

**MINUTES OF THE
MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
March 18, 2009**

Visit the MAC website at ct.gov/MAC

Peter Bucknall, MAC Chair, called the business meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the February 18, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously, as submitted.

Treasurer's Report

Dave Lynn, Treasurer, reported that the balance in the treasury remains unchanged at \$3,406.56. Dave also expressed MAC's great appreciation for the hosting of the February MAC meeting. The Department of Veterans' Affairs and their staff are owed sincere thanks for the use of the facility and the waiving of fees that otherwise would have cost MAC approximately \$300. The DVA Representative and Alternate are also thanked for their work in facilitating this and handling meeting/facility logistics. The Treasurer's report was accepted unanimously.

Committee Reports

Credentials. Ellen Carter, MAC Credential Chair, reported that she has not been notified of any agency elections or other credentials activity.

Old Business

Speakers and Logistics. Brian Garnett, Director of External Affairs for the Department of Correction, will speak about media relations following today's business meeting. Linda Yelmini, Director of the Office of Labor Relations, has accepted MAC's invitation to speak at the April 15 meeting. We have confirmed Colonel William Shea, Army National Guard, to speak at the May 20 meeting about leadership in stressful times. Suggestions regarding speakers for the Fall meetings are welcome.

Managers Day 2009 Committee. The committee has convened. A planning meeting was held on March 13. The committee discussed several potential sites. Committee members have scheduled a site visit to Rentschler Field in East Hartford and to a newly renovated facility (Page Hall) at Connecticut Valley Hospital in Middletown. Inquiries were also made regarding Central Connecticut State University and a Department of Correction training facility in Cheshire. Pros and cons of these sites were discussed, including cost, capacity, parking amenities, and the potential "draw" of the site. The theme is still being refined, but most likely will focus on managing in times of change. Recommendations for speakers are welcome.

Web Site. Anne MacLeod, MAC Web Mistress, was not in attendance, and there was no web site report.

Communications Committee. Tom Crafa had nothing new to report.

Orientation Committee. Dave Lynn reported that there was no new activity during the past month.

Legislative Committee. A list of bills of general interest to managers was updated as of March 18. Hard copies were distributed at the meeting, and the listing will be circulated via the list serv later today. David Guay of the Association of Managerial Employees in Connecticut State Service was present as a guest, and provided an update on AMECSS's legislative activity. AMECSS was again successful in having a collective bargaining bill raised (Senate Bill 921, AN ACT CONCERNING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FOR STATE MANAGERS). Discussion and questions related to AMECSS and the bill ensued.

Meeting with Administration Officials. Efforts to set up a meeting continue, but a date has not yet been confirmed. Peter will send a letter today to Secretary Genuario, reiterating our concern to meet with him or his designee(s).

Other Old Business. In follow-up to the February 18 presentation on the State Employees Retirement System, there was a request for a statutory citation for the bullet point about current state law prohibiting retroactive changes to benefits of retirees. Dave Lynn will follow up with Colin Newman. There was no other Old Business.

New Business

Voluntary Schedule Reduction. There was discussion about the Governor's communiqués regarding the voluntary schedule reduction program. Agencies have been encouraged to approve requests for voluntary schedule reductions, whenever possible. Dave Lynn reported that two modifications to the program are in effect only through June 1, 2009. These modifications allow for consecutive days off and provide for full credit for holidays even if the employee is taking a reduced daily schedule.

Other New Business. Ellen Carter thanked the MAC membership for the card, the well wishes, and the fruit basket.

Adjournment of Business Meeting

The business meeting was adjourned at 9:52 a.m. The meeting was reconvened at 10:08 a.m. for the guest presentation.

Guest Presentation

Peter welcomed and introduced our guest speaker, Brian Garnett, Director of External Affairs for the Department of Correction. Mr. Garnett was a journalist for 25 years before joining DOC. For many years, he has been active in media training for professional and law enforcement groups in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Mr. Garnett explained that, in state government, agencies appoint a Public Information Officer (PIO), to ensure consistency in the agency's message. Nonetheless, under the guidance of the PIO, managers are expected to be able to speak to the media about events that happen "on their watch". State government has an obligation to talk to the media. Trying to stay below the radar doesn't work. The media will find someone else or something else, including rumor and innuendo, to fill the void the agency's silence would leave.

Economics plays a huge role in shaping today's media. With downsizing in the media outlets, the ranks of the reporters are just sufficient to fill the news slots. Managers should expect that the reporter has defined his/her agenda before showing up at the agency. The reporter has most likely developed the story before leaving the agency, so there are no second chances to tell your story. With news websites, information can be released instantaneously. The agency cannot wait until tomorrow to respond.

It is important to understand that the reporter does not necessarily care about you or the issue. The reporter wants to write a good story and is not there for a friendly conversation. Preparation is 90% of the job. The manager needs to be in charge and to establish control through cooperation. It is important not to be swayed by a reporter's negative attitude or unpleasant behavior. You cannot let yourself be bullied.

The first step in taking a media call is to find out what the story is, what their take on the story is, and what they need you for. Then let the reporter know that you will call back shortly, so that you have some time to prepare.

Newspaper reporters want quotes, radio reporters want tape, and TV reporters want on-camera interviews. "No comment" is never an option but, in certain situations, it may be best to direct the reporter to a written policy, to make a brief written statement, or to issue a press release. If there is information that you cannot discuss, explain why in terms of your agency's mission and responsibilities.

Double-check your facts, and prepare the key points of your message. Be sure to notify your leadership and get approval of your statement. Maintain control of the time and place of the interview. Set a time limit. The longer the interview, the more your message and key points become diluted.

Take time out, when needed. Give yourself time to gather your thoughts with something like: "Let me just say something about that." Don't follow the lead of the reporter's question. Take control; turn it around and take it where you want the interview to go. This is counter-intuitive and takes practice. You cannot be perceived as ignoring the question. Remember that

ultimately you are talking to the public. Stick with your talking points and keep your message positive.

In crisis communication, time is of the essence. Take control early. As an example, for the Michael Ross execution, it was important to control the influx of media. DOC established a media center, with everything the reporters needed in place.

In summary, ensure your side of the story is represented. Don't relinquish your chance to get your points across. Be upfront, proactive, and timely, especially with the negative. The three keys are preparation, control, and cooperation.

Adjournment

Mr. Garnett was thanked for his very informative presentation. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m. The list of those in attendance at the March 18, 2009 meeting is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes. Also attached and made a part of these minutes is a copy of the PowerPoint presentation by Mr. Garnett on media relations.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 15, 2009 in Conference Room A and B at the Department of Transportation. Linda Yelmini, Director of the Office of Labor Relations, will be the guest speaker at 9:00 a.m., with the business meeting to follow at 10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elise Kremer
MAC Secretary
MAC Representative for the
Department of Public Health

MAC ATTENDANCE ROSTER
March 18, 2009

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Rep/Alt/Guest</u>
Accountancy	David Guay	G
Administrative Services	Dave Lynn, Treasurer	R
Banking	Percy Cave	R
Banking	Claudia Helfgott	A
Children and Families	Barbara Kleefeld	A
Comptroller	Sandra Hurrie	A
Consumer Protection	Elisa Nahas	A
Consumer Protection	Claudette Carveth	G
Correction	Donald Currey	R
Correction	Marla Shiller	G
Correction	Rick Hamel	G
Correction	Debbie Sass	G
Correction	Loyda Borton	G
Correction	Nick Costanzo	G
Correction	William Porter	G
Correction	Kevin Roy	G
Economic and Community Development	Sheila Hummel	R
Human Rights and Opportunities	Epifanio Carrasquillo	R
Insurance	Allen Elstein	R
Insurance	Barbara Spear	A
Mental Health and Addiction Services	Bobbi Buckner	R
Mental Health and Addiction Services	Laurene Gomez	G
Mental Health and Addiction Services	Angela Levix	G
Motor Vehicles	Joe Lembo	R
Pardons and Parole	Rasa Pakalnis	R
Policy and Management	Ellen Carter	R
Public Health	Elise Kremer, Secretary	R
Public Utility Control	Peter O'Neil	R
Revenue Services	Tom Crafa	R
Social Services	Peter Bucknall, Chair	R
Transportation	Lisa Fazzino	G

Connecticut's New Managers' Orientation Program

Brian Garnett

Director of External Affairs
Connecticut Department of
Correction

Why Should We Talk to the Media?

- It is a watch dog on behalf of the public
- Transparent state government
- Insures we are good stewards of state funds
- We are public Servants
- Media part of democracy
- He who remains silent suffers the consequences

What drives the media?

- Make no mistake, it is a business first and foremost.
- It's all about "feeding the monster" and being first.
- Don't expect a reporter to "care" about you or the issue.
- It's about writing a good story

Points to Remember

- This is not a friendly conversation
- Prepare, prepare, prepare
- You are in charge
- Control through cooperation

The Dreaded Call

- Don't ignore
- Take control
- Stay calm, be professional
- Determine reporter's interest and needs
- What is their deadline?
- Don't be pressured
- Tell them you will call back shortly
- He who talks off the top of their head just might lose their head

Before you put on the make up...

- Consider the intention and context of story
- Is the issue within your purview
- Check with other likely interviewees
- Should you be the one talking?
- Notify Chain of Command, PIO, Lawyers, Governor's Office, etc.
- Remember that the boss gets the gravy

Not with a 10-foot pole...

- Consider the consequences of the story and the reporter
- Politely refer to a more appropriate person/agency
- Direct to written policy
- Offer a written/e-mailed statement
- No comment is never an option.

Preparation, Preparation...

- Get the facts
- Prepare your key points
- Get approval on your statement
- Rehearse your presentation with questions
- Have document copies available
- Consider additional information/interviews
- Reporters love one stop shopping

I'm ready for my close-up...

- How, when, where and how long is up to you
- Set a time limit
- Conduct the interview where you are comfortable
- Keep your points close by
- Use a speaker phone and assistant
- Be cautious about live interviews

Things to remember while you are talking

- If it comes out of your mouth its fair game
- Don't follow the lead of their question
- Stick with your points
- Keep it positive
- If you don't know say so
- Remember the end user is the public
- Educating the reporter is not your job
- You are on until you're off

Crisis Communication

- Time is of the essence
- Take Control through cooperation early
- Give the media a place to go
- Offer assistance and follow through
- Set boundaries
- Don't get nickel and dimed with interviews
- Bring all the players together
- There's a deadline every minute

Sneaky stuff they all pull...

- If I ask the question enough times I'll get the answer I need
- If I don't say anything they'll keep blabbering
- I'll need to call back for clarification
- While I've got you here....
 - You can just tell me off the record
 - I just need a couple of quotes
 - Can you just explain the policy to me

What do you do when they've done you wrong?

- Proceed cautiously when you are up against a foe that buys paper and ink by the train car.
- It's a balancing act
- A wrong uncorrected becomes true
- Is it worth the battle
- A letter to the boss is worth a dozen calls to the reporter

Now, who can I put on the spot?

- Scenario #1

- This is Clark Kent from the Daily Bugle. I am going to print in a half an hour with a story based on reliable sources who say your agency routinely neglects many clients and leaves them in deplorable conditions. How do you feel about this?

Now, who can I put on the spot?

- Scenario #2

- I am a reporter with the Associated Press in Los Angeles. I am doing a story for the national desk on the issue of property tax on automobiles. The more I talk to people the more I hear about Connecticut and the very progressive steps it is taking in not only taxation but reducing automobile usage and pollution reduction. What can you tell me?

Now, who can I put on the spot?

- Scenario #3
- State Senator Hornblower, whom I just talked to over at the capitol was very critical of the mistakes your agency has made and strongly suggested that it might be time for new leadership. How do you respond?

Conclusion

- The media can not be ignored.
- The void will be filled with rumor, innuendo or worse.
- You need to ensure your side of the issue is represented.
- The best policy is to be up front, proactive and timely, especially with the negative.
- Preparation, Control, Cooperation

Goodnight and Good Luck!