

MINUTES

Approved 12/4/08

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

OCTOBER 2, 2008 3:30 P.M. SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM

Present: J. Dennis, Chair; L. McBean-Clairborne; D. Kiefer; M. Sigler (arrived at 3:38 p.m.); W. Burbank (arrived at 3:40 p.m.)

Staff: C. Covert, Clerk of the Legislature; P. Younger, Deputy County Administrator; M. Lynch, Public Information Officer; B. DeLuca, Mental Health Commissioner; A. Fitzpatrick, Personnel Commissioner; J. Thomas, Personnel Department; S. Estes, Deputy Personnel Commissioner; S. Martel Moore, Deputy County Administrator; P. Carey, Social Services Commissioner; C. DeMarco, CSEA White Collar representative; P. Meskill, Sheriff

Guests: J. Mareane, new County Administrator; T. Ashmore, Ithaca Journal Reporter; TC3 student

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m. Chair Dennis asked that introductions be made at this time as the new County Administrator was attending the meeting. [Mr. Mareane begins employment with the County October 20, 2008.]

Changes to Agenda

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne requested that the resolution entitled Award of Grant – The Grandmothers Project be withdrawn from the agenda.

Chair's Report

Mr. Dennis reported that interest arbitration for the Road Patrol is scheduled for October 27, 2008. He also congratulated the Personnel Department for the award they received recognizing their commitment to disability employment.

Mr. Sigler arrived at this time.

Performance Review for Direct Reports

Ms. Younger said that the proposed performance review process includes a Legislature Review Panel to help guide and coordinate the process. A training/coaching session for a proposed five-member Panel (Legislature Chair and Vice Chair, Human Resources Committee Chair, Government Operations Committee Chair, and Budget and Capital Committee Chair) is being scheduled in November. The purpose of the training will be to reintroduce the Guidebook which explains the process, steps required for completion, and sample forms and to discuss “behavioral approach” to performance management. Ms. Younger said the process, which has a completion time line of about 90 days, would be piloted following the training session.

Mr. Burbank arrived at this time.

Mr. Dennis said he would be interested in hearing from the new County Administrator, Joe Mareane, about his experiences with evaluations.

Ms. Kiefer spoke briefly about the number of Legislators proposed for the review panel noting an earlier document included a list of Legislator position titles plus two other Legislators and believes at least six Legislators would be appropriate. She understands a process like this takes time, but as she has stated months ago, had hoped a test of the evaluation proposed could be done with Steve Whicher,

County Administrator, prior to his retirement. From her Legislator's point of view, by putting it into practice, she thought it would provide some feedback toward making a decision of whether to continue with the proposed process. Ms. Younger said although it would be difficult to have something in place by the end of October, she could ask Mr. Whicher if he would be willing to fill out the form and provide feedback from his perspective and then let interested Legislators complete their review form.

Ms. Robertson said she could not recall hearing about a panel being formed and believes this should be vetted to the full Legislature. If the proposal was to include certain Committee chairs on the panel and roll out the process early next year, she reminded the Committee that new Committee chairs will be assigned in January. She believes the Legislature should be involved and invited to participate in this process. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne spoke about the process to date and said there was a suggestion at a previous meeting to present this to the Legislature and believes further discussion needs to take place and recommends that happen before proceeding further with the panel session. Mr. Dennis agreed that final decisions have not been made on this process and reminded Committee members that a lot of the information pertaining to the performance review process has been sent out to Legislators. Mr. Burbank spoke of his support for a test run as suggested by Ms. Kiefer.

Following further discussion, the Committee agreed to pilot this process with the outgoing County Administrator if he agrees, with the involvement of Ms. Kiefer and Mr. Burbank. The Committee also agreed to postpone scheduling the panel session and that a presentation will be made to the full Legislature.

Personnel Department

Workforce Utilization Report

Committee members briefly reviewed the Workforce Utilization Report. *In response to a question from Ms. Kiefer concerning trends, Ms. Fitzpatrick said that information could be provided at the next meeting.*

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne asked if employees when resigning state their reason(s). Ms. Fitzpatrick believed that approximately 80 percent state their reason for resigning. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne asked if resignation letters could be viewed by Legislators; Ms. Fitzpatrick believed they could.

Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Exit Interviews

Ms. Fitzpatrick provided copies of exit interview models used by Onondaga and Dutchess Counties for review by the Committee. She said there was not a uniform response from counties contacted. Some departments in the County do informal exit interviews. If a formal process were being considered, Ms. Fitzpatrick believes exit interviews should take place in the Personnel Department.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne spoke of her interest and the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee's discussions concerning exit interviews. She said some of the reasons this topic was raised relates to retention and improving what is going on in the organization overall. She is interested in seeing more models as well.

Mr. Dennis asked if employees would be obligated to doing exit interviews. Ms. DeMarco commented that that is a negotiated item. *Following further discussion, Mr. Dennis asked that more options be reviewed and that this topic be discussed further at a future meeting.*

Policy 02-01 – Creating New Positions and Reclassifying Existing Positions and Review of Existing Point Factor Rating System

Ms. Fitzpatrick provided a lengthy overview of the policy for creating and reclassifying positions and the existing point factor rating system. She explained in detail the process used during the pay equity study done in the late 1980's. Some positions have not been reviewed since the pay equity study was done 20 years ago. Ms. Kiefer commented that there are a number of new technologies requiring different skills since that study was done, and noted that the last time the Administrative Manual was amended there was a concern about ensuring there be an appeal mechanism available regarding classifications and reclassifications.

In response to a question raised by Ms. Robertson concerning the number of requests for reclassification of positions, Ms. Fitzpatrick said there are approximately 20 processed each year including both acceptance and denial of reclassifications. She noted that Tompkins County Personnel Department does classifications for Tompkins County, TC3, and the Tompkins County Public Library. Sometimes a reclassification is done when a position is vacant. In answer to Ms. Robertson's question about whether some job descriptions may be more out of date than others because of long-time incumbency, Ms. Fitzpatrick noted departments keep on top of such changes. She recalled that Deputy Sheriff's did not participate in the original pay equity study and that also in 2002 the Assistant District Attorneys came forward as a group for a reclassification.

Mr. Burbank was excused at 4:42 p.m.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne believes the policy needs some review and possible revisions. Ms. Kiefer commented that she would like to see what the new County Administrator would suggest.

Approval of Minutes

It was MOVED by Ms. Kiefer, seconded by Mrs. McBean-Clairborne, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of September 4 and September 16 as corrected.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m.