



Discussion of Employee Concerns

Microsite

Executive Committee

Item 6b

March 23, 2021

Employee Concerns Microsite

- Goals

- Increase transparency and public access to issues-related materials
- Maintain a record of correspondence and actions from Metropolitan, other agencies and individuals
- Establish a hub of information where Metropolitan can store and link to documents when referencing them in electronic correspondence

Microsite

- House information in one place
 - Metropolitan Board activity
 - Public comments provided to Metropolitan Board
 - Media coverage
 - Metropolitan's Equal Employment Opportunity Policies
 - Metropolitan's Diversity Equity and Inclusion Initiative
 - Correspondence and other actions from other entities including employees, employee unions and local and state government

Microsite

- Public facing website that points interested parties to one location
 - Legislators, County Supervisors, City Council members and staff
 - Board of Directors
 - Member agency directors, managers and staff
 - Employees
 - Media
 - Public

Employee Petition

- Employee petition began circulating March 8, 2021
 - Created by female employee
 - Union represented team manager (AFSCME Local 1001)
 - Signed and distributed as an individual and not as a Metropolitan manager (i.e., not under MWD signature block or job title)
- Distributed to:
 - Solely to “Friends/coworkers”
 - Seeking concerted action “if you are supportive”
- Executive Management Involvement - None

Employee Petition

- Entitled: “Petition from Metropolitan Water District Employees Focused on Solutions for a Better Future”
 - “As a current employee of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, I am saddened and distressed by media coverage that reflects the current climate created by a handful of employees that is now impacting the morale of the other 99 percent of employees.”
- Unknown if petition is still circulating or how many employees have signed
- “Google” form with ten statements seeking signature from employee if they agree with all or most statements

Employee Petition

- Stated Goal: Seeks concerted action in order to voice a common viewpoint on ten factors relevant to the following items:
 - Supporting the victims of sexual harassment at Metropolitan and the processes in place to address that subject
 - Accepting change in a positive manner
 - Focusing on the experience of all groups at Metropolitan
 - Challenging the tactics adopted by the AFSCME Women's Caucus
 - Commenting on their perception of Executive Management
 - Acknowledging actions taken to date

Employee Petition

- Executive management does not take a position on the petition
- Management employees involved in the petition are involved in their capacity as an employee engaged in protected activity
- Metropolitan has not adopted statements in the petition
- Metropolitan has not authorized any employee to circulate the petition on behalf of Metropolitan
- GM memo to all employees that there shall be no retaliation regardless of whether or not an employee participates in the petition or not

Management Hierarchy

- General Manager
- Assistant General Managers (4)
- Group Managers (11)
- Section Managers (26)
- Unit Managers (54)
- Team Managers (150)
 - Typically oversee 3 – 18 employees depending on nature of work
 - Petition originated at this level

Employee Rights

- First Amendment

- First Amendment protects a public employee's right to speak as a citizen on matters of public concern without fear of retaliation by his or her employer or to file petitions seeking redress
- Speech related to the workplace but outside the course of an employee's ordinary duties is protected
- Employees "are often in the best position to know what ails the agencies for which they work."

- MMBA/PERB

