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## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **Member Attendees**

Jane Holl Lute/Deputy Secretary  
John Gage/AFGE National  
Colleen Kelley/NTEU National  
Catherine Emerson/CHCO  
Shawn Moran/NBPC  
Gary Anderson/FEMA

David V. Aguilar/CBP  
Rendell Jones/USCIS  
Jeffery Orner/USCG  
Chris McLaughlin/TSA  
Connie Patrick/FLETC  
Caitlin Durkovich/NPPD

Mark Whetstone/AFGE-CIS  
David Wright/AFGE-FPS  
Steve Hardman/AFGE-FEMA  
Ezequiel Rodriguez/NTEU-CBP  
Raymond Marsh/NTEU-CBP  
Glenn Dockham/NTEU-CBP

### **Welcome by the Co-Chairs**

Deputy Secretary Jane Holl Lute, John Gage, and Colleen Kelley welcomed DHS Labor-Management Forum members and advisors.

### **Budget Update**

OCFO briefed the forum on the DHS budget outlook. This summer, the Budget Control Act was passed, which reduced the federal budget and mandated yearly budget increases be limited to 1-2% increases over the previous year. Automatic cuts in discretionary funding will be implemented. Congress is currently looking at a \$1 trillion spending packet, with the possibility of another Continuing Resolution for DHS after December 16. A Continuing Resolution would maintain the same funding levels with certain restrictions and rules of operation. A high level explanation of Continuing Resolution rules and restrictions will be shared with forum members.

### **Employee Viewpoint Survey**

The forum was briefed on the non-profit Partnership for Public Service release of its annual Best Places to Work rankings, in which DHS was compared with other large federal agencies.

The following comments were shared during the discussion of how Components are attempting to improve the work environment: NPPD shared that Component leadership has met with sub-component heads to discuss results. John Gage attributed the poor results to grade and pay structures. Managers have a good education system, but other employees do not. Mr. Gage recommends promoting establishment of career ladder jobs as a means to address employee satisfaction issues.

### **Leader Development**

The Forum was briefed on the enterprise Leader Development Program, with a focus on front-line supervisor. The program builds on best practices at various Components to set DHS requirements. These are set as the curriculum standard across the Department. Components have the flexibility to include additional mission-specific training in their development curriculum.

### **Labor-Management Relations Climate Survey – Write-in Comments**

The forum was briefed on the results of the qualitative data gathered in the Labor-Management Relations Climate Survey, based on write-in comments. The results are based on an aggregate sample, with a majority of responses coming from CBP. All written comments have been shared with respective Components and union representatives; who, in turn, were encouraged to review the data in the Component-level labor management forums.

### **Telework Working Group Update**

Members of the Telework Working Group provided an update to the Forum on DHS telework progress and setbacks. Seventy percent of DHS employees are not eligible for telework, based on their duty requirements. Of those employees who are eligible, 10% telework. A major issue that limits the use of

telework is technology. Future telework initiatives include enhanced training, exercises, desk-sharing, and enhanced technology measures.

### **DHS Union Official Time Report**

Members received an update on the DHS Union Official Time after the release of the OPM Report. The DHS average number of hours of official time per bargaining unit employees in FY 2010 was 2.04, which is lower than the government-wide average of 2.58. Sixty-two DHS representatives were on 100% official time as of July 2011. The majority of the DHS LMF members are on 100% official duty time. Members discussed whether Forum time should be included as representational time. DHS will confer with OPM regarding the proper course of action and share the information with forum members.

### **Idea Factory**

The Forum was briefed on progress towards implementation of an enterprise-wide Idea Factory to gather and implement comments and suggestions from employees. TSA launched its Idea Factory in 2007 to engage employees, but full implementation to all of DHS has been delayed. The Deputy Secretary said this is a good tool to encourage management to engage with the workforce. Union representatives were concerned about how employees who submit good ideas will be recognized and/or rewarded. Additionally, representatives would like to know how unions fit in to the rollout process.

### **FEMA (b)(1) pilot update**

An update on the FEMA Labor Management Partnership Council (LMPC) was provided to Forum members. Current Partnership programs include expanding telework participation, reducing agency funding for equipment, and developing employee accommodations for daily equipment transportation. FEMA aims to have every employee equipped with a laptop and smartphone. The Partnership has enabled FEMA to move beyond an IT “silo” approach.

### **Next Meeting**

February 8, 2012 – 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Julie Myers Conference Center, 500 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW, Washington, DC 20024.