

Standing Committee Meeting Minutes

July 15, 2021 at 2:00 PM

Present: Rachel Stefan, Alexandra Carter, Andrew Generous, Darcy Lanes, Naminder Sharma, Ben Ruether, Angelo Sia, Cam Leeson, Travis Englund

1. Grievance 21-02: Travis Englund Unjust Discipline

Unifor: There are lots of challenges to get to where the Company wants to go as far as working in a safe manner. You know the training issues etc. So with this incident, Travis goes adjusts this thing in the manner he was shown, dealing with something the crews had been trying to address... discipline is just unfair. Travis was cooperative in coming up with a better way. Actually, he did work with us to come up with a new system, so I think the discipline was unfair considering the whole umbrella. It put him in a bad position, and it wasn't malicious so we would like to see it removed.

CPP: I know it wasn't malicious. I think it was taking a shortcut, so it stands.

Unifor: That's what I've been shown.

CPP: By whom?

Unifor: By the senior operators that trained me. We've been doing things that way for years.

CPP: I haven't been here that long but it's not appropriate to stand on a handrail.

Unifor: What about leaning over a handrail?

CPP: What do you mean?

Unifor: Like if your waist is over a handrail.

CPP: Handrails are designed to 42 inches high so your waist shouldn't be over them.

Unifor: They are on the 1st press and 2nd press, that is how we've been doing it.

CPP: You're leaning over into it to do threads?

Unifor: We have footage, would you like to see?

CPP: Sure.

Unifor: There are problems with complying in the machine area. We're trying to work with the Company on this. The guys are being exposed but we want the machine to run.

CPP: I can see that that one looks like it is low.

Unifor: There's a 30-foot drop.

CPP: Yes, you're right, we should fix it. But leaning over is different than him standing with both feet on the handrail. I am going to disagree. Climbing up is different than what you've shown me.

Unifor: Some people have to climb up.

CPP: Who is doing that?

Unifor: Some people offer to hold others feet to do the threading. We're good working with you and I get the message, but we can't go too far because the machine won't run. When workers are doing this, they're trying to keep it running. We're in a terrible position. We will comply but give us a chance. If you can think about that and look at it. We can only get better by working together. We need cooperation on this.

Unifor: I would welcome you and Jeanette watching the start up. Do you not see a problem with this?

CPP: I have watched a start up.

Unifor: I know I made a mistake, but I think it was too much. They're putting themselves in dangerous positions. Come watch a start up on the 1st press.

CPP: I have watched a start up and I know they're not completely safe. We're trying to come up with something else.

Unifor: We're saying that we need to work together on this. We should have had a good conversation about this. The whole process about how we're getting to safety is not working. We've been bringing up these issues for 10 years and nothing has happened. This is part of the culture that Ben is speaking to. We're trying to be involved and we're getting nothing out of it. I had a meeting with Guy and Riley and Paul about safety stuff and everyone had good things to say, but I doubt it'll happen when they said it will. I don't think the operators have been talked to about the things we brought up. We want to be safe but we're being asked to do stuff that is dangerous. I don't feel safe at the 2nd press. It's more dangerous in my opinion than what I did on the dry end.

2. Grievance 21-04 Travis Englund Vacation Allowance

Unifor: We talked about this briefly.

CPP: I still don't understand.

Unifor: A guy with less seniority than me took the same week off as me and I was denied but the other guy was granted his. Last tour, they covered my vacation with overtime so we're asking for consideration in that. There was someone training so that is why they did it last time, but it's so rare for the machine tender and back tender to both be off at the same time. There are only a few positions that this would occur. We're asking that this be dealt with in a different way. I ended up taking floaters because Mike and I both had valid reasons for being off. Floaters should be more used for emergencies and medical reasons.

CPP: Is there something we've done wrong in terms of the collective agreement?

Unifor: Past practice is 3 people can be off at the same time in the fibreline, that's why there are 3 production labourers.

Unifor: It doesn't say that there's two positions that can't be off at the same time. Managers have taken that to say these two guys can't have the same time off because we don't have coverage.

CPP: We haven't violated anything.

Unifor: You haven't honored it either.

CPP: I'm just trying to understand.

Unifor: He's being denied time off because his position can't be covered with someone that is trained, but there are enough production labourers.

CPP: I thought we couldn't cover vacation with overtime.

Unifor: Now we have management picking who is off according to position.

CPP: Where is the page number in the collective agreement so I can read it?

Unifor: I think its vacation allotment. P 47-48.

Unifor: I put in a grievance because my discussion with my supervisor was going nowhere so I wanted to bring it to this meeting.

Unifor: Vacation will only be granted if it can be covered without overtime. The number per crew shall be determined by respective departments and superintendents, etc. We have a problem with training in the senior position, you only have 1 backup. The lower positions are always quite easy because there's quite a few trained. I believe the reason April 15 is in there, that's when summer students come in and that's why this speaks to superintendent and shop stewards to determine number of production labourers. We've always gone by previous understandings. It doesn't point to positions.

CPP: Do you know how many positions are in this situation?

Unifor: CRE, Machine Tender, #1 Operator... we're proposing this just during prime time. Come the end of the vacation year we're balled up with people trying to get time off, so we want to encourage the Company to look into a way to manage this with overtime just during this time. You won't want to decide here but I don't think it's a bad proposal.

CPP: In some departments you are right about the shutdown prep and backed up vacation.

Unifor: It would help to spread this out.

CPP: You also have to take into consideration about whether or not we're able to find coverage.

Unifor: Mike is going on a trip in august as well, so it's difficult to wait a week before to book something.

Unifor: It's also difficult to train people up to that level. It's not workable to do that in those positions. We're looking at a certain amount of overtime, but it would have to be equitable.

CPP: Yes, it wouldn't really be fair to only do it for a few positions.

Unifor: You'd have to look at it a bit. I think there are ways you could make it work.

CPP: Yes we would.

Unifor: I think there are ways we could look at it that would become a win-win. Our crew usually get together to plan our holidays in the winter. For our company's sake, we don't want this to be abused.

3. Grievance 21-05

Unifor: We don't have the form for this one.

CPP: I never received this one, I only have the previous two.

Unifor: I guess we will all have to look for it. It was right after shutdown finished.

CPP: Ok we'll look for it too. We can discuss it in the next meeting.

4. Chip Tester Position

Unifor: That's pretty well done?

CPP: Yes, but it could resurface eventually.

5. Standing Committee Meeting Dates

CPP: We could do August 17th at 11:00 or 3:00 or the 19th at 11:00 or 3:00? I'd like to keep them mid-month.

CPP: We will likely be in the middle of start up on the 17th.

CPP: Is that whole week off?

Unifor: Might be good to push to the following week.

CPP: Ok I'll email you for that one then.

Unifor: No appetite to schedule in advance?

CPP: Yeah if one doesn't work then we move just that single one.

CPP: Can we schedule 3rd step for next week?

Unifor: We can do the 17th, 18th, 25th, 26th of August.

CPP: Ok and at that meeting we can schedule 4th step.

Unifor: Yes.

6. COVID Government Program

Unifor: It's 3 days, not sure how exactly the policy works, but the government is encouraging employers to provide paid days for COVID related absences. What is our policy here?

CPP: If people are off for a day and a half for a test, then they're paid for those days off. With our testing, we're able to get them back within the 3-day window.

Unifor: So we are following that?

CPP: Yes and it is retroactive to May 1st and ending on December 31st. The employee can request it.

Unifor: Are you sending information out? I just don't like that way of the information going out, only in the minutes here.

CPP: They just have to ask us for it.

Unifor: You don't think it's a good idea to put something out to everyone? So they know it's an option?

CPP: Yeah they just have to request it from us.

Unifor: So this is retro to May 1st and ending December 31st? It doesn't change the fact that WI isn't covering people off for quarantining or if someone in their household is asking to isolate?

CPP: No, nothing changed with that.

7. Railway Medicals

CPP: You asked about the sleep apnea here?

Unifor: If there is follow up required, how is that done?

CPP: There was a change to the railway medical form right before COVID and asks about sleep disorders. It asks a bunch of questions, such as whether you're over a certain age, overweight, male, and so forth, and if you have 3 of the indicators on the form, you get screened for sleep apnea. They're sent to the clinic in Quesnel. There's no fee and it only takes 4 days to get in for it. They take a machine home and if they get a certain score then they are treated for sleep apnea. The hourly blue cross medical covers sleep apnea machines. It's really good to find out that you have it. I think it's a good thing.

Unifor: So the first part that we need to round up is on those railway medical forms there are a ton of things the medical officer can pursue. Our members are contacted directly by phone by the company doctor. We don't like to deal over the phone, if there is follow up required, can it be done through letter correspondence? I don't like dealing with personal business on phone. That is the first thing we're asking for.

CPP: I'll have to get back to you on that one.

Unifor: The second part is, the company doctor has a request, what we're asking for is that the follow up of the sleep apnea question be dealt with through the employee's family doctor. There are privacy issues for employee. They go to sleep apnea clinic, where does that information get released to?

CPP: It goes to their family doctor. Then the doctor talks to the employee and then the employee brings it in. I know people are confused. I don't need to see that stuff; we want something more streamlined. We're working on that and giving people a timeline to get it done. Right now, it's 6 months.

Unifor: Ok we want them to follow up with their family doctor and the family doctor can report back to the company.

CPP: You don't want the West Fraser company doctor involved?

Unifor: Only for what is necessary.

CPP: Yes, we're working on that.

Unifor: There's a lot of information on there that is private.

CPP: Yes, there is, we're working on a better process right now.

Unifor: in the meantime, we have members waiting to hear back from us.

Unifor: Is this medical one time?

CPP: No, it's every 3 years. These are federally regulated medicals.

Unifor: Depends on age too.

CPP: We have one guy about to expire so we need his resolved quickly. The results will go to his family doctor and his family doctor can write us a letter if he's able to work.

Unifor: Who sets up the appointment to the sleep apnea clinic?

CPP: The employee does, they get referred by their doctor and set it up according to their schedule.

Unifor: So, the employee is being contacted by the company doctor and it should be looked into how that is being set up. That is why it should be via letter. It's a little more complicated than what they're used to.

CPP: Yes, there is definitely room for improvement.

Unifor: Who is paying for the time to pursue this? To go see the doctor, the sleep apnea clinic, etc. The Company was paying for the railway medical. Who is paying for their time?

CPP: The Company pays for the appointments. But no, it's no different than light duty form or WI forms, they aren't paid to go to these visits. It's a requirement of their positions.

8. Light Duty Form

CPP: So we don't currently ask anything about medication in the light duty form and sometimes that can be concerning from a safety standpoint. We just want to know if it will cause cognitive impairment and what the side effect are.

Unifor: I know that Glen had discussion with union lawyer, I think we want to draft a response to that.

CPP: Like for the wording?

Unifor: Just for their ability, the doctor should already be assessing that.

CPP: They don't right now though, that slips past us unless the employee mentions it. We should have this information so we can keep people somewhere safer if their reaction time is slower.

Unifor: I need to talk to Glen about it and get back to you on that.

CPP: we can talk about it at 3rd step.

Unifor: That will work.

9. Standing Committee Minutes

Unifor: With the minutes what are we doing?

CPP: We'll just send them to you. They're just verbatim.

Unifor: If you have any markups we'll send them back.

CPP: Yes she just captured what was said.

10. Steam Plant Exams

CPP: I wanted to talk about the exam status for Stephen Verge; I hope the Union pushes him to get those completed. I haven't heard his marks back yet. He booked 4 exams, and he is done in December. Our records were wrong, December 5th, 2021 is the date by then he must have his 3rd class ticket.

Unifor: I need to review. In CA it says from date you receive FE4, you have 4 years.

CPP: That period will end in September, but I am going with December because we had some missed follow ups.

Unifor: What does he have completed?

CPP: He hasn't had any exams in last 3 years, I don't know where he is at though.

Unifor: in language we have some consideration for special events. COVID will be a consideration. I will talk to Stephen and I hope he's doing all he can.

CPP: But he did not appear for any exams the first 3 years. He didn't start thinking about it until we had discussions. Everyone else was getting dates and appearing for exams. Last time we talked to him he booked it right away. He got his confirmation. When he tried to book he was able to, so that shows he never tried before.

Unifor: Come December 5, then are you going to boot him to labour pool?

CPP: He has all the exams booked but he needs to pass. He's had all the opportunities.

Unifor: Hopefully he's working his tail off. I don't want to be in the position that December 5th he is back in labour pool. Each year we should have been reminding him.

CPP: We spoke to him each year about it.

Unifor: It's supposed to be a Union-Company meeting.

CPP: He hasn't shown up for exams.

Unifor: I hear you, we're going to encourage him, but I hope we have latitude.

CPP: At this stage I can't do that. For right now it's a no.

11. Steam Plant Training

CPP: For 2nd CRE training – recruitment is ongoing. Two guys coming on 28th, Chad is on CRE training and Mark, and Phil is getting training as well. So we do have development. However, I am experiencing issues with trying to provide floater and if they don't receive them they call in sick. I try to provide OT but not many people work with me on that and come in. I need presence of people to come in.

Unifor: In the past, the training window left the summer prime time months a little bit. The expectation to train in summer months wasn't there. The focus was non-prime time months. I'm not surprised you're not having luck.

CPP: when people put off retirements that is great, but time is passing. I need people to start working a lot on training so they can work on panels. I don't want to be in a position where we don't have people to operate the panel. Nobody will want that here.

Unifor: I really need someone from the Steam Plant to understand this better so I can't really speak to it now.

CPP: I need commitment from people that they will come and I'm not seeing it.

Unifor: Until people see the need, they can't make a commitment.

CPP: Yes we had one guy ask for family day and then he was sick and that disturbed the entire tour for training.

Unifor: Would you like to have a meeting and maybe I can bring Chris Norman into it, he's quite knowledgeable and he could shed some light on whether there's something we can do.

CPP: Yes maybe we can have separate meeting, I am open to that.

Unifor: It'll have to be a couple weeks.

CPP: Ok no problem.

12. Steam Plant Spouts Practice

CPP: Bad practice with senior people, I don't know where it came from, but they're refusing to do spouts.

Unifor: Yes that is a practice not a policy.

CPP: It was never approved by company; it was a myth.

Unifor: Are you saying you're changing practice?

CPP: It was never approved.

Unifor: When are you doing that?

CPP: I don't know where it generated in the first place.

Unifor: What's the purpose for changing? Is it causing issues?

CPP: Yes it is.

Unifor: Are we talking about the grievance that went away? I thought we dealt with that.

CPP: That was a different grievance. That was a training one. We can re-discuss this.

Unifor: If you want to change the practice we can, but I don't know if you'll help yourself with that. You have to remember that the issue you are talking about will resolve itself in time unless there are more accommodations in the future. It's hot and physical and hard for older members. That's why it was set up.

CPP: Health is one thing but taking advantage is another thing. Company has not approved it.

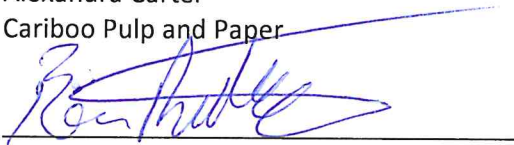
Unifor: The guys understand it's not a right but a practice. One guy took it too far, but I think that's been resolved.

CPP: I can do a couple of meetings and we can discuss it. I just wanted to clear up that wasn't approved by the Company.

Unifor: Yes it's a practice not a policy.



Alexandra Carter
Cariboo Pulp and Paper



Ben Ruether
Unifor Local 1115