



**CUPE 4848 and NB EMS
Tuesday, March 25, 2014
10:00am – 4:00pm**

In Attendance

CUPE	Guy Ward	Mike Harris
	Bill Flewelling	Trent Piercy
	Chris Kennedy	Greg McConaghy
	Brian Harris	Denis Cogswell
	Bernard Soucy	
NB EMS	Beth Simkins-Burrows	Yvon Bourque
	Paul Ward	JP Savoie
	Paul Boudreau	Robin O'Hara
	Caroline Wicherek	Paul Ward
	Edgar Goulette	Craig Pierre

Absent

CUPE	Judy Astle	
NB EMS	Jacques Charest	
Invited Guest		
Recording Secretary	Caroline Wicherek	

1. Meeting Called to Order

- a. Beth Simkins-Burrows called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.

2. Approval of Minutes from January's Meeting

- Minutes approved by Trent Piercy, CUPE and Beth Simkins-Burrows, NB EMS
- Beth to make minor change to 48 shift cancellation notice wording so it reads better.

3. Approval of Agenda

a. Follow Ups from January's Meeting

i. OMs to get feedback from Employees in Floater positions – NB EMS

We added a few new floaters and removed the Woodstock floater. There were a few challenges but overall the feedback has been positive from staff.



CUPE is hearing that some of the part timers in Moncton are worried about not getting hours because there will now be two floaters in the station. One floater is permanent and one is a six month term.

Follow up: Check in to see if part timers are getting hours due to two floaters in the Moncton station.

ii. Chute Time Study – NB EMS

IT is working on resolving some technical issues and if testing goes well it will be rolled out in May. Current data isn't accurate. Radio issues were also identified. The government is looking at the radio system again. It could mean a new digital system.

Follow up: NB EMS to provide update at next LM meeting.

iii. PTSD eLearning module – NB EMS

NB EMS has had good discussions with EMS chiefs working group. Will be sharing what they do with new and existing employee. Looking into "mental first aid" training for managers and eventually getting staff trained. Once our graphic designer is back we will look at updating the website with information. The goal of the group is to reduce stigma and increase education. All EMS services are struggling with this issue.

CUPE said there is a gap in treatment options available to employees. CUPE had concerns from members that the Workers Compensation claim for PTSD places a large amount of leg work and personal time in seeking a professional psychological diagnosis before Work safe claim is approved or denied. CUPE would like to see more access to psychological sessions with Blue Cross and disability options. Alan's comments about benefits upset the employees. CUPE would like to look at the option of cost sharing between CUPE and the employer. NB EMS can't negotiate the provinces' health benefits.

NB EMS states that employees can call Mental Health or EAP. CUPE believes they should sit down with Mental Health to discuss accessibility of their services and then start a campaign to educate staff.

NB EMS would like to change the model of the CISM next year so that staff nominate a peer. Would like to increase the number of peer supports we have. CISM is on the way out and the new approach is focusing on peer supports. We are relying on the same peer supports over and over again. Wellness Consultant will be focusing on this topic.

Follow up: NB EMS and CUPE to discuss cost sharing of disability benefits. CUPE and NB EMS to book a meeting with the department of health to discuss services for staff with mental health issues.



iv. TeleStaff changes from Union/ER Meeting – NB EMS

Memo went out yesterday to staff notifying them of changes to TeleStaff based on feedback their feedback. Will go paper based for vacation requests this year as there is an issue with the system. CUPE would like the paper vacation requests to be a backup next year as well even if the electronic component is set up.

CUPE stated there is an issue about entering extra meal break in TeleStaff. NB EMS looked into the issue and it was because the employee missed the 24 hour window to enter it so they simply have to contact their Ops Manager.

NB EMS would recommend that if an employee has an issue to email Karen Leonard right away so the issue can be resolved without delay.

v. Right to refuse Issue Update – CUPE

Follow up: Judy is absent so this will be discussed at the next meeting.

vi. Memo for Units Stopping – NB EMS

Edgar sent memo out to staff. We have still not been able to pinpoint the problem with the units. It is assumed that with warmer weather coming the issue will be gone until next winter.

vii. Combing Two Units – CUPE

CUPE noted that practice of combining two lone medics together from neighbouring admin areas to staff a unit should only occur after the callout of both open shifts have been completed and no staff were available for callback. NB EMS stated this is the process which is being following. CUPE said this wasn't done in Woodstock Admin area. NB EMS will send a friendly reminder to Ops Managers.

Follow Up: Yvon to ensure reminder was sent.

viii. Roadside Policy change to 1.5 hours – NB EMS

The policy has been updated.

ix. Vacation Requests Greater than Two Weeks – NB EMS

CUPE wants NB EMS to commit to trying to cover vacation and not denying it because of overtime. NB EMS stated overtime will not be an issue.

x. Uniform Committee/Grievance on Wind Pants – NB EMS

NB EMS would like to propose a point system for uniforms. Employees will be given a certain amount of points towards the purchase of required items and optional items. NB EMS states the military uses a system called "unicore" for



uniforms. Every year employees' banks are loaded with points to purchase items. Employees can log into an account and place orders. NB EMS believes that an in house system similar to unicore can be created.

CUPE wants to ensure that new hires are given the basics and then employees can purchase additional items.

CUPE and NB EMS agreed to extend grievance on windpants.

Follow up: Before next LM meeting NB EMS to present a proposal to CUPE for a uniform point system. It will include the process for new employees and existing employees.

xi. Update on Emergency Plans of Power Outages – NB EMS

NB EMS reviewed the power outages that happened during the storm in Saint John. They looked at what went well, what were the problems and what could have been done differently. NB EMS is currently working on an emergency plan. When the weather is severe, NB EMS does not want to put staff in danger and will pull them from roadside posts and send them to the station.

NB EMS often puts a hold on roadside posts and transfers. We had a lot of issues with snow removal this year. MCMC is looking at doing an SSP for bad weather conditions. If roads are unpassable it may be best to call snow plow before sending ambulances to a call. Aim to have a better process in place next year.

CUPE wants to ensure that Paramedics can communicate and work together with MCMC during upcoming storm. NB EMS has no issue with this as Paramedics are the eyes on the ground as long as the information they provide is accurate. NB EMS and CUPE agree that there shouldn't be unnecessary movement during severe weather. The safety of employees is the most important thing. CUPE wanted to ensure that Paramedics would be able to stop for a coffee or grab a quick meal to go if they had already been deployed away from station during severe weather. CUPE believes that this is not an unreasonable request of ANB. The stop, if needed would be for a brief amount of time in severe weather as long as Paramedics are not making major detour from the return to a station after a call.

NB EMS stated that DOT told plows not to open roads during the last storm however they did so the Ambulance could pass. Plows went against DOH orders and got in trouble.



xii. Cancelling Shifts – NB EMS

If a shift is cancelled with 48 hours' notice, NB EMS states they try to find something for the casual employee to do. If we don't have any work they will be paid for 2 hours. If we find them work and the employee decides to go home the employee will not be paid. If it is more than 48 hours' notice, the casual is not owed anything. The same rule applies for an overtime shift.

CUPE states once they accept a shift it becomes part of the employees schedule so how can the shift be cancelled.

Often if shifts are cancelled NB EMS finds the employees the next available shifts as a replacement. Due to the number of vacancies we currently have it usually isn't an issue. If a part timer loses a shift and is below the 150 they go back on the call in list.

NB EMS doesn't believe it happens often that shifts have to be cancelled because someone returns early for maternity leave, sick leave and/or WorkSafe.

b. CUPE Topics

i. Vacation requests and written responses if denied

For short term leave request, CUPE would like the employees to receive an email from the Ops Manager as soon as possible notifying them if their request has been denied. They want a more reasonable time frame in notifying the employee. CUPE does not feel it is correct to let the employee know a few days before.

NB EMS states that sometimes they are filling other shifts which take priority such as union vacation etc... which causes a delay. NB EMS suggests that it may help if the employee tells the manager by what date they need to know about their vacation request. When the employee makes the request in TeleStaff they should put a note in the comment box. Less than two weeks' notice overtime will be a consideration in whether the request is approved.

Follow up: NB EMS (Yvon) to create a process regarding short notice leave requests, which it will share with CUPE.

ii. SSP changes or start times

CUPE said all they heard was that changes were going to take place with no information and/or input from employees. Decisions were held behind closed doors and nothing was communicated to staff. Employees have concerns about childcare due to shift schedule changes. Employees need ample notice.



CUPE asked if a transfer unit is still a possibility. NB EMS said this proposal is still with government. NB EMS would like to see a separate unit for transfers. NB EMS states that the change in ambulance billing will cause more administrative work but we are not sure how it will affect call volume. NB EMS will monitor the call volume to ensure resources are available. Cards are in the ambulance explain the billing process so that Paramedics do not have to answer any questions from patients.

iii. **Forced OT for coverage**

CUPE believed there was an agreement that the employer would have the crews back to the station 45 minutes before the end of their shift. CUPE said it has gotten incident reports from their members because they are being forced to do OT and it's not for a 911 call. What a more consistent approach in the province. CUPE states that it will need to be determined whether a 911 call and 911/emergency coverage are the same thing.

NB EMS would like to know where the individual complaints are coming from so they can be addressed.

NB EMS states that by changing the SSP it hopes to minimize shift overruns but there will always be some shift overruns. Anticipate SSP changes to West and North will be launched May 1 and then the other two regions at a later date. There will be a clear process and an update to the CAD will provide recommendations to the dispatchers which will leave less up to their discretion.

Follow up: Have an MCMC employee come in to explain the rational about keeping employees past their shift.

iv. **Idling units and letters of reprimand**

During the last LM meeting NB EMS mentioned idling was an issue and that discipline wouldn't be issued. However since, letters of reprimands have been issued.

NB EMS states that a reprimand was issued but it was more as a result of insubordination than idling. No other reprimands have been issued due to idling. If there is an issue managers will talk to staff.



v. Meal breaks North Region

This is an issue specifically with the North region. The CUPE rep from the North was asked to provide further information to look into this issue outside of the Labour Management meeting.

The Meal Allowance MOU is there, but the issue is that Dispatch or certain Ops Managers are just saying that the medics have a meal voucher so they don't need a break. Staff feel the MOU is being abused and that staff still need to have a break. There was an issue in Sussex that the crew was denied a meal break and it was only a non-urgent transfer. CUPE wants to ensure that Paramedics can take a break can if not assigned a stat or 911 call.

Medics have the right to ask to go back to their home base for the meal. If they can't return to their home station they will get a meal voucher and still should request a break as soon as cleared from calls.

MCMC looks at situation on a case by case basis. There was a situation where a crew has been free for several hours and when a transfer requests comes in the crew asked for their meal break. Have to look at both sides of the story.

Follow up: CUPE will forward reports/complaints to NB EMS to investigate.

vi. Shift trades between Island stations and mainland

c. NB EMS:

i. PT Floaters

NB EMS is wondering if CUPE would be open to have part time floaters in certain areas. They would not go in the same areas where there is a full time floater (ANB suggested trial PT Float may work ie. Campbellton and Woodstock). CUPE would like to see what stations before they agree. CUPE is hesitant of adding part time floats in some admin areas as may lead to no extra offers to current part time staff.

Follow up: NB EMS (Yvon) to provide CUPE with a proposal before next LM with the stations and the perimeters of the part time floaters.

ii. SSP Changes

NB EMS is looking at changing the SSP start times and road side posts. Start times are being changed to cut shift over runs due to transfers. Also want to maximize coverage.

In the North, the Beresford and Brantville posts will be removed. The date for this is still to be determined.



MCMC is open to meeting with staff to explain the changes to the SSP so they understand and they can express their concerns. Offer will be put out to all regions.

Follow up: NB EMS to keep CUPE updated of any changes.

iii. TeleStaff Update

TeleStaff changes were completed as per the memo that went to staff yesterday.

iv. Shift Exchanges

CUPE had a request from Casual employee to shift trade a 24 Island shift for two 12 hour shifts with employee on mainland as needed time off. CUPE feels that the islands should have option to do shift trade as their situation is unique. Option to swap shifts among all of the Islands should be an option as well.

Staff shift trades have to be apples for apples (ie. an 8 hour shift for an 8 hour, a 12 for a 12, a 24 for a 24). We understand this limits the shift trades for the Island staff. It causes issues with leveling and TeleStaff. Also the 10 hours off rule between shifts doesn't apply on the island but it does on the mainland. The Regional Manager says that the driving force is just one employee. CUPE would like to see some options for the island staff trading shifts.

Follow up: Beth to follow up with Paul to see if there are any options for Island staff and to provide CUPE an update at next LM meeting.

v. Employee Engagement update

The fall tour showed that there is a disconnect between employees and the employer, PANB and CUPE. They don't understand their role.

An engagement committee will be created with CUPE, NBNU, ANB staff and NB EMS members. NB EMS will let CUPE know once it is determined who exactly will sit on the committee. The committee will design the engagement program for their peers. They will provide recommendations on what will work and won't work.

Follow up: This topic will be a recurring item at LM.

vi. Reorganization of Admin areas/regions

NB EMS is looking at the workload of Ops Managers and allowing them to get out in the field seeing their staff. To do this we need to look at manager vs. ratio of staff as well as the size of their administrative area/location of stations. Alan and Yvon to talk to employees for feedback.



vii. Cut off date to complete policies

NB EMS would like CUPE's help to encourage staff to complete VOK and policies on time. We are still running issues with staff not completing them on time. NB EMS is going to stop baby sitting and chasing employees. If the VOKs/policy reviews are not completed on time, they will be taken off the trucks. Of course there are expectations depending on the situation. It tends to be the same employees.

viii. Provincial Topics on agenda

NB EMS wants to focus on provincial topics and not individual topics at LM. This should be the essence of the LM meetings. Individual issues should be taken offline and dealt with separately.

ix. Update on Initiatives

CPAP eLearning now available and in the upcoming in-service. Edgar provided a Telestroke update. An eLearning component for Telestroke will be created in May.

CUPE states that an ANB employee put in a proposal for a peds monitor and would like an update. NB EMS stated that it was brought forward to the province however new MRX machines will be brought in soon which will help. CUPE asked if the bag configuration had been looked at again. NB EMS states they are looking at where items are located in the bag and also looking at possibly getting new bags entirely. Some equipment can't be altered because of requirements from the DOH.

NB EMS has gotten some good feedback on the Sprinter from the employees.

x. Tema Center National Tour

The tour will take place on May 15 from 6:00-8:00 pm in Moncton and on May 16 from 2:00-4:00 pm in Fredericton. Response to the sessions has been very good. There will be an open mic for those that want to speak on their experience with PTSD. A message and application process will be sent out by Tema Center.

New Items:

1. Performance Appraisals (CUPE)

Staff are concerned that they have to sign the appraisal. NB EMS confirmed it is similar to other letters that the Employer provides an employee whereas the employee is just



confirming they understand and reviewed the appraisal. CUPE said some employees may refuse to sign the appraisal.

NB EMS will be adding a section to the appraisals, where employees must acknowledge that they have read the policies, which must be reviewed annually.

2. Honour Guard Update (NB EMS)

NB EMS was approached by the Moncton and Fredericton honour guard groups for funding their group. The groups combined and there is now one Honour Guard group. They are independent from PANB and are volunteer based. They will have an ANB logo on their uniform. NB EMS has a certain budget available to support the group for items

3. National EMS week (NB EMS)

CUPE will contact NB EMS Communications to discuss. There is interest in promoting EMS week.

4. 24 hour stations

CUPE would like to know how to open the discussion again on this topic. NB EMS is always willing to discuss the issue and possibly opening up some 24 hours station in exchange for something in return. NB EMS will never go back to all the 24 hour stations we had in the past. CUPE doesn't understand why they should give up something and/or negotiate just because staff prefer to work a 24 hour shifts, which is also a benefit to the employer. NB EMS states that some issues are just a give and take.

5. Next Meeting

May 28, 2014 at 10:00 am at John Street office, Moncton.

Respectfully submitted and approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Trent Piercy", written over a horizontal line.

Trent Piercy, CUPE 1252, Local 4848

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Beth Simkins-Burrows", written over a horizontal line.

Beth Simkins-Burrows, NB EMS