

## Employer Advisory Committee (EAM) Conference Call Meeting Notes of 12/1/2004

1. **MERS staff in attendance:** Gayle Lansky, Yvette Elledge, Kathy Taylor, Stephanie Bellwood, and Tom Ives – Recorder.
2. **Attendees (by conference call):** Venice Anderson, Kim White, Marita Dizon, Pennie Lien, Debbie Vulsteke, Charlene Nelson, Melissa Hager, Fred Welding, and Gordon Allen.

### 3. **Introductions:**

- Gayle introduced MERS staff attending the meeting.
- Focus is the “Annual Reconciliation” process. It will be totally different this year than in past years.
- We want input and advice from you as we prepare to “roll” this process out.

### 4. **Annuals Process – Yvette Elledge:**

- We do not need you to submit an “annual file with 2004 data for this year. You have been submitting information throughout the year through Clarety.
- **Question to Attendees:** What would be most helpful for you to receive from PERS so that you can do your annual reconciliation ...such as an electronic file of all submitted transactions to date, etc.?
- **Response:**
  - Pennie - OHSU: They have their files that they sent us. We now need to see the information that is in the System vice what we believe we submitted – by SSN. That way, we can then compare the two sets of data and make necessary corrections.
  - Gayle L. asked: Should you be able to see the cumulative hours worked for all PERS employers? Response: “Yes,” it should show all hours.
  - Fred – Fern Ridge School District: I have looked at the system and it shows the hours and that is helpful, but it does not give the amount of salary posted - and that would be most helpful. Clarification: “Yes” - We would like to see the salary broken down by subject, non-subject, OT, etc for each employee and also total salary if possible. Consensus was that the larger employers would need to have both subject and non-subject salary breakdowns.
- **Topic: Viewing Capability:**
- **Discussion:** That some sort of viewing capability of “year to date” information with the capability to download information as needed would be nice to have.

- **Decision/Response:** Yvette noted that both view capability and download capability will not be available at the same time. In the long term, we plan on having this information in a format that can both be viewed at any time and also have the capability to download. This is still in the development phase at this time.
- **Question:** Yvette: We have just a short time frame to make this happen. “Do you also need something in an electronic format so you can do a comparison?”
- **Response:**
- Fred, “Yes” we do need to have this - if not in an electronic format, then on a disk.
- Yvette noted that if we provide it in a screen format, this might be okay for smaller Employers, but the larger employers would need it in an electronic or on a disk.
- Yvette stated that we probably could not provide an electronic format at this time – but we will work on trying to provide it to the larger employers on a disk.
- **Topic: Suspended Demographics:**
- **Discussion:**
- Attendees raised concerns that they were receiving suspended demographics error messages mainly in regard to address issues. They need a way to confirm whether the system suspended the transaction because the address in the system was not consistent with what they are reporting or whether the suspension was for a different reason.
- **Decision/Response:** Yvette stated that this is a “Track III change request.” It will be at least until mid-year 2005 or later that we would be able to provide address review to the Employers. Yvette also noted that we are hoping to have payroll comparisons by mid January, 2005.
- **Topic: Overview of annuals process - Yvette:**
- **Discussion:**
- Yvette: This includes clearing up “valid's” and other suspended records, by working with the various Employers. This is happening now.
- We are also working on data cleanup items that will help to clear problems up.
- We are working on System modifications to Clarity that need to be made so that annuals reconciliation can begin.
- Files will only include posted records.
- One of our system requirements is that the screen will be updated as “records post.” For some employers that have not submitted all of their payroll reports to date, a screen that reflects current posted records is essential.
- In the past, we have sent out exception reports – there will be less of that occurring this year.
- This year there will be much less direct Employer involvement and more action

- for PERS in the synchronization of records between RIMS and Clarety.
- Employers will be able to continue to process records throughout the annuals process.
- **Topic: Reports Options** – Venice, Sutherlin School District:
  - **Question:** What will be our report options in the future? We do not need a “whole file,” but if a report could be printed off, it would be ideal. This would be used to balance quarterly reports.
  - **Decision/Response - Yvette:** It would be ideal for the employer to have the capability to view current year to date information at any time and to be able to print it out as needed. This would be a report that would reflect all transactions/information that they have reported in that given time. We hope to be able to get all transactions on the screen. We are looking at preparing it in an Excel format.
- **Topic: 238 Members** – Gordon, OHSU:
  - **Question:** Pertaining to PERS 238 members. This is an issue of “overlapping years. If they became a member in 2003, and then reported on in EDX in 2004. Yvette asked if he was talking about exceptions for PERS 238 members ? Gordon said that he was. Gordon stated that he is talking about overlaps on new hires from 2003 to 2004.
  - **Decision/Response** – Yvette: There are still some exceptions we will have to work with the Employer to clear. Not all of the exceptions will involve the Employer. For that one situation with OHSU, Yvette is not sure if we have always had the problem. Yvette stated that she would make a note of it and make sure that this issue is addressed and resolved.
- **Topic: Exception Types:**
  - **Discussion:**
  - Yvette noted that we should get the same type of exceptions as we have received in previous years.
  - This year, however, it will be a question of whether RIMS is in agreement with Clarety and the information reported by the Employer.
- **Topic: Salary Maximum of \$200,000:**
  - **Question:** I came across several examples of where Clarety is still showing \$200,000 as the Salary level and I thought this had been resolved?
  - Other Attendees confirmed that they also were seeing some of these, and they are creating suspended transactions.
  - **Decision:** Gayle and Yvette stated that they would check into this and see what

the system is reflecting. Gayle thanked all for bringing this sort of a problem to our attention.

- **Topic: Putting Retirees on the December Report-** Melissa, Coos County:

- **Discussion:**

- Melissa states that she mentioned this to Tim L. when the technicians were not able to help resolve issues surrounding Retirees.
- She has made the decision to take all of her “retirees” with problems off of the various reports, so those reports can post.
- She will then put all “retiree issues” on her December report. She states that Tim concurred that this sounded like a good idea.
- Fred stated that he has been doing the same thing with “temps and subs.” He has been deleting them from other specific reports and intends to “plug them in” the December report. Fred also commented that with all of the various problems in EDX reporting and the additional requirement of having to do negative entries – it was a smart move. Fred stated he would continue to do this until we get system changes that recognize “temps and subs.”

- **Decision:**

- Gayle said that she would check this out with the MERS “Program Techs” and see if this might help. Gayle also stated that if it were proven as a valid “work around option,” she would put this out on the list-serve as a suggestion.

- **Topic: Additional Annual Reconciliation Issues -** Yvette:

- **Discussion:**

- Yvette informed all of some outstanding “issues” that PERS is attempting to “iron out” at this time:
  - 1) Part-time employees;
  - 2) Ineligible members – where Employer thought they were eligible, and reported “Subject” wages only to find out at the end of the year that they did not reach the required 600 hours to be a qualified PERS employee.
- **Decision:** Yvette stated that this would be the final piece we resolve before we get our annual statements out.

- **Topic: “Rolling out” instructions and annuals processes and updates –** Gayle:

- **Discussion:**

- Gayle stated that a variety of tools could be used to achieve this goal.
  - 1) Web-X – an internet tele-conferencing capability (some did attend these in the past)
  - 2) Paper and mailing - tried and true method , but paper bulletins might

not be best way to communicate.

- Most Attendees stated that they preferred e-mail's with attachments. One attendee enjoyed the personal touch of a phone call. One commented that she did not mind Web-X and it was helpful, but somewhat frustrating
- Yvette when asked, noted that she did not believe the process was complicated to the degree of requiring us to use Web-X to train Employers. She further stated that the information we should be getting by January 2005 should be relatively simple. Employers would have the capability to view the info. PERS would then also have the ability to send a requested file via disk to an employer.
- **Decision:**
- Yvette stated that Employers would be able to view the information on file via a screen.
- If more comprehensive information was required than was available on the screen, they could notify PERS and we would prepare a file on disk and get it to them.
  
- **Topic: Timelines** - Yvette:
- **Discussion:**
- Yvette noted that our timeline for the Pre-Annual process remains basically the same, as we are still using the old System (RIMS) to do the closing for Employers annuals.
- January 2005 was our date for synchronization of records and data cleanup.
- Our "drop dead date" to complete all pre annuals processes is 3/165/2004.
- Yvette further noted that we will be asking that Employers work on clearing all suspended records and posting all reports they can on their own. All remaining problems/issues will have to be fixed by PERS.
- OHSU noted that 12/31/2004 was the last pay date of the year at OHSU. They will file their report no earlier than the first week in January 2005. Yvette noted that PERS is aware of this, and that PERS is also working on some "exception files" earlier than this, when possible.
- **Decision:**
- Consensus received from all Attendees that mid January 2005 is an acceptable date for getting access to review salary contributions.
  
- **Topic: Employer Reconciliation Deadlines** – Debbie, Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue:
- **Question:** If we get file to reconcile in mid January, when will we have to get the reconciliation's completed?
- **Decision/Response:**
- Yvette noted that Employers would be getting a copy of what we have in Clarety.
- Employers can then make any corrections required in the EDX system. This is why we are trying to clear up as many suspended records as we can now.

- There will probably be a deadline, but it has not been assigned yet.
- When Employers have completed reviewing this information on-line, we will want you to “let us know.” A typical response might be: “Yes, it all looks good, and ER records are reconciled with what is on the screen.”
- We will not require Employers to send us a file back.
- As an estimate, we will need feedback from the Employer by mid February 2005.
- Gayle added that we do not know yet what the format for this information feedback might look like. Perhaps something like “Negative adjustments, etc. have been completed.”
- Yvette noted that we wanted an error exception screen that would allow the Employer to click “OK” that the report and information is “ready to go.” We are in the process of developing business requirements for this screen this week.
- Yvette reminded all that when we say “EDX” we are referring to the system that the Employers see and do their reports in. When we say “Clarety,” we are referring to how PERS views the reports that Employers have submitted.
- Our programmers will be providing screens that we can use for annual reconciliation and then also use throughout the year once we get through the annuals process. We still do not know what specific information will be on the screens or what it will look like.

- **Topic: Seeing DTL2 transactions for another Employer** Charlene, City of Ashland:

- **Discussion:**

- Charlene states that she spoke to Paul S. about a problem that she ran into.
- On or about 11/30/04, she opened a DTL 1 records report, which listed 5 pages, but she could only see one page of it. When she clicked on page 2, she got information with SSN's.
- She called spoke to Paul S. and was informed that she was looking at information from Lane County! The information she was looking at was DTL 2 information on transactions.
- When she spoke to Paul S., he informed her that he thought this was a “virus” problem.
- Another Attendee also stated that this same thing happened to her about two months ago and that she spoke to Tim L. at the time and was told that PERS was aware of this problem and was working on it.
- None of the other attendees report a problem similar to this.

- **Decision:**

- Gayle L. will get with PERS staff to include Bob Curb and look into this matter immediately.

- Gayle thanked all for reporting occurrences of this nature and encouraged them to contact her as they occur.

- **Topic: Negative Adjustments to correct salary reported incorrectly on Retirees and maximum hours issues** - Penny, OHSU:

- **Discussion:**

- Penny stated that they have some transactions for retirees in which they erroneously reported salary. Can they do a negative adjustment?

- **Decision/Response:**

- Other Attendees stated that it did not work to do a negative adjustment in this situation. The negative adjustment will suspend.

- **Question:** What does she (Penny) do with Retirees that are getting close to maximum hours, when the hours in the system are incorrect (too high)?

- **Response:**

- Gayle stated that the functionality to have the ability to correct reported hours is not activated at this time.
- Both the retiree and the Employer need to be tracking the accurate hours to make sure they do not exceed them.
- Gayle also said that this is on the list of things we are working on, but there are other pressing things that take priority at this time that impact money and/or contributions.

- **Topic: Turnaround time for Pulling a Retirement for a Retiree for returns to work:**

- **Question:** What is the turnaround for pulling someone out of retirement?

- Employer #2018 has an employee (David Pump) who they want to rehire, but the system is still not showing them as being retired. The entry has been suspended for the last four months.

- **Decision/Response:**

- Yvette stated that she will look into this one and get back to the Employer on the status of the retirement and with a deadline for how soon they can report the new hire.

- **Topic: New Employer Bulletins** – Gayle:

- **Discussion:**

- Upcoming Issues are:

- 1) Re-employing Retirees
- 2) Elected and appointed officials
  
- **Next Meeting:** 1/5/2005, Wednesday at 2 PM. Gayle noted that she would get out the meeting notes and agenda items.

Tele-conference adjourned at about 3 PM.

Tom Ives - Recorder