

**EMPLOYEE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
SUMMARY**

Thursday, April 10, 2014, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.
East Conference Room, Rampton Complex

PRESENT: Carlos Braceras, Executive Director
Shane Marshall, Deputy Director
Becky Bradshaw, Comptroller
Carlos Rodriguez, HR Manager
Cherissa Wood, Operations
Denece Sheppick, Region Two
Donna Beagley, Region Four
Ivan Hartle, Project Development
Jake Brown, Region Two
Jessica Rice, Project Development
Keith Oman, Region One
Liz Olschewski, Administration
Mike Cole, Region Three
Nick Kenczka, Program Development
Ree Scheena, Region Four
Ryan Halverson, Region One
Tawnya Lang, Operations
Diane Josie, Executive Assistant

The meeting began at 10:05 a.m.

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING .25 PERCENT DISCRETIONARY INCREASE

Shane said during the last General Legislative Session, the Legislature approved a 1.25 percent increase.

One percent is a general increase to all employees. This will be an increase in wage; there is no change to salary ranges. The increase will be given to employees that are Schedule B, AR, AD, AB, and TLs with benefits. Those at the maximum of their range will get a one percent bonus rather than an increase. If an employee is a few pennies away from the maximum of their range, the increase will put them into longevity and the difference will be in the form of a bonus.

Shane said the other .25 percent approved by the Legislature is discretionary money. Governor Herbert has asked each agency to figure out how to distribute the discretionary money and submit their plan to him for approval. Carlos and Shane would like to get input from the EAC. Does the group think there should be a minimum raise or bonus? What does the group think the criteria should be for the raises?

Shane said .25 percent translates to \$195,000 for UDOT. If we give .50 cents per hour raises, they would go to 187 employees. It's not a lot of money.

One EAC member asked if this money is an opportunity to look at the groups that fall under the Market Comparability Adjustments. Shane said the increases need to be performance-based. He said another sub-category could be the MCAs. Carlos pointed out it is the Legislature's responsibility to fix the MCA issues. He thinks making the increase merit-based would be more effective.

Another member asked if this increase is on top of the six percent ASIs. Carlos reminded the group they need to have the money every year for ASIs before they're given. The ASI program would continue.

Shane said his first question for the group is should there be a minimum amount of increase. The group discussed the benefits of an amount of increase versus percentage of increase. The group mentioned the option for a one-time bonus. Carlos said the money wouldn't go away next year. Becky said one-time bonuses are hard to track. Shane confirmed with the group that they want to steer away from one-time bonuses. The group agreed the minimum increase should be .50 per hour.

Shane asked for the group's input on the criteria for a performance-based increase. After a lengthy discussion the group decided on the following recommendations.

Screening criteria:

- Successful Performance Plans for the last two years.
- Must be vested.
- No on-going disciplinary or corrective action in FY14.
- Anyone who received an increase in salary (outside of the general increase) in FY14 would not qualify. Examples include ASIs, promotions, etc.
- No one at the maximum of their range or in longevity is eligible.

Performance-based criteria:

- Employees who go above and beyond.
- Employees who are innovative.
- Employees who provide exceptional customer service.
- Employees who helped the Department save money.

The group discussed how the increases would be distributed. They would be distributed among the Department based on the percentage of employees in each group. Shane said even though the EAC set some screens and criteria, the supervisors are going to have to determine who gets the increases. One member of the group said she thinks the supervisors will appreciate the criteria.

ACTION ITEM: Shane offered to put together draft guidelines and send them to the group.

UDOT's guidelines need to be sent to the Governor's office for approval. The deadline is April 29, 2014.

Carlos told the group he appreciates their help with this issue. They brought up things the leaders would not have thought of.

One group member asked if ASIs are being given out in the Regions. The employees in the Regions want to know if there is a chance of getting an ASI. If they're not being given, what is the reason? They want to know the transparency of what is being given out. Shane asked if a report every year would be helpful. The employees agreed it would help.

ACTION ITEM: Carlos asked Shane to prepare a report based on Group or Region to share with the appropriate EAC listing the number of ASIs allowable and the number awarded. The report should include an explanation if they are not being distributed. The report should be done by the end of June.

2. NEW LEGISLATION

Carlos Rodriguez was asked to discuss new legislation that impacts employees.

One EAC member asked about the hands-free legislation and how it impacts driving state vehicles. Carlos discussed the background of the legislation. Shane is working with Jason Davis on a new policy implementing this law. It will have a huge impact on how snow plow drivers operate during the winter.

One member of the group asked about the bill regarding pan handling in the right of way. The bill passed. UDOT maintenance employees will not be responsible for enforcing the bill.

Carlos said H.B. 194 was regarding changes to retirement. Effective January 1, 2014, sick leave will not be a retirement benefit. This doesn't impact how sick leave is paid out for any existing balances before January 1, 2014. There is no cap on the sick leave accrued. The bill allows the State to match \$26 per pay period for employees participating in a 401k.

Carlos said insurance rates will increase. He said Flex spending limits are still \$2,500 and the day care limit is \$5,000.

ACTION ITEM: Carlos assigned to send out the insurance information to employees in the next week.

An EAC member asked about health insurance for seasonals. Carlos explained a measurement period will start for all new employees beginning May 1. If a seasonal works an average of 30 hours per week, the agency will have to provide health insurance. HR needs to know when an employee is no longer employed.

3. TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

Carlos asked Becky to provide her background and experience using UDOT's tuition reimbursement program. She said tuition assistance is available to Schedule B employees attending an accredited college and earning a grade of C or better. The money does not cover the cost of books, parking fees, etc. If the class is job-related, the reimbursement amount is 100 percent. Non-work related classes are reimbursed at 75 percent. The maximum reimbursement per employee is \$5,250 per calendar year.

ACTION ITEM: Carlos suggested a blog story about the tuition reimbursement program.

4. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

- **Employee of the Year, Leader of the Year, and Career Achievement Awards Recognition in Groups/Regions**

Shane said the Group and Region finalists for each of the three awards will be recognized at lunches held at the Complex. The winners for each of the three awards will be announced during the UDOT Annual Conference. The reason for this change was to allow the employees to be recognized in front of more people.

- **Employee of the Month**

Shane said the Department had this program in place for a while. He would like feedback on reinstating the program.

He asked if money should be attached to the program. Some of the group said the program is good for morale even if the employee just received a plaque. Everyone agreed it would be good to reinstate the program. They thought it would be good to distribute a list of nominees and the winner for each month amongst the individual Groups or Regions.

Shane said this item will be discussed during the Improving Communication Meeting with the other senior leaders.

One group member asked about giving a plaque or clock to recognize retiring employees. They did it in the past, but have been told they can no longer do that.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEM: What does the Department do to recognize retiring employees?

- **Internal Communication**

Shane asked the group how many people look at the blog. No one raised their hands. He asked how many read Carlos' e-mail about changes involving the legislature. Everyone raised their hands. One member said a lot of employees don't have access to e-mail.

Shane asked the group about the best way to reach as many employees as possible. One member said he brings up information in safety meetings in his station. He said it's up to management to communicate with employees. Managers are able to explain the message and the reason for it. Another member said employees don't look at messages that affect them.

Shane asked if employees know how to find information they need or want. One group member said he doesn't think so. Carlos mentioned the "Ask John" e-mail. He said it dropped off after it was initiated. One member said the change in the Employee Gateway threw off a few employees.

An EAC member suggested that if weekly staff meetings were held, information can be given to the employees. The leaders need to identify what information needs to get to all employees. Another member asked if there is a way to put the information on the web and provide a link to supervisors to discuss the information. He suggested a list of bullet point items that is updated every two weeks.

Carlos mentioned his visits to the Groups and Regions. He likes the chance to talk to employees. One member said employees like it when Carlos goes out to talk with them.

An EAC member said it helps her to communicate better if she keeps her messages short and concise.

5. FUTURE DISCUSSION ITEMS

Carlos asked the group if they have any items for next meeting. Are there any items the group feels should be priority?

The group had the following suggestions.

- Maintenance activities falling behind in Region Four.
- Flexible schedules.
- Losing FTEs and doing more with less.
- No overtime.

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.