

**MINUTES**

Approved 5/9/07

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

**APRIL 18, 2007 1:00 P.M. COURTHOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM**

Present: J. Dennis, Chair; G. Stevenson; M. Sigler  
Absent: D. Kiefer and L. McBean-Clairborne  
Staff: C. Covert, Clerk of the Legislature; S. Martel Moore, Deputy County Administrator; P. Younger, Deputy County Administrator; A. Fitzpatrick, Personnel Commissioner

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 1:08 p.m.

**Changes to the Agenda**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**Committee Goals**

Mr. Dennis said he met with Ms. Martel Moore and Ms. Younger to discuss proposed goals for the Committee to consider. At this time, the draft goals were distributed and Ms. Martel Moore provided an overview and requested feedback from Committee members. Mr. Stevenson said he supports committees having a direction to help facilitate committee work, but did not have any suggestions to offer and would support what the Committee recommends as its goals. Mr. Sigler said he would like to include a goal of evaluating the number of County Departments and staff. He believes the numbers should reflect the total County population and that there should be flexibility of movement among staff between departments.

Discussion followed concerning the goal Policy Development and whether there was interest by Committee members to review specific policies in addition to what was proposed in the draft goals distributed at the last meeting. Ms. Fitzpatrick mentioned the reclassification policy although it is not out dated, there have been issues raised. Ms. Martel Moore recommended if the Committee wished to have a list of policies to review this year that a timeframe be developed and suggested having a process for reviewing personnel related policies on an annual basis.

Further discussion followed concerning government structure and Mr. Sigler understands that some of the issues related to this topic would be the responsibility of the Government Operations Committee, but that the staffing numbers would be discussed in this Committee.

Ms. Fitzpatrick spoke briefly about the training efforts Personnel staff is handling and funding available within the Department's budget. She also spoke about the orientation of new employees and said staff is in the process of adding other components to that process.

Further review followed on the draft goals distributed by Ms. Martel Moore and Ms. Younger added that one of the goals on the Government Operations Committee's list is the Administrative Manual and a standardized way to approach a review process. A brief discussion followed concerning the Diversity Initiatives goal and it was noted that some of the issues are included in the list of goals for the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

*A final version of the goals will be presented at the next meeting for approval.*

### **Red-Circled Positions**

Ms. Fitzpatrick said there are three titles with a total of seven employees that are considered “red-circled” positions (employees hired above the salary range). The titles are Psychiatrists, Medical Examiners, and Deputy County Attorney. The Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council (ITCTC) Director’s salary is also above the salary range, but that salary is set by the ITCTC and affirmed by the Legislature. The County acts as an agent for ITCTC.

Ms. Fitzpatrick also noted that the contracts for both the White and Blue Collar employees expire December 31, 2007.

At this time, Ms. Fitzpatrick provided a brief history of why the three positions are above the salary schedule. In 1991, the County adopted a reclassification study that placed all positions in labor grades. Everyone in the same labor grade received the same dollar amount.

With the Psychiatrists position in the Mental Health Department, the Department Head provided an analysis at the time the Psychiatrists were brought on staff comparing relative costs between contracting out the required services on an hourly basis and hiring a fulltime equivalent employee in terms of continuity and quality of care. The decision was made to move away from the labor-grade system as the market would not bear bringing in doctors at the level of pay the County’s salary schedule allowed.

Following the decision to pay certain positions above the salary range, ongoing discussions have been held over the years on what criteria should be used to establish these salaries including market analysis, CPI, and the same increase as management employees. Ms. Fitzpatrick said it has been difficult to collect salary and benefit information from medical institutions about doctors and what information has been gathered has not been particularly useful as far as translation and if anything it was higher than what the County was offering. If the Committee believes having the history of CPI, management salaries, and the doctors’ salaries are relevant factors, Ms. Fitzpatrick said she could provide a history of that information.

Ms. Fitzpatrick said she is looking for guidance about what data would be useful to establish salaries. A brief discussion followed concerning comparisons to other counties and Ms. Fitzpatrick commented that they have different systems than Tompkins County.

Mr. Dennis reminded the Committee that he presented a resolution in January that authorized the red-circled positions to receive the same increases as management employees. He said the resolution passed the Committee, but was withdrawn at the Legislative level for further review.

Ms. Fitzpatrick said the Committee could consider having a policy that by October of every year a resolution for red-circled positions would be presented to the appropriate program committee that would have a blank for the salary increase to be filled in. This recommendation provides a process for the doctors and that there is no criteria that exists across years and that their salaries would be set by the Legislature based on whatever criteria is used that year. She hoped the Committee, if it moved in this direction, would identify and present data requests in a timely manner. Mr. Sigler said he agrees with doing this on an annual basis.

Discussion followed and Ms. Fitzpatrick noted that the Psychiatrists positions in the Mental Health Department also generate the fee structure. She also noted that the child Psychiatrist hired on a

contractual basis is being paid between \$175-\$225 per hour for eight hours per week. In addition, she said no opinions have been expressed about inadequate salaries and there has been 100 percent stability in the staff retained in 2000.

Based on this discussion, Mr. Sigler believes the resolution presented to the Committee earlier in the year should be brought back for reconsideration. Mr. Stevenson said he supports either option: reaffirming the resolution passed previously or the suggestion by Ms. Fitzpatrick to annually approve filling in the dollar amount by October.

Mr. Dennis briefly outlined some approaches he discussed with Chair Joseph such as tying salary increases with another group, same percentage increase as another group, same dollar amount as highest employee of another group, etc.

Following a brief discussion, the Committee agreed to bring back the resolution with additional language that explains there currently is stability with the individuals in the positions. However, if recruitment is necessary there will be at look at CPI and market analysis.

### **Confidential Employees**

Ms. Fitzpatrick said at the last meeting there was a request to consider approving a resolution that would allow confidential employees to mirror White Collar employees in terms of salary and benefits. A resolution was prepared, but a request was made by Ms. Pottorff, confidential employee representative, to postpone action until it has been circulated to confidential employees.

### **Personnel Department**

#### **Workforce Demographics Report**

Ms. Fitzpatrick briefly reviewed the reports distributed with the agenda and said if Committee members were interested in a different format to let her know.

#### **Workplace Violence Prevention Plan**

Ms. Fitzpatrick said the County is moving forward with incorporating the new mandate for workplace violence prevention. Employee training sessions have begun. Mr. Croteau, Health and Safety Coordinator, is in the process of doing a separate assessment with each Department Head. The County will then move on to other types of training and other ways to meet the new mandate. The Sheriff's office will be offering to provide free resources in terms of training on issues of workplace violence such as safety and security.

#### **25-Year Club Dinner**

Ms. Fitzpatrick reminded Committee members that the 25-year club is May 10<sup>th</sup> and there are eight new inductees.

### **Announcements**

The following announcements were made:

- Diversity Consortium Roundtable – May 31, 2007
- Human Rights Annual Dinner – April 21<sup>st</sup>
- B.R.E.A.T.H.E. (Building Respect, Equality and Activism Through Hip-Hop Expression) – spoken word event – April 20, 2007
- New York State Affirmative Action Conference will be held in June

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**Approval of Minutes**

It was MOVED by Mr. Stevenson, seconded by Mr. Sigler, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of the March 14, 2007, meeting as submitted.

**Other Business**

CANARx

Ms. Fitzpatrick said the County Health Insurance Representative, Orville Boden, is in the process of analyzing the information from TC3 and hopes to have a report in May. The utilization numbers are low at TC3.

Smoking Cessation Program

Mr. Dennis asked if the County offered a smoking cessation program; Ms. Fitzpatrick said at this time there is not a program offered. There was a program offered years ago, but the professionals at the Health Department believe it has not been the most successful way to approach this. She will be meeting with Ted Schiele of the Health Department in a couple of weeks and will discuss this issue.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.