



RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

February 16, 2006

NOTES

**Held at the
The Elms Room
Crowne Plaza Hotel at the Crossing
801 Greenwich Avenue
Warwick, RI**

1. ROLL CALL

The meeting convened at 9:25 a.m.

Committee members present:

Wolfgang Bauer, Town of West Warwick (Chairperson)
David Krugman, Town of Narragansett
Colonel Stephen McCartney, City of Warwick
Richard Kerbel, Town of North Kingstown (Items 1-5 Only)

Committee members absent:

Lori Miller, Lincoln Public Schools
Robert Hicks, South Kingstown Schools
M. Richard Scherza, Cranston Public Schools
Linda Celona, North Providence Schools

Trust Management present:

Thomas E. Dwyer, Rhode Island Interlocal Risk Management Trust
Russell Godin, Rhode Island Interlocal Risk Management Trust
Brian T. Ahern, Rhode Island Interlocal Risk Management Trust

Due to the lack of a quorum of the Risk Management Committee, an official meeting of the Committee was not held. An informal discussion of the following topics occurred as described below. No votes were taken.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 29, 2005 MEETING

Due to the lack of a quorum, approval of the Minutes of the September 29, 2005 meeting was deferred to a subsequent meeting.

3. NEW COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

Mr. Bauer welcomed Richard Kerbel, Town Manager, Town of North Kingstown, to the Risk Management Committee. All Committee Members joined in welcoming Rich to the Risk Management Committee.

4. Discussion on Drug and Alcohol Testing Consortium

Mr. Ahern provided the Committee with a memorandum dated February 8, 2006 that detailed the Consortium's drug and alcohol testing results for 2005. In 2005, the Consortium reported a total of 602 drug tests and 131 alcohol tests. There were 514 random drug tests and 128 random alcohol tests completed in 2005. All of the 7 verified positive drug tests in 2005 were in the random category. There were no positive alcohol tests in 2005. Mr. Ahern stated that the Consortium roster has increased to a total of 1,061 drivers. Mr. Ahern pointed out that 2005 was the first year of a three-year contract with Health Resources, Inc., headquartered in Woburn, Massachusetts, to provide drug and alcohol testing services for the Consortium.

Mr. Ahern reported a concern with three Consortium Members (Town of Bristol, Town of Foster, and Central Falls School District) for non-compliance with the random selection process. All three Members did not send 100% of their randomly selected drivers for testing. Reminder letters will be sent to Members stressing the importance of having the randomly selected employees report to the collection facility for testing.

Mr. Ahern also briefed the Committee on the December 2005 Consortium meeting for all Designated Employer Contacts (DERs). He said Trust staff and representatives of Health Resources distributed and discussed the revised model Controlled Substances and Alcohol Testing policy at that meeting. All Consortium DERs received hard copies and CD-ROM copies of the revisions and were instructed to incorporate the changes into their respective policies and distribute the revised policies to all covered drivers, Mr. Ahern said. A follow-up Consortium meeting will be scheduled in March or April 2006 for all DERs to ensure that all Trust Consortium Members have adopted the revisions to the model policy and distributed a copy to all covered drivers.

To assist in achieving Member compliance with Consortium requirements, the Committee suggested that all future correspondence to Member DERs include a copy to the Member CEO.

5. Discussion on Cultural Issues Associated with Workers Compensation Claims Reporting

Mr. Ahern advised the Committee that Chair Bauer had asked that this matter be placed on the Committee Agenda in order to have an opportunity to consider whether Rhode Island local governments in general or certain municipalities in particular are prone to a work culture or attitude that produces unusually high incidences of work-related injury claims in comparison to other work environments, either in the private sector or in local governmental entities in other states.

Prior to the meeting, Mr. Ahern provided the Committee with an article from *Professional Safety* magazine (June 2005) titled "Six Sigma Safety". The article detailed management principles to foster a zero-injury safety culture. Mr. Ahern discussed the importance of quality supervision – specifically that the first line supervisor is often the key individual in reducing the frequency of workers compensation claims.

General discussion of the cultural and work attitudes of the public and private sectors followed. Mr. Kerbel noted that poor labor-management relationships can be an important indicator of the potential problems of high workers' compensation claim activity at a particular location. Col. McCartney noted his frustration in dealing with Injured-on-Duty claims for his police officers and how employee morale in the police department plays a role in injury reporting. Mr. Dwyer acknowledged that certain local governmental entities seem to have employee work groups with cultures and attitudes that yield higher than normal workers compensation claim activity, but did not concur that this was universally true for every Rhode Island local governmental entity.

Committee consensus was that The Trust should continue to investigate and compare statistical data for claim frequency and severity between municipal Members and school Members, and between Trust Members and state and national trends.

Discussion continued among Committee members and staff on the many causes of poor culture and the various approaches that could be taken to effect changes in this area, including the possibility of employee motivational training programs.

At this point of the meeting Committee Member Kerbel excused himself from the meeting.

6. Update of Winter Freeze-Up Prevention Program

Mr. Ahern provided the Committee with an update on the winter freeze-up prevention program designed to reduce property claims caused by freeze-ups and water damage. He said he hoped that the newly created incentive/rewards program will encourage Members to complete a self-inspection property hazard identification checklist for buildings valued at over \$200,000. Under the program, Trust staff will randomly select Members between December and March to participate. Members can win a \$50 Visa gift certificate by completing self-inspection checklist and forwarding the reports to The Trust, Mr. Ahern said.

Mr. Ahern said that December response from Members was disappointing. After repeated calls to selected Members, only four of the ten Members polled decided to participate and were subsequently issued \$50 gift certificates upon submission of their properly completed self-inspection checklists. The remaining six Members either were not interested in participating or they indicated they never received the material in the mail.

Committee discussion focused on improvements to the program that included the possibility of increasing the monetary incentive and also having the inspection checklists available to Members on-line. Staff will continue to stress the importance of the self-inspection program with Members, Mr. Ahern said.

7. Update on Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) Program

Mr. Ahern provided the Committee with a progress report on The Trust's assistance to Members in the development of an AED program. In follow-up to The Trust's AED educational seminar held at our Annual Dinner in January, he reported that the Loss Prevention Department has developed a two-tier approach to assist Members. First, The Trust will provide technical expertise in the development of a model policy. Once completed, the policy, presently in the final stages of development, will be distributed to Members.

The second area involves AED training. With numerous outside agencies equipped to provide proper AED certification training, Mr. Ahern stated that it would be redundant to have Trust staff develop a "train-the-trainer" program. However, management will ensure that at least one Loss Prevention staff member becomes certified to instruct the *Heartsaver CPR and AED for Lay Rescuers* course so that this staff person can function as a back-up to local community trainers when needed and can stay abreast of critical training requirements. Trust staff would continue to act as an informational "clearing house" when Members request assistance with AED programs.

Committee concurred with the suggested approach and topics presented by Mr. Ahern with regard to Member AED programs.

Committee discussion ensued on liability issues surrounding AED deployment.

8. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Update on Law Enforcement "Use of Force" Model Policy

To date, Mr. Ahern reported a total of eight Member Police Departments have adopted The Trust model "Use of Force" policy. Trust staff continues to conduct in-service training session with Members who have questions related to the model policy.

Staff will continue contacting all Member Police Departments who have not yet adopted the model policy for an explanation and to resolve any outstanding issues. Mr. Ahern stated that he does not anticipate any major problems from Member departments; rather he expects most of the discussions to center on non-substantive changes desired by the departments to certain sections of the model policy.

Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) Instructor Training Course Schedule

Mr. Ahern informed the Committee that the annual CPI Instructor training course will be held at The Trust March 7-10, 2006. This will be the fourth "train-the-trainer" session to be held at The Trust.

To date, CPI has certified a total of 78 school Member employees: teachers, teacher assistants, and bus monitors.

9. NOTICE OF INTENT TO SEEK TO CONVENE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Because of a lack of a quorum, the Risk Management Committee did not formally convene into an executive session but did conduct an informal review of claims in litigation.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting stood adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

BRIAN T. AHERN
Loss Prevention Manager