



Meeting Minutes: Governor's Committee on the Safety, Health, and Wellbeing of Agricultural and Food Processing Workers

DATE: 11/08/2021

MINUTES PREPARED BY: CINTHIA MARTINEZ

Attendance

Committee Members

Present

Andrea Vaubel, Deputy Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Colin Laffey, Staff Attorney, Agricultural Worker Project, Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (SMRLS)

Gary Wertish, President, Minnesota Farmers Union

Jim Gleb, President, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1189

Nicole Blissenbach, Deputy Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry

Rodolfo Gutierrez, Executive Director, HACER

Sarah Berry, Public Health Director, Waseca County | CHS Administrator, Le Sueur – Waseca Community Health Board

Susan Bishop, Supervisor, Minnesota Department of Health, and Migrant Agricultural Worker Response Lead, ICS

Guest

Michelle Manivel, Public Engagement Liaison, Office of Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor

Peggy Flanagan

Absent

Rena Wong, Director of Organizing, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 663

Stephanie Low-Interim Executive Director/ Chief Medical Officer, Community Health Service Inc.

Tamara Nelsen, Executive Director, Minnesota AgriGrowth Council

Emilia Gonzalez Avalos, Executive Director, Unidos MN

Hamse Warfa, Deputy Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Kevin Paap, President, Minnesota Farm Bureau

Kiza Olson, CHS Administrator, Meeker-McLeod-Sibley Community Health Services

Staff Present: Ben Wood, Safety Consultant Principal, Minnesota's Workplace Safety Consultation

Unit; Carrie Rigdon, Operations and Planning Section Manager, Minnesota Department of Agriculture;

Blake Nordin, Environmental Health Supervisor, Minnesota Department of Health; Cinthia Martinez,

CareerForce Office Coordinator, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development;

Jessica Grosz, Director of Labor Standards and Apprenticeship, Minnesota Department of Labor, and

Industry; Lorrie Janatopoulos, CareerForce Director, Minnesota Department of Employment and

Economic Development; Maureen Ramirez, Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, Minnesota

Department of Employment and Economic Development; Mike Zastoupil, Food Access Associate,

Minnesota Department of Health

Agenda

- 1:00 PM **Welcome**
- 1:05 PM **Guest Introductions**
- 1:10 PM **Approve Minutes & Agenda**
- 1:15 PM **Updates – DC Vaubel**
- 1:35 PM **Work Group Recommendations**
- 2:40 PM **Recommendations Report**
- 2:50 PM **Public Comments**
- 2:55 PM **Final Thoughts & Next Steps**
- 3:00 PM **Adjourn**

Meeting notes

Guest Introductions

No members of the public introduced themselves.

Approve Minutes & Agenda

Approved.

Updates- DC Vaubel

Guiding values and guidelines for recommendations (Also located in PowerPoint)

AWWC members discussed the grounding values and guidelines for the recommendations in the report at the last meeting. Support staff reviewed feedback from Committee members on initial draft and offer these as incorporating the additional thoughts and comments provided. There was no additional feedback from Committee members.

- Diversity, inclusion, and equity are essential core values and top priorities of One Minnesota. Recommendations will be framed with an equity lens in recognition that agricultural and food processing workers are essential to Minnesota's economy and their labor puts food on the tables of Minnesotans.
- Recommendations will focus on improving the safety, health, and wellbeing of agricultural and food processing workers.
- Recommendations will remove barriers between agencies and stakeholders, and bring community voices to the table.

Timeline

An additional meeting was added on November 15th to the timeline. This meeting will give the committee more time discuss the progress of the report and see where things are in terms of consensus. Deputy commissioners Warfa and Vaubel are unable to attend, but Deputy Commissioner Blissenbach will be present.

November 10th Migrant Services Consortium Meeting

AWWC members are invited to attend the November 10th Migrant Services Consortium meeting. Members of the staff will be in attendance to present their recommendations. The Executive Order states that this Committee should consult with the Consortium on a regular basis, and this will be a good chance to keep them in the loop.

Committee work past December 1st

The deadline for the recommendations is December 1st, but the committee will continue to work past the deadline. Deputy Commissioner Vaubel would like to open the discussion on how members would like to move forward in terms of frequency of meetings, topics to work on, and next steps. This will be an ongoing Conversation.

Work Group Recommendations

At the last meeting, the fist-to-five consensus process was discussed and explained. At this meeting, committee members will have a chance to try it out. This is not a final decision on the recommendations, but it is meant the Committee some idea on where people are and where there might be concerns. Based on feedback from the last meeting, members of the work groups have broken down their recommendations by administrative, legislative, and agency-levels. Committee members will vote on each recommendation individually after each workgroup presents their report. Staff would like to hear from anyone with concerns at the 2 or below level. For rule making and legislative, staff want to know where committee members are using fist-to-five. For agency level recommendations staff would like to know concerns or items that need prioritization. This is an opportunity for the work groups to be able to get feedback and identify what is working, what isn't working, and what suggestions or concerns need to be addressed.

(Recommendations located in the PowerPoint)

Housing Work group (Susan Bishop)

Recommendation 1: All Committee Members present voted 4.

- Comments/concerns: Have not figured out how this will be implemented and how to make it more effective.

Recommendation 2: 4 of the members voted 4 and the other 4 voted a 5

Comments Concerns:

- Needs more attention on how we would strengthen.
- This could require more inspections. Do we have the capacity and funding?

Recommendation 3: 7 out of 8 members voted a 4, and one member voted 5.

- Comments/ Concerns: Will there be interest in a program like this?

Recommendation 4: 7 out of 8 members voted a 4, and one member voted 5.

Comments/ concerns:

- Would we need funding for this?
- Needs a 'how'
- Could be a cross work group solution.

Recommendation 5/6:

Comments/Concerns:

- Who would be in charge of conducting the inspections?
- What happens to those who are not registered?

Out of scope/ Recommendation 7: 3 members voted 5. 3 members voted 4

- Most effective with a variety of stakeholders
- The statute would have to outline the charge, and other administrative consideration.

Worker Safety Work group (Mike Zastoupil)

Recommendation 8/10: All members voted a 5

- Comments/Concerns: We need more of the how and what are the limitations on it.

Recommendation 9: 5 members voted 5. 2 members voted 4

- Comments/Concerns: Would like to see if a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) could possibly be higher penalties than OSHA's current federal penalties.

Recommendation 11: 2 members voted 5. 2 members voted 4

- Comments/Concerns: Do we need to consider funding?

Recommendation 12,13,14,15 & 16:

- Some cross/ duplication of these in the other work group recommendations
- Recognition program does take up staff's time in the case of regular work.
- How do we prevent unsafe employer in getting the recognition program?

Fair Labor Standards (Jessica Grosz)

Recommendation 17 A/B/C: All Committee Members present voted 5/5/5

- Concern regarding complaints not getting referred on.

Recommendation 18 A/B/C:

Comments/Concerns:

- How do we assure that all agencies are onboard?
- How do we make sure it's a priority?
- How does outreach happen after changes occur?

Overlap of Work Group Recommendations:

- Ombudsperson
- Education and Outreach

Recommendations Report

A progress report on the recommendations is shared by Maureen Ramirez. Committee members are in agreement with the format.

Public Comments

No members from the public.

Final Thoughts & Next steps

Members of the staff will develop an agenda for the next steps in order to get closer to the final report formation. Committee members will finalize recommendations at the November 15th meeting.

Adjourn