MINUTES

EASTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
Labor Management Committee
Supervisory Unit Management Committee
Thursday, June 15, 2000
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

PUB 357

Members Present: Kandys Dygert, Mike Irish, Rod Nicholls, Judith Penrod Siminoe, Del Thompson
Resource Persons: Ken Berg, Jo Rogers, Rick Romero, Karen Wichman
Recording Secretary: Connie Gross

I. Call to Order

Judith Siminoe called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

II. Old Business:

Minutes of May 18, 2000, II.a.—Judith Siminoe
The minutes were accepted as presented.

Disposition: The minutes of May 18, 2000 were accepted as presented and will be distributed according to the contract.

Proposed Key and Key Card Procedure, II.b.—Mike Irish
Mr. Irish said he revised the procedure, restricted to item #5, after receiving some suggestions from Del Thompson. Mainly he took out the fines language and removed the table of charges. It was noted that the title Business Manager should be replaced with Chief Financial Officer. Labor was concerned with the policy being equitably applied. Mr. Thompson had suggested a reimbursement based on person’s salary—a charge mechanism under which the fine was proportional to a persons ability to pay. Mr. Irish doesn’t see where salary enters into it, noting that his system takes into account negligence and cost of replacement to re-secure the area. Ms. Siminoe suggested including a step whereby the individual can have input to the process before a final decision is made. Ms. Dygert asked about the difference between keys and other university equipment. She feels we need a penalty that is meaningful but not financially devastating. Mr. Irish stated he is trying to recover the cost of re-securing the area. The other option is that the keys, like computers, could not be taken off campus, thereby requiring a check-in process at the end of each shift. Labor does not find the current proposal agreeable. They will put together a counter proposal for an equitable solution regarding classified staff. Ms. Dygert noted that there is a process for staff who are negligent in their work: neglect of duty with a disciplinary action, but no punitive damages—the university would not have that loss replaced. Jo Rogers noted that the Union contract, Article IV, Section 18, adresses negligence in university supplied equipment. Ms. Siminoe noted that the security interest hasn’t changed—the first draft of the procedure had a fine, the second one has a reimbursement. Further discussion of this item will take place at the next meeting.

Disposition: Further discussion on the proposed key and key card procedure was tabled until the next meeting. Labor will draft a counter proposal for what they feel is an equitable solution on this item in respect to classified staff.

Standby Pay Revisited, II.c.—Del Thompson
Ms. Siminoe asked the committee members to discuss what we are trying to achieve with standby pay, and not take action on it today. She noted that we are trying to solve the problem of the situation where we know in advance of situations coming up where we anticipate a possible need. This policy is intended to be a way of having someone available when there is an unusual need to have someone available. Mr. Nicholls said paying $1 an hour for standby is not equitable. He noted that cell phones would give those employees on standby more mobility, and also suggested providing a university vehicle for those employees who don’t have a private vehicle available. He said it shouldn’t cost any less to have someone
on standby than to use call back. This item was tabled. Management may decide to bring forward another proposed solution to this problem. Any revisions should be submitted by agenda prep. Ms. Dygert asked to change “to distribute” to “to offer” on #6 of their draft, so that it is similar to the way overtime is offered.

Disposition:
The standby pay policy was tabled. Any revisions are to be submitted by agenda prep (July 6, 2000). The wording “to distribute” on #6 of labor’s draft should be changed to read “to offer”.

III. New Business:

Changes in Housing Maintenance, III.a.—Rick Romero

Mr. Romero came to share some good news. He introduced a new maintenance program for the housing area. He noted that substantial growth in housing the last 3 years—over 600 student increase—has brought inherent problems, including that our current approach to maintenance isn’t working well. Currently housing pays the physical plant a negotiated amount ($239,000) each year. Dedicated custodial staff are targeted to specific facilities, and 2 maintenance custodians work where needed and fill in for custodians. This system makes it difficult to respond to the students’ needs. He feels we need to focus on our existing facilities, get some dedicated resources back to housing, separate the maintenance and the custodial piece, get away from the pool concept and have people dedicated to specific facilities so there is ownership, and find some way to improve communications between the customers and the workers. Mr. Romero proposed a plan last year to replace the $239,000 with state funded dollars, and in exchange housing would take that money and dedicate it to their resources. We were not funded for that last year, but $189,000 was funded this year, we are now attempting to follow that approach.

He plans to hire a manager or customer service representative responsible for the interface between the dedicated staff and the customers to coordinate this program. This position would probably be an exempt position (he is working on the job description with Human Resources). Four Maintenance Mechanic I positions (MM1s) will be added and will be allocated as follows: three to the six residence hall facilities (2 buildings each—Pearce and Dressler, Streeter and Morrison, LA and Dryden), with the fourth person dedicated to the four apartment complexes. He would reallocate the two maintenance custodian positions to two of the new positions, plus hire two new people. He would create one custodian position to be a floater to fill in for absences, or to work where the higher priorities are. He noted that we also received funding for a dedicated MMI for the PUB (separate from the housing program). The new MMIs would spend approximately 70% of their time dedicated to emergent, day-to-day needs. The other 30% would be scheduled types of maintenance in the halls, e.g. carpentry, painting. We will buy from the physical plant any journey-level functions needed from the trades pool, on an as-needed basis, but the MMI’s should be able to handle the majority of the needs. This plan should result in an improvement in customer service and better meet the needs of the students in the halls and apartments. We should have a higher level of maintenance.

Mr. Nicholls questioned plumbing, heating and ventilation work being done by the MMIs. Mr. Romero responded that basic repairs could be done by the MMI, whereas any journey-level work would be purchased from the physical plant. Ms. Dygert asked if any assessment had been done on the time the painters, carpenters, etc. are currently used. Mr. Romero said somewhat, but any work done by the housing people would free up the plant people to do more work on the campus side. Management does not anticipate any reduction in work for these positions. The new exempt person would report to Toni Taylor, who reports to Mr. Romero. This will probably be an exempt position because the person will function like a property manager—being the primary point of contact for the others and doing managerial-type work. Ms. Dygert would like to see the criteria being utilized for this position. Ms. Dygert asked if this was considered a reorganization. Ms. Siminoe noted that the item came to this table for labor’s information. Ms. Rogers understands labors concerns about any possible negative impact to any employees—but noted that there are steps employees can follow if they are negatively impacted. Mr. Romero stated that management doesn’t intend to negatively impact employees, and that hopefully this plan will positively impact them, however we have to make the staffing changes that serve the university the best. Also, we have grown all the auxiliary areas over the past few years, and have been and will be adding more positions in these areas. When these opportunities come up, we need to be able to approach it in a business perspective. We need to keep growing and keep moving forward. Ms. Dygert asked if the two current people meet the qualifications and want to compete for the job, can management guarantee that
they will get the job. Mr. Romero responded that while he cannot offer a guarantee, if they want the job and are qualified they will be offered a new position. Ms. Rogers emphasized that, according to the rules, the current employees can compete for the new positions.

Disposition:
This discussion was in response to an announcement. If future actions require a return to the Joint Labor Management agenda they will be discussed when required.

Student and Part-Time Help Performing Classified Work, III.b.—Kandys Dygert
Ms. Dygert said the issue is that part-time help of any kind should be classified positions because the work being performed is classified work. It is illegal to contract out the work of a normal classified staff. That work needs to be done, so one can take those same hours and hire classified positions. Ms. Rogers asked if Ms. Dygert was addressing any part-time work that had previously been done by a classified staff person, or any part time work in general. Ms. Dygert responded that she means any part-time work. Ms. Rogers noted that the civil service rules allow part-time work and temporary employment, e.g. student employees and 1050-hour temporary. Ms. Dygert believes any part-time work other than student work-study meets the criteria of contracting out. Mr. Thompson referenced the contract, Article X, Section 4. Ms. Dygert asked if the committee should begin discussion or reach impasse. Ms. Siminoe responded that the committee doesn’t have enough information to reach impasse or even disagreement, and said it would be helpful if labor could provide some instances. Ms. Dygert referred to recent library testimony, and noted that if we look at the hours utilized, the non-classified part-time employees are performing classified work. Ms. Siminoe stated that management needs time to research this issue. Ms. Dygert will supply another case on this issue once she receives it. This item will be discussed again next month.

Disposition:
Management needs time to research this issue, so this item will be discussed further at the next meeting. Ms. Dygert will supply management with another case regarding this issue once she receives it.

Custodial Workload Issue, III.c.—Del Thompson
First Karen Wichman addressed the June 14 timesheets put out by a student working for Phil Krahn, without his review, that need revision. She noted that employees will get paid whether they turn in their timesheet or not.

Mr. Thompson distributed a handout which addressed staffing service levels. He sees Eastern as a level 3 or 4, which correlates to “casual inattention” or “moderate dinginess”. He asked if our evaluation procedures are aligned along those expectations and asked if we should try to staff up to at least level 2—ordinary tidiness. Ms. Wichman noted that this is the newest book for evaluation. We have started to work with Tony Cook’s evaluation but have not gotten to that finite point in Figure 1—which is very specific. We are using a generalized 30,000 square feet per custodian. Mr. Thompson noted that if we evaluate against this ranking we will score low because of low staffing. Mr. Irish commented that all evaluations will be individual by person, taking into consideration the square feet and types of rooms assigned for cleaning—not campus wide. Ms. Dygert had difficulty reconciling level expectations with size and type of facility and staffing levels. Mr. Irish said another factor is that the guidelines don’t consider the personal factor, and OFM’s budget allocations don’t cover the costs. Ms. Dygert has a labor person who could work with management to work up a proposal to OFM for better funding.

Mr. Thompson asked why custodians have to fill out a special worksheet. Ms. Wichman responded that the special sheet is being utilized to gain important data for the budgeting process—to determine time spent doing certain tasks. She said that landscape maintenance, grounds and equipment don’t do recharges, so this sheet was devised for tracking purposes only—to determine the number of hours needed for certain tasks. She noted that it is strictly for the purpose of identifying time issues at the end of the year. Ms. Dygert suggested putting in a code for time spent filling out the form. Ms. Wichman said use of the sheet will continue on an annual basis.

Disposition:
The committee made a commitment to work collaboratively to encourage OFM to increase the staffing level ratio that they use.
Custodial Review, III.d.—Mike Irish

Ms. Wichman gave an update on custodial shifts and team cleaning. Team cleaning has been up and running in the Science Building since middle of November. There were a number of problems at first, but the concept has become very helpful as far as pacing the custodians’ day and the shift. She gave some examples of comments from a recent meeting with the midnight custodial shift. Most of the people are pleased with the team cleaning concept.

Disposition:
The custodial shift changes and the team cleaning concept appear to be progressing well, with most employees content with the recent changes.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.