

ALASKA LABOR RELATIONS AGENCY
Minutes of Business Meeting
Friday, September 20, 2002, 10:00 a.m.

1. **Call to order: Meeting** was called to order by Board Chair Aaron Isaacs, Jr., at 10:00 a.m., in the Department of Labor and Workforce Development Building, Room 208, 3301 Eagle St., Anchorage. Present at the publicly noticed meeting were Aaron Isaacs, Jr., Chair; Dave Rasley, Vice Chair; and board members Dick Brickley and Roberta Demoski. Chair Isaacs noted a quorum was present for conducting business. Member Raymond Smith was unable to attend today's meeting. Commissioner Ed Flanagan will attend briefly via teleconference.

Staff members Margie Yadlosky, Jean Ward, Mark Torgerson, and Arvella Thomas also attended. A sign-up sheet was provided for public attendees.

2. **Approval of minutes from April 11, 2002 business meeting:** Dave moved to approve the minutes. Roberta seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

3. **Old business:**

- a. **Status of pending cases.**

1. *Case flow chart. (Margie)*

Board members reviewed the case flow summary report, which provides an overview of the work load by showing the number of cases filed and closed during a reporting period. Margie, among other things, provided an overview of case filing and resolution activity. The total caseload is 49 cases, compared to 54 at this time last year. Margie noted the Agency continues to make progress in reducing the overall caseload. Jean described the number of ULP cases and the fact that none are over 5 months old.

2. *Update on unit clarification petitions and unfair labor practice complaints. (Margie/Jean)*

Margie said the Agency continues to reduce the unit clarification (UC) backlog. The unit clarification caseload has been reduced from 40 to 26. Margie is awaiting responses to questionnaires in approximately one-half of the remaining UC cases. Margie said the Agency investigates cases more assertively now because incumbents do not respond as readily as they did previously. Dick inquired as to how long a UC is open for information gathering and if it is closed due to lack of information.

Margie explained the process and the pitfalls of getting questions answered by the incumbent's staff and management. Aaron stated that Dick brings up a good point on closing cases due to lack of information being provided. Aaron stated the Agency needs to follow-up on a timeline for UC's to be closed.

3. *Update on election petitions. (Jean)*

Aaron asked if there were any election petitions. Jean responded that there is one for the Yupiit School District in the town/villages of Akiak, Akiachiak and Tulusak.

b. Budget.

Mark outlined the status of the FY 2003 budget. Dave reiterated that former Member Bob Doyle's statement is a convincing argument: "It is awkward to ask individuals to sit on the Board and not have money to provide adequate training which is an important budgetary item." Roberta asked what is the purpose of ALRA. She then read the statutory declaration policy of the Agency which is to, "Serve as the labor relations agency under the Public Employment Relations Act and serve as the railroad labor relations agency for the Alaska Railroad under the Alaska Railroad Corporation Act."

She said the Agency needs adequate training in order to properly perform its duties and functions. Regarding attendance at hearings, she said, is unfair to the people we are representing to have the Board listen on tape at home. Mark pointed out that the Board cannot ask timely questions if they aren't at the hearing. Neither can the Board weigh credibility and demeanor. The Board asked that the Agency be more aggressive to get money added to the budget during the next legislative session.

Mark said that staff requested travel increase, funds for a contract hearing officer (in case of conflict of interest) and future merit increases in this FY2004 budget.

The budget request includes the following:

- \$18,500.00 increase to the total budget, including:
- \$ 7,000.00 for travel
- \$ 4,500.00 for personnel increases
- \$ 7,000.00 for Contractual

Roberta asked what contractual was for. Mark explained that it would fund a contract hearing officer if there is a conflict in interest.

Commissioner's Conference Call -- Commissioner Flanagan thanked Board members and staff for their service and cooperation. He asked if former

member Bob Doyle was present. Mark explained Bob's new position as Superintendent for the Mat-Su Borough School District. Mr. Flanagan then expressed his appreciation for Bob's long-term service to the ALRA and that the Agency would be getting another management position soon. Dave interjected to the Commissioner that we were just discussing the budget and he hopes that we will have some success with a funding increase. The Commissioner said it would be appropriate for Board members to talk with the legislators. Roberta suggested contacting their legislators formally. Union and State representatives are willing to offer their support. There were no other questions or comments regarding the budget.

4. New business: (Aaron / Mark)

a. Board member update.

Aaron welcomed Roberta to the Board. She has done two hearings to date. The legislature confirmed Roberta's appointment, and the re-appointment of Dave and Aaron. A plaque and card was passed around to all Board members to sign for Bob's service. Ray has the most tenure now that Bob is gone. Aaron asked for an updated Board list.

b. ALRA Conference.

The conference was held in July in San Diego. Aaron and Mark attended the ALRA conference and remarked that it is an Annual Conference for the Association of Labor Relations Agencies (Big ALRA) with State, Federal and Canadian participants. Mark spoke at the conference and moderated a panel that addressed agencies in crisis, such as, dealing with reduced budgets and catastrophic national events like September 11, which impacted functions of labor relations agencies. Dan Rainey of the National Mediation Board explained that the NMB's post office was the one that had all of the anthrax and caused delays in receiving time-dated documents. Marlene Gold from the New York's Office of Collective Bargaining told a compelling story of her agency's experience with the September 11 disaster. Her office was located 1½ blocks from the World Trade Center. Aaron thanked the board for sending him to the conference. He found the conference very useful. He enjoyed meeting his counterparts in other states and encouraged other board members to attend.

Some conference attendees approached Aaron and Mark about Alaska hosting a future conference. A brief brainstorming session ensued as to whether or not the conference was a possibility. Mark stated the conference could be a time issue for a small agency, and the cost could also be a factor. Roberta suggested getting some of the unions and employers to help. Mark shared that there are a lot of people who want to come to Alaska for the conference. A part-time position was suggested to assist with the conference. Dave said the Governor's Safety Committee might want to help with the permission of the

Commissioner's office. Mark stated that at next summer's ALRA conference they would select the location for 2005's conference. Aaron said we need to decide whether to invite the conference here through a formal letter. There was mention of other departments that could help with the conference planning. Roberta suggested a list of those who would benefit from the conference. Mark stated that the budget is still an issue this year. Aaron would like this to be an agenda item for the next meeting and discuss the possibility of including this cost in the budget. Mark said the conference would probably need to be coordinated through the Commissioner's office. Other departments may want to participate in the conference as well. Roberta asked that for the next meeting that some prior conference materials be included in the Board packet.

c. Request from Commissioner on Nabors.

A Letter of findings was included in the Board packet concerning Nabors Alaska. Mark explained to the Board that the letter summarizes his investigation requested by the Commissioner.

d. Introduction of new Administrative Clerk III, Arvella Thomas. Welcome aboard!

e. New pamphlet 900 was distributed. The Agency's website is not exactly what we wanted, but we will be working with the new webmaster to improve the site.

f. Tentative dates for next year's Board meetings are April and October. A call will be made to Board members to inquire as to which day of the months of April and October will be good. If possible, hearings will be scheduled prior to Board meetings as this has worked out for everyone.

g. Mark thanked the Board for their volunteer service to ALRA and to Alaska.

5. Other: Mark noted that the ALRA Academy was a two-day training preceding the National ALRA conference for newcomers to the Board. The Academy is 2 days: Friday night through Sunday morning. The conference starts immediately following the Academy. Aaron said he learned a lot at the Academy, and the instructors were excellent.

6. Public Comment: No public attendance.

7. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m., and the Board met in executive session for deliberation of cases.