

ALASKA LABOR RELATIONS AGENCY
Minutes of Business Meeting
Friday, December 16, 2005

1. Call to order: Vice Chair Aaron T. Isaacs, Jr., called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Vice Chair Isaacs and Board Members Dennis Niedermeyer and Colleen Scanlon attended in person. Member Gary Atwood attended by teleconference.

Staff members Sherry Ruiz, Margie Yadlosky, Jean Ward, and Mark Torgerson also attended. There was one member of the public in attendance: Susan Hartlieb from Alaska State Employees Association.

2. Approval of minutes from May 20, 2005 business meeting: Colleen moved to accept the minutes as written, and Gary seconded the motion. By unanimous roll call, the motion carried.

3. Old business:

a. Status of Pending Cases.

Margie, Jean and Mark provided an overview of pending cases, including those in the hearing process. Margie noted that the most significant change in the caseload was the substantial decrease in open unit clarification (UC) petitions since January 1, 2005. Jean teamed up with Margie to put a significant dent in the UC caseload. The total agency caseload was reduced by 50 percent.

1. Case Flow Chart. Mark reiterated the decrease in open UC petitions and asked the Board if there were any questions about the chart. There were no comments.

2. Update on Unit Clarification Petitions and Unfair Labor Practice Charges. Jean and Margie updated the Board on the status of these cases. Jean made progress on the unfair labor practice caseload, which is currently at eight cases. Five of the cases are in abeyance. Two cases are under active investigation, and one case will be scheduled for hearing.

3. Update on Election Petitions. Jean reported that the Agency conducted one election since the May Board meeting. Employees of the Annette Island School District voted in favor of representation by the Metlakatla Education Association. There is one unit amendment petition to change the representative's name of the Fairbanks North Star Borough from the Alaska Public Employees Association to the Fairbanks North Star Borough Employees Association, Local 6125, APEA/AFT.

4. Summary of Recent Board Decisions. Staff provided Board members with a copy of this summary, prepared by Mark. There were no questions.

b. Budget.

Mark reported that the Agency has not spent much on travel to date, but costs related to the Board meeting and upcoming February 2006 hearings in Juneau will reduce available funds. Regarding the fiscal year 2007 budget, the Agency is requesting a \$3,000 increase. Governor Murkowski granted the request and inserted it into his FY 2007 budget. If approved by the Alaska Legislature, this request would cover increases in fixed costs.

c. Action Items.

1. Board Member Update. The Agency was informed that a firefighter might be appointed to the Board. The word is the firefighter may be from Fairbanks. The person's name is unknown at this time. Dennis pointed out that if this happens, both labor members would be located in Fairbanks. Gary inquired about former member Ray Smith's application for reappointment to the Board. Mark said Ray stopped at the office and informed staff that his application was declined. Mark will let the Board members know as soon as the appointment is official.

2. Career Path for Margie. Mark reported that Jean drafted a plan to upgrade Margie's skills with the ultimate goal that she could eventually qualify as a hearing officer in the event Jean retires. Colleen asked if there were available funds to provide schooling classes for Margie. Margie said there were no funds earmarked for school but she would be willing to take classes. Colleen noted that she returned to school and found courses very helpful. Aaron asked if staff had set a timeline to accomplish the items in the plan. The goal would be to complete the plan by the time Jean retires, perhaps in a few years. Colleen asked if it would be appropriate to take Board action for the purpose of requesting funds to provide schooling for Margie. Dennis said that although he supports the concept of advancing staff to higher levels, he believes board action in this regard would be micro-managing staff.

3. Capitol Improvement Project. Mark told the Board that he decided to not pursue funding for a Capitol Improvement Project (\$37,000) to upgrade the Agency's database system. The odds of getting approval for the project appeared very slim. The Agency will look at other alternatives. Margie explained that the database was originally designed to provide case management information. It was not designed to provide statistical data. A redesign would allow the Agency to get statistical data faster and better. The Agency may request this project again in FY 08.

4. New business:**a. Board Member Update.**

See discussion under action item c. (1) above.

b. Annual Report.

Margie reported she is working on a draft of the 2005 Annual Report. She will then have Mark and Jean review and edit the report before sending it to Gary Bader and Board members.

c. Next Board Meeting.

Board members discussed availability to the May business meeting and hearing week. They decided to schedule hearings during the week of May 8 to 12, with the Board business meeting on May 12 beginning at 10:00. The Board also tentatively approved the weeks of August 7 and December 11, 2006, for third and fourth quarter hearing dates, with the December Board business meeting scheduled for December 15.

d. Proposed Regulations.

Board members were provided with a copy of the regulations drafted by staff. Mark described the steps in process required to adopt regulations. Dennis moved to put the proposed regulations out for public comment, and Colleen seconded. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.

e. Travel Procedure Update.

Sherry reported that there is no new travel procedure information. Sherry estimated we could convert to the new procedures sometime in 2006. Sherry said per diem will probably increase. Colleen said now would be a good time to utilize the Alaska Airlines constituent fares.

f. July ALRA Conference.

Jean spoke about her attendance at the July ALRA Conference in Seattle, Washington. She expressed that the key speaker was great and that he discussed issues that were timely for Alaska.

g. Hearing Week, first quarter 2006. See discussion under next board meeting (c.) above.

h. Agency Relocation to 6th Avenue Building.

Mark announced that the Agency would be relocating from the current Eagle Street Building to the 4th floor at 1016 West 6th Avenue. The Agency will be sharing space with the Alaska Workers' Compensation Appeals Commission. Board members inquired about the reason for the move. Mark pointed out that the Agency is a neutral agency with no union membership. This physical separation from the members of the bargaining units in the Eagle Street Building will reduce chances for conflicts. Dennis

asked what is happening to our current space. We've heard that workers' compensation vocational rehabilitation may relocate here from the third floor.

i. Board Member Work Distribution.

There was some discussion about reassignment of board members due to conflicts. Mark will email information from Gary Bader to board members.

5. To do list:

There were no items listed.

6. Public comment:

Suzan Hartlieb inquired about the status of pending UC appeals filed by Alaska State Employees Association. Mark informed her that the board usually does not comment about cases appealed to the board until after deliberations have been conducted. He told her that a decision will be issued on these UC appeals after board members have reviewed a draft.

Colleen moved to adjourn, and Dennis seconded. Board members voted in favor of adjournment, which occurred at 11:30 a.m.