

**MONTANA STATE FUND
OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

December 8, 2022

The Montana State Fund (MSF) Operational Excellence Committee meeting was held December 8, 2022 in MSF's Board Room at 855 Front Street, Helena, Montana 59601 and via Zoom.

Committee Members Attending

Dexter Thiel, Sidney
Michael Marsh, Billings

Jan VanRiper, Missoula

Board Members Attending

Richard Miltenberger
Karen Fagg, Billings

John Maxness, Helena

MSF Staff Attending

Holly O'Dell, President/CEO
Kevin Braun, General Counsel
Will Anderson, Interim Operations VP
Bruce Johnsen, Chief Strategic Officer
Pam Byers, Assistant Vice President, Operations

Verna Boucher, Spec Asst to Pres/CEO
Matt Mandell, Interim Operations Support VP
Ethan Heverly, Director, Government Relations
Julie Jenkinson, Vice President, Operations

Others Attending

Peter Strauss, Montana Self Insurers' Assn.

I. Meeting Preliminaries – Dexter Thiel

- A. Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 3:16 p.m.

IV. Stakeholder Perspective – Injured Worker – Claimant Attorney Insights – Jan VanRiper, Kevin Braun, Leslae Dalpiaz

Chair Thiel moved item four to the first spot on the agenda to accommodate the outside speaker who had been patiently waiting for some time.

Committee member requests prompted testimony from a claims attorney, Leslae Dalpiaz, regarding injured employees experiences and treatment by MSF. Ms. Dalpiaz reported that the primary reason for injured employees to hire an attorney is due to lack of response by their claims examiners who are typically carrying a claim load that is overwhelming. She noted that MSF, on the whole, does a good job; however, the more prominent issue currently is the lack of uniformity with the new adjusters based on the lack of experience and mentoring knowledge being shared due to remote/hybrid worksites. Committee members asked a number of questions to gain additional detail.

V. Claims Examiner Experience – Focus on What Matters - Pam Byers, Assistant Vice President, Claims Operations

Staff provided a report outlining the improvements implemented to address the dissatisfaction and division expressed by Claims Examiners, verbally and by leaving MSF, regarding performance requirements, caseloads, and excessive oversight. Continued reviews and insights by management will be sought going forward with additional solutions adopted as needed to increase engagement for employees.

I. Meeting Preliminaries – continued - Dexter Thiel

- B. June 3, 2022 Minutes

The Committee took action to approve the minutes as presented; Mr. Marsh made the motion, Ms. VanRiper seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

II. Committee Charter/Structural Issues – Jan VanRiper

The Committee reviewed and took no action to alter, change or update the charter. A plan to consider additional changes in the future was discussed.

III. Stakeholder Perspective – Agent – Agency Partnership Committee Feedback – Will Anderson, Interim Vice President, Operations

In response to the Committee's request for additional information about the Agency Partnership Committee (APC), staff provided the history of the evolution of the APC and the improved processes developed and adopted, throughout the years, as a result of this partnership. The Committee commented that agents who have a strong understanding of MSF's product are best suited to deliver customer service to MSF policyholders.

VI. 2022 Strategic Plan – Meaningful Decisions at the Desk – “Kill the Forms” – Matt Mandell, Interim Vice President, Operations Support

Staff explained the newly adopted process to review and eliminate, if possible, unnecessary, bureaucratic forms that slow or stop right level decision making to empower employees and increase productivity.

VII. 2023 Looking Up and Out – Bruce Johnsen, Chief Strategy Officer

Staff reported on the AM Best state of workers' compensation discussion held on-line on November 7, 2022 that highlighted that overall, the workers' compensation market continues to have a favorable outlook. Continued investment in an agile technology approach is warranted and MSF would benefit by continuing to watch bellwether indicators which provide insight into medical takedown, wage inflation, and medical inflation.

VIII. Safety-related Grant and Scholarship Programs – Michael Marsh

Staff provided a comprehensive review and history of the grants and scholarship programs MSF engages in:

- Awards of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to high school and middle school classrooms since 2017
- Scholarships to individuals enrolled in various post high school trade and industry programs or MT Tech's Occupational Safety and Health degree programs
- WorkSafe Champions safety education and support to policyholders at their worksites and non-policyholders through the centralized classes connected to the Quarterly Safety Workshops throughout the state.
- Achieving Charitable Endeavors (ACE) Grants to 501(c)(3) non-profits, seeking to improve safety for their organization through a proposed project and matching funds.

Staff commented on MSF's intent to tie safety interventions to intended out

IX. Old Business/New Business

The Chair called for any Old or New Business; there was none.

X. Public Comment

The Chair called for public comment; there was none.

The meeting adjourned at 5:24 p.m. The next scheduled Operational Excellence Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, March 9, 2023 at Montana State Fund, 855 Front Street, Helena, Montana in the Board Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Verna Boucher
Special Assistant to the President/CEO