholly internal Neutral Party Hearings. Mr. Brown reaffirmed his respect for the union despite their differing interpretations.

Non-union Employees Not Provided Timelines for Bonus Checks

Mr. Quattlebaum reported that the union presidents received an advance copy of the FAQ sheet regarding 2025 staff bonuses for approval. However, he stated that union members did not receive the approved document. Mr. Brown provided a date on which the FAQ was distributed to staff, but Mr. Quattlebaum asserted that several union members had not received the information. Mr. Quattlebaum also acknowledged receipt of the non-union FAQ by staff and mentioned queries from union members regarding the lack of a similar notice for union members.

Mr. Brown confirmed the various dates on which the FAQs were sent to union presidents and members but committed to resend the union notice later in the day.

FAQ For Wage Overpayment Was Not Sent to Union Employees

Kevin Poge, AFSCME 2091, noted that the FAQ sheet for wage overpayment was received by union members.

Mr. Brown said the OMAC team sent the FAQ to all employees via the union email list on January 12, 2026, and emphasized ongoing efforts to prevent future overpayments. He confirmed that the overpayment FAQ went to all employees, not just those affected by overpayments.

Mr. Herrington stated that it is critical to remain in proactive communication with union leadership.

Ms. Milton requested a forwarded copy of the email sent to union members to verify the date of the notice.

Chair Ross thanked union leaders for providing advance details of their agenda items. He asked Mr. Brown to ensure the union email list is updated regularly.

III. HR UPDATE

Amber Jackson, Chief People Officer and EVP & Interim Chief Legal Officer, noted that employees returned to work after the holidays with strong morale due to the additional days off granted by David Gadis, CEO/General Manager.

The wellness program has launched a ride-along series to foster collaboration and help team members better understand their colleagues' roles.

In response to a question from Mr. Herrington, Ms. Jackson elaborated on Lincoln Tech's skilled trade program, noting that the committee had identified recruitment challenges for hard-to-fill positions, particularly those requiring certifications like DCPEs, and highlighted partnerships with institutions such as Lincoln Tech to expand the applicant pool. Regional collaboration is also encouraged, including joint apprenticeship and internship programs to address staffing needs. Certification programs at Lincoln Tech help fill entry-level instrumentation positions. Ms. Jackson noted she would provide additional information on the Lincoln Tech collaboration after the meeting.

Mr. Herrington noted that recruitment for skill roles requires a coordinated strategy across the organization and recommended seeking partnerships with other regional authorities. He agreed to follow up with Ms. Jackson offline about potential opportunities to collaborate with Fairfax County.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:21 AM.

Follow-up Actions:

1. Mr. Brown will verify that the bonus checks FAQ sent to union members was the correct document and will reissue the notice if it is found that the wrong notice was distributed.
2. Ms. Milton requested a forwarded copy of the overpayment FAQ email sent to union members to verify the date of the notice.
3. Ms. Jackson will provide additional information on the Lincoln Tech collaboration after the meeting.
4. Mr. Herrington will follow up with Ms. Jackson about potential opportunities to collaborate with Fairfax County.