

# **AFMC/AFGE Council 214 Partnership Council Meeting Minutes**

**28-29 Sep 2010**

**Edwards AFB, CA**

The HQ AFMC/AFGE Council 214 Partnership Council (PC) conducted its 31<sup>st</sup> meeting on 28-29 September 2010. The meeting was hosted at Edwards AFB, CA. Copies of the agenda, list of attendees and actions items are attached.

## **1. Opening Remarks/Acknowledgements**

Dr. Butler opened the meeting and provided opening remarks to include welcoming of the PC members and guests. He expressed his appreciation for the members taking time to attend the meeting and said the PC meetings are important. Dr. Butler thanked Mr. Berard for hosting the meeting. Mr. Blanch also expressed his thanks to Mr. Berard for hosting the meeting. Mr. Berard welcomed the members and then Mr. Amaya welcomed the members as well. After introductions, administrative remarks were provided by Mr. Conley.

## **2. Edwards Mission Brief – Thomas Berard, AFFTC/CA**

Mr. Berard again welcomed the PC members and briefed the Edwards AFB mission. Team Edwards has a population of approximately 13,000 (one-half is military) and is comprised of Air Force Flight Test Center (AFFTC), Air Force Research Lab (AFRL), United States Marine Corp (USMC) and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The mission of AFFTC is to, "Conduct safe, effective, objective Research, Development, Test and Evaluation." AFFTC supports AFMC through Program Management for Aero Systems, Program Management for C2 & CS Systems, Program Management for Armament Systems, AF Logistics, Execution of Development Test, and Development of Advanced Technology. The Combined Test Force (CTF) is comprised of the F-16, F-22, F-35, B-1, B-2, B-52, Global Hawk, C-17, C-5, C-130, KC-135, C-12, T-38, and ALTB. The CTF uses a combination of engineering, test facilities, electronic warfare facilities, and simulation laboratories to accomplish the mission.

## **3. Local Partnership Update – Rykki Swenson, AFFTC/DPL & George Amaya, President, AFGE Local 1406**

Ms. Swenson and Mr. Amaya gave a joint presentation on the labor-management partnership at Edwards AFB. The relationship is a work-in-progress and recent efforts to strengthen the relationship have increased communication between the parties. The local partnership strives to meet quarterly and is attended by labor relations officers, union stewards, and key managers. Currently, most partnership meetings are occurring at the Wing level. Dr. Butler said, "Partnership meetings need to occur at the Wing, Center and Command level". Mr. Tingey said we need to stress the importance of meeting at the Center level. Ms. Swenson and Mr. Amaya explained that scheduling has been a problem at Edwards and the last Center level partnership meeting was in October 2009. Mr. Amaya said his Wing Partnership Council meets regularly and goes out to the floor to talk with supervisors and employees and works issues as they arise. The members agreed that the Wing partnership was a good concept, but that the Center PC's need to do a better job of meeting on a regular basis. Dr. Butler asked for a PC status chart at the next meeting showing each Center and the status of their local meetings. Mr. Berard said there is an issue with getting all three local unions in a room at Edwards. Dr. Butler said that it was, "okay to just meet with AFGE". Mr. Blanch said, "The three local unions have very different issues, AFGE is very broad while IAFF is very narrowly focused". An action item was recorded for HQ AFMC/A1KL to provide a PC status chart at the next meeting.

#### 4. Single Staffing Tool – Charles Huerta, AFPC/DPI

Mr. Huerta provided a briefing on the Single Staffing Tool (SST). The SST was created in response to a Presidential Memorandum calling for the improvement of the federal recruitment and hiring process. The memo called for a streamlined hiring process incorporating an 80-day hiring model, simplified process for managers, simplified application process for applicants by eliminating essay-style questionnaires and transitioning to a resume-based system, and applicant notifications throughout the hiring process. The current staffing tools are RESUMIX, which is no longer supported or enhanced, Civilian Personnel Data Support System (CPDSS), which relies on 15-year old skill-code search capability, and USA Staffing. The interim DoD staffing tool chosen to streamline the hiring process is USA Staffing. USA Staffing was chosen because it is an OPM developed tool, with no cost to DoD for enhancements, and license funding through DoD, which saves AF \$30M in FY11 through FY16. The SST provides one announcement for all applicants (internal and external). Concern was raised about employees lying on their resumes. Mr. Steenbock said the system offers, “multi-tiered validation through templates, resumes and interviews”. Mr. Huerta said, “Employees can be terminated if they are found to lie on their application/resume”. Mr. Shaw asked how long an announcement must be posted for in the new process. Mr. Huerta stated the minimum posting requirement is three days unless otherwise stated in the labor agreement and said announcements can be opened any day of the week. He also acknowledged some emergency rules allow for one day announcements. The interim solution allows employees to create resumes and store up to five resumes. Mr. Huerta said resume assistance is available through Airman and Family Readiness Centers (A&FRC). Mr. Shaw asked if there was a class on resume writing that could be delivered to the workforce. Mr. Huerta did not know of such a class; however, USA Staffing does have on-line tutorials. A discussion occurred around the fact that USA Jobs has a bad reputation. Mr. Berard mentioned that it was hard to filter applicants. Mr. Tingey agreed and said it was also hard to filter on applicants with security clearances. Mr. Robinson clarified that USA Jobs provided a job listing service, while USA Staffing was a complete staffing tool with referrals and templates. Mr. Huerta continued his briefing with results from the pilot program on USA Staffing and said overall, customers liked USA Staffing. According to the surveys conducted, 75% of customers were satisfied. Mr. Blanch asked about the 25% that were not satisfied and Mr. Huerta said customers did not indicate they were “less satisfied”. Mr. Huerta said the pilot programs also showed timeliness of referrals improved by 11 days and timeliness of selections improved by 25 days. Targeted deployment of the USA Staffing as the SST is 15 Nov 10 except where bargaining obligations have not been completed. Mr. Blanch said, “This system was the hold-up on the Master Labor Agreement (MLA). Mr. Huerta said the ideal future system will be an enterprise staffing system with full-cycle recruiting and performance management tied together.

#### 5. Centralization of Injury Compensation, Charles Huerta, AFPC/DPI

Mr. Huerta began his briefing by talking about the BRAC 2005 recommendation which said transactional work should be moved to Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC). Injury compensation was identified as automatable and centralizable. As a result, AFPC will acquire Injury Compensation Program Administrator (ICPA) duties, which include training and guidance, form submission, monitoring continuation of pay, case management, compliance, coordination of light duty, and review of Defense Injury & Unemployment Compensation System (DIUCS). Mr. Huerta stressed changes for employees will be minimal. Instead of calling their servicing personnel office, employees will now email or call AFPC for questions related to the process, their status, and rights. AFPC started their injury compensation pilot program in Feb 10 and currently has nine people on staff. Ultimately, 19 people will service AFMC bases. The centralization schedule for Large Civilian Centers (LCC's) starts in Nov 2010 for Tinker, May 2011 for Hill, Jun 2011 for Robins, and Aug 2011 for Wright-Patterson. Mr. Blanch said, “Workers compensation has been a big partnership issue, one of the first we worked, and most bases have return-to-work programs”. Dr. Butler said, “AFMC needs to work closely with AFPC, we have many issues, especially in the depots”. Mr. Huerta agreed. Dr. Butler asked for an action item to keep track of the transition processes as they occur throughout AFMC. An action item was recorded.

#### 6. Benefits and Entitlements Servicing Team (BEST) – Charles Huerta, AFPC/DPI

Mr. Huerta provided a briefing on the centralization of benefits and entitlements (B&E). B&E centralization began in 1996 and has evolved from benefits servicing of insurance and TSP to retirement and survivorship. The 2005 BRAC decision requires transactional workload to transition to AFPC for

servicing, which has furthered the centralization of B&E. BEST is a self-service model, with limited face-to-face counseling - exceptions are made for deaths and disability retirements. Mr. Huerta reviewed recent and future system enhancements of the BEST system. Dr. Butler affirmed that BEST is a pretty good system and there has been positive feedback from employees; however, blue collar workers still seem to have access problems. Dr. Butler asked Mr. Huerta if privacy has been compromised or tampered. Mr. Huerta gave two examples, but said no harm had been done. Mr. Johnson asked if there was any malicious abuse of the system and Mr. Huerta said there were incidents of employees spying on appraisals. Mr. Tingey said there are still some issues with timeliness related to compensation claims.

#### 7. Dues Withholding – Tom Robinson, AFGE Council 214 Executive Assistant

Mr. Robinson gave a briefing about dues withholding. Several bases are collecting dues from ineligible employees, although once the problem has been identified, the employees are unable to recover dues that were paid in error. The current system for recording adds to and drops from the bargaining unit is cumbersome. Last year, there were seven cases at Wright-Patterson and Hill has six to eight cases per year. As a result, employees are wrongly charged dues and the MLA does not cover damages to the employee. One possible solution is AFGE automated dues withholding system. This system allows for automatic payment of dues to the national office and then reimbursement by the national office to the local union office. At present, no DoD agencies have agreed to use the automated system. Dr. Butler said he was unsure how this system would correct the problem and Mr. Blanch said the system works. An action item was recorded for management and the union to look into the automated system.

#### 8. New Beginnings Conference – George Amaya, President, AFGE Local 1406

Mr. Amaya spoke about the New Beginnings conference that was held the week prior to the Partnership Council meeting. The New Beginnings conference was the kick-off session to strategize on future performance management programs. The conference was attended by members from management and union. Transparency in the performance management process is the key feature desired by attendees. Attendees discussed the “good ole boy system”, unfair incentives and awards. Attendees also discussed ways to attract and retain employees. Mr. James, from the NSPS Transition Office, was the host of the meeting and will give a report to congress next month. Design teams will work next steps. Dr. Butler said he had mixed feelings about this and didn’t understand why demonstration projects did not catch-on. Mr. Blanch said he thought this would be another type of NSPS system. Mr. Amaya said supervisors were abusing the system and Dr. Simpson said the “bad” things that occurred with NSPS came down to poorly trained managers.

#### 9. CONOPS Review – Randy Shaw, HQ AFMC/A1KL

Mr. Shaw reviewed the current PC CONOPS. There are a number of administrative changes that need to be made. Mr. Shaw said the Executive Order on Labor-Management Forums will add another piece to the CONOPS once metrics have been established by the National Council. A recommendation was made by Mr. Shaw to add Mr. Robinson as a “distinguished guest” for council meetings. Further recommendations included sticking with three meetings per year, one in conjunction with the Joint National Labor meeting. Mr. Shaw spoke about MLA negotiation plans. Negotiations are scheduled for the first two-weeks of November 10 and will be facilitated by Mr. David Martinez from Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services (FMCS). The goal is to have bargaining done this year. Interests have been exchanged and some bargaining language will also be exchanged. Mr. Shaw then continued to review the CONOPS and said the sections on agendas and minutes were not being fulfilled. Language will be written to address changes in these sections. Mr. Blanch asked who is providing guidance on Labor-Management Forums.

#### 10. AFGE National Issues – Tom Robinson, AFGE Council 214 Executive Assistant

Mr. Robinson reviewed issues that are of concern to the national AFGE union. The main interests include the transition of National Security Personnel System (NSPS) employees back to General Schedule (GS), the involvement of the union in the development of a new performance management system, and the creation of labor-management forums under Executive Order (EO) 13522. Mr. Robinson reviewed the fact that DoD chose to implement NSPS where bargaining was not required and also presented the union

view on the harm of NSPS. AFGE was invited to attend the brainstorming session on the new performance management program. AFGE recommendations include: consistent rating system with clear formulas, prohibition of manual manipulation of results, increased training opportunities and increased funding for training and performance recognition. EO 13522 calls for a labor-management forum at AFMC level, which is currently in practice through our Partnership Council. AFGE recommends the revision of the PC CONOPS to reflect the provisions of the EO. Further, AFGE recommends institutionalizing pre-decisional involvement, establishing meaningful metrics, and keeping labor relations officers from taking lead control from management. Dr. Butler said we are awaiting guidance from DoD in establishing metrics. Mr. Robinson agreed; however, Mr. Blanch said, "I don't think we want DoD to tell us how to do this. We already have some good ideas for metrics". Mr. Steenbock said he's volunteered to help Air Force establish meaningful metrics.

#### 11. Command Structure – John Steenbock, HQ AFMC/A1

Mr. Steenbock provided a briefing on the leadership structure of HQ AFMC and AFMC bases. Mr. Steenbock explained the Center versus Wing structure is unique to AFMC and outlined the role of the functional units. After reviewing the organization charts for each Center, Mr. Blanch said the union asked for the Command structure briefing to "stay in touch with key players". Mr. Steenbock said management will take action to "reinstate two-letter visits with the union" and will put the action in the CONOPS. Dr. Butler said different bases put different leaders on the PC. Mr. Blanch said the union prefers civilians to be members of the PC for continuity and most Centers assign this to the Center Director. Dr. Butler said, "We'll try to make sense out of Wright-Patterson. Jerry's (Mr. Gerald Freisthler, ASC/CA), willing to take on PC, but the ABW owns most of the people". An action item was recorded to clarify the reporting structure at each of the Centers. Mr. Blanch asked for copies of the updated charts.

#### 12. Closing Remarks

Dr. Butler and Mr. Blanch recognized members of the PC who were new to the council and who were leaving the council. A welcome certificate was presented to Mr. Thaddeus Wallace by Dr. Butler. The union presented thank-you plaques to outgoing members, Mr. Terry Ayres and Mr. George Amaya.

Dr. Butler and Mr. Blanch thanked everyone for attending and recognized the individuals who coordinated and supported the meeting. Mr. Milo Conley from the Edwards Civilian Personnel Flight planned, coordinated and organized the meeting. Mr. John Poplett provided logistical support for the conference center and Mr. Chris Brown provided technical support. The co-chairs thanked everyone again for coming and the meeting was adjourned. Mr. Kenneth Hudgens Jr. also received thanks for his support throughout the meeting.

**Carry-Over Action Items from Eglin Meeting 27-28 October 09**

AI #	ACTION	OPR	POC/AO	STATUS	ACTION
09-03-11	Provide Pandemic update and look into next steps/best practices		SG/A1	Bargaining is with the local level – Wright-Patt is currently working.	OPEN
09-03-16	Web site overload – work top 10 list to be more user friendly		AFGE C214/A1KL	Team is developing material that will be included in the New Employee Orientation. We are also developing a packet of screen-shots that will be available in the maintenance areas.	OPEN

**Carry-Over Action Items from Tinker Meeting 23-24 February 10**

10-01-09	Work on solution to gate access		A1/A6/7	Mr. John Steenbock, AFMC/A1 sent a message to Dr. Butler, AFMC/CA on 27 Aug to determine the way ahead – budget constraints and shortfall of manpower authorizations have been identified in our conversations with A6/7. This may need to go back to the local level to push as a priority for fallout.	OPEN
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**Carry-Over Action Items from Wright-Patterson Meeting 23 June 10**

10-02-01	Provide an update on the Hill AFB explosive smoking issue at the next PC.		AFGE C214/SE	Mr. Scott Blanch, President, AFGE Council 214 will provide an update.	OPEN
10-02-11	Several items need to occur to bring the AFMC PC in line with the Executive Order on Labor-Management Forums. Metrics need to be established and charters need updated. Examples of metrics may include number of issues resolved and amount of time to resolve.		AFGE C214/A1	The National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations' working group on metrics has just developed a draft document on measures that can be used to help agencies assess the effectiveness of their labor-management forums. The draft report recommends metrics that focus on three areas: Agency performance, Employee satisfaction/engagement, and Labor-management relations. Will review the recommended measures to determine what may work within AFMC and will work with C214 to determine a way ahead.	OPEN

**Action Items from Edwards Meeting 28-29 Sep 10**

10-03-01	Review the COOP plan with the union		A1		OPEN
10-03-02	Provide copies of AFMC/CC's policy letter on Energy Star appliances		A1		OPEN
10-03-03	Review the usage of commissary and/or BX privileges at each of our Centers		A1		OPEN
10-03-04	Create status chart of		A1		OPEN

	Center-level PC meetings identifying structure and logistics of meetings. Chart will be shown at each PC meeting				
10-03-05	Show progress of transfer of injury compensation workload to AFPC		A1		OPEN
10-03-06	Identify current dues withholding process and review AFGE national TAPES process to see if it would provide a solution		AFGE C214/A1		OPEN
10-03-07	Track progress of New Beginnings performance management team		AFGE C214/A1		OPEN
10-03-08	Provide update on MLA negotiations		AFGE C214/A1		OPEN
10-03-09	Provide Command Structure briefing charts to the PC members		A1		OPEN
10-03-10	Rework CONOPS and ensure AFGE C-214 President will meet with new directors and deputy directors		A1		OPEN
10-03-11	Clarify reporting structure of Center-level Partnership Councils		A1		OPEN