

MINUTES

Approved 10/10/07

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

AUGUST 8, 2007 3:00 P.M. SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM

Present: J. Dennis, Chair; D. Kiefer; G. Stevenson; M. Sigler; L. McBean-Clairborne

Staff: C. Covert, Clerk of the Legislature; S. Whicher, County Administrator; S. Martel Moore, Deputy County Administrator; D. Squires, Finance Director; C. DeMarco, Mental Health Department; A. Fitzpatrick, Personnel Commissioner; M. Lynch, Public Information Officer; B. Kominos, Benefits Manager; P. Younger, Deputy County Administrator

Guests: K. Luz Herrera, Legislator; O. Bolden, Health Insurance Consultant; See Attendance Sheet for others present on file with the original minutes on file with Clerk of the Legislature

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

Changes to Agenda

Mr. Dennis said he would like to move to the beginning of the agenda the discussion of health insurance for retirees due to the number of interested individuals present.

A resolution was added to the agenda later in the meeting.

Resolution – Health Insurance Plan – Retiree Group

Mr. Whicher began by giving an overview of the discussions held concerning the County's health insurance plan and the proposal to move all retirees into the Comprehensive Value Plan effective January 1, 2008. He also reviewed in detail the following outline distributed:

Health Insurance Process Steps

- I. Current State:
 - a. Health Insurance premiums are rising at two to four times the faster than salaries. This is the primary variable under our control that is driving the increase in the fringe rate.
 - b. The anticipated increase in Health Insurance costs over the next three years will exceed \$1,000,000 in local-share costs.
 - c. Currently anyone who elects to subscribe to the County's health insurance is a member of a pool including Library and TC3.
 - d. Medicare-eligible retirees currently subsidize the cost of Health Insurance for all others in the pool.
 - i. With Part D the single pool became more difficult to justify.
- II. Actions:
 - a. Formed a committee to explore the potential for establishing a plan for Medicare-Eligible retirees that would provide as close to the same coverage as they currently enjoy but establish a rate that reflects Medicare as being primary.
 - i. Outcome:
 - 1. Carve out rather than supplemental
 - 2. Recommended premium of \$300 per contract
 - a. Higher than rate that would be derived based on Medicare-Eligible retiree experience.
 - b. Model indicated that this would result in a loss to the pool of \$487,000 in year one and \$196,000 in year two.

- ii. Next:
 - 1. Moved the discussion to internal team only
 - 2. Looked at the remainder of the Retirees – considered moving them to Comprehensive plan –
 - a. Pulled Medicare-Eligible retiree proposal out of consideration.
 - 3. Decided to recommend:
 - a. Create two pools: Actives and Retirees
 - b. Move all retirees to the comprehensive plan
 - c. Net savings to the pool of \$100,000 year
 - d. Reduced Retiree Premiums
 - e. Increased exposure
 - f. Medicare Eligible retirees pay more than if they were in a separate pool

Mr. Dennis clarified that retirees will pay more for prescriptions and medical-related expenses; however, the premium will be less and the benefits will not change.

Mr. Stevenson spoke briefly about retirees' expectations of benefits they would receive at the time of retirement.

In response to a question raised, Ms. Kominos briefly reviewed the process of when an employee is planning to retire as well as the outreach efforts and information that would be provided if this proposal were adopted. Ms. Kominos said she would ask Blue Cross/Blue Shield to have a full open enrollment of the retirees in order to ensure all records are being updated.

Ms. Kiefer asked if a payment could be made to the retirees if they chose not to enroll in the health insurance plan. Retirees would have options other than Tompkins County plan, e.g., Medicare and AARP Supplement. Mr. Bolden conveyed how the process started and stated Tompkins County has a large expense in the benefits area and making a change in the retirees health insurance will save the County money. Extracting the retirees from the pool will save \$26,000 per month.

Ms. Fitzpatrick spoke to Mr. Stevenson's comment made earlier regarding retirees' expectations upon retirement and said there have been other modifications to plan designs over the last 20 years post-retirement.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne asked, with the understanding that it is not required, if the proposal was discussed and reviewed with the retirees and if feedback was sought and if there were any other suggestions. Mr. Dennis said two retirees (Louise McEwen and John Murphy) participated in some of the discussions and meetings including interviewing the groups for the supplemental plan. In terms of representation there was no organized group formed. Mr. Whicher said the Comprehensive Plan as introduced to the whole organization was presented. Mr. Dennis said there were suggestions but not specifically to change the three plans being offered and a fourth plan was not introduced.

It was clarified that there is a \$2,500 cap on medical costs but not a cap for prescriptions.

At this time, Mr. Boden distributed and reviewed the 2006 information showing the actual impact as it relates to the prescription plan for retirees in the current structure (\$5/\$10/\$25) versus the Comprehensive Value Plan structure (20%/20%/40%). In summary, there were nine individuals under 65 years of age that would have experienced an increase cost of over \$1,000; in the over-65-year age group

there were five individuals that would have experienced an increase cost of over \$1,000. In addition, he provided an overview of the out-of-pocket medical costs for individual members claims incurred in 2006.

Ms. Herrera said she appreciates the opportunity to comment on this issue and that the committee is allowing input as it will allow alternatives to be suggested.

Mr. Dennis at this time opened the meeting up to other comments from individuals in attendance. Mr. Weatherby of TC3 asked if the County was going to look into the CANARx program as it is saving TC3 money. Mr. Dennis said the County has been looking at it as well as TC3's experience and savings and believes the County will be moving towards offering the CANARx program fairly soon.

Mr. Dennis understands further discussion is needed and will recommend closing this discussion shortly and continue it at another meeting before a recommendation is put forward. He noted that delaying action will postpone the effective date of this proposal.

Mr. Long spoke about the presentation employees of the Library received from representatives of the Personnel Department asking them to consider the Comprehensive Plan as a third option. It was their understanding based on that presentation that it is essentially a catastrophic plan. It focuses on saving you money if you are going to the hospital and have a major catastrophe. However, the costs increase for the day-to-day and week-to-week expenses such as doctor visits. It was presented and recommended that younger healthier people consider this plan. He believes that the more people who participate in the Comprehensive Plan the less money there will be in the Traditional plan and therefore it could no longer be available in the long-term.

Mr. Murphy commented that he does not believe the Comprehensive Value Plan proposal is for retirees. The plan is great for young, healthy, and active employees with very few prescriptions and rarely have doctor or hospital bills. He would like to recommend that retirees over 65 years of age (Medicare retirees) remain in the current Traditional Plan and carve out the retirees separately as a subgroup. As a subgroup, the Medicare retirees would have their own numbers and own costs and that a sufficient premium would be paid by the subgroup to cover that cost. Ms. McEwen distributed and briefly reviewed charts outlining the following plans: Traditional, Comprehensive, and Traditional separating out the Medicare-Eligible subgroup.

Further discussion followed and the Committee agreed to discuss this at a special or regular meeting in September. Ms. McEwen asked if retirees could be notified and made aware of the proposals being considered. Mr. Dennis said he will meet with staff and discuss how to handle that request.

In response to a question raised by Ms. Kiefer concerning other calculations she wished to see, she was informed that questions or requests be given to Ms. Fitzpatrick.

Resolution – Records Management Grant

It was MOVED by Ms. Kiefer, seconded by Mr. Stevenson, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval. Ms. Kiefer asked who would be doing the study as referenced in the resolution. Ms. Thomas said a Request for Proposals was done in January and three responses were received. However, the grant is less than requested and therefore the original proposals will need to be reviewed prior to a decision being made for choosing a vendor. The following staff will be involved with the review process: Arel LeMaro, Jackie Kippola, and Jackie Thomas. Ms. Kiefer expressed interest in knowing the results, however, other Committee members did not.

A voice vote resulted as follows on the resolution: Ayes – 5, Noes – 0. RESOLUTION CARRIED.

RESOLUTION NO. 153 – AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT A GRANT FROM THE STATE ARCHIVES – RECORDS MANAGEMENT

WHEREAS, the Personnel Department, Records Management Program, has been notified of a grant award from the State Archives in the amount of \$17,500, and

WHEREAS, the State Archives grant provides for the Personnel Department, Records Management Program to determine the County’s existing and future inactive records storage space needs, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Personnel Committee, That the County Administrator or his designee is hereby authorized to execute all contracts related to this award,

RESOLVED, further, That the Director of Finance is authorized and directed to make the following budget adjustment:

APPROPRIATION:	A1460.54442	Professional Services	\$17,500
REVENUE:	A1460.43089	Other State Aid	\$17,500

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Changes to Agenda

It was MOVED by Mrs. McBean-Clairborne, seconded by Mr. Sigler, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to add to the agenda the resolution entitled Payment of Honorarium for Tompkins County Diversity Logo.

Resolution – Internship Program Restructuring

It was MOVED by Mrs. McBean-Clairborne, seconded by Mr. Stevenson, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval. Ms. Fitzpatrick said the resolution as discussed at the last Committee meeting reflects the concerns raised at that meeting. She gave a brief overview of the Internship Program and said the Personnel Department will provide ongoing oversight of how project assistants are placed in various departments regardless of funding. A written request by the department and approval from the Personnel Department will be required prior to hiring a project assistant. Ms. Martel Moore said the Human Rights Committee and Department of Social Services have project assistant positions already on the books and asked if this resolution would change current practices for those positions. It was felt that the proposed resolution would not impact those two departments.

Following further discussion, a voice vote resulted as follows: Ayes – 5, Noes – 0. RESOLUTION CARRIED. *Mrs. McBean-Clairborne requested a breakdown of demographic information of project assistants for the next Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee.*

RESOLUTION NO. 162 - RESTRUCTURING OF THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM AND CREATION OF A LIVING WAGE FOR PROJECT ASSISTANTS

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Legislature, by Resolution No. 125, of June 6, 2000, approved the creation of an Internship Program to give eligible internship candidates an opportunity to provide meaningful, challenging, hands-on, in-depth work experience at a rate of pay from \$7.00 to \$10.00 per hour with no fringe benefits, and Resolution No. 254, dated November 21, 2000, increased the maximum rate of pay to \$15.00 per hour, and increased the hours of all positions to 40 per week, and

WHEREAS, the Internship Program continues to be a successful cost-effective method of meeting the goal of providing meaningful, challenging, hand-on, in-depth work experience for candidates who are college students (who are not otherwise eligible for full payment through any other work-study program), high school students, or any other person who is unemployed or underemployed, and

WHEREAS, this program continues to provide another avenue to diversify the workforce and enhance and broaden the opportunities for County Departments to utilize the knowledge, skills, and abilities of eligible candidates to provide a valuable service to the taxpayer, and

WHEREAS, according to the Alternatives Federal Credit Union (AFCU), a living wage is defined as the amount of income and resources (such as health insurance) needed for an individual to meet his/her basic needs without public or private assistance, and Tompkins County is fully in support of the concept of paying a living wage to all of its employees, and

WHEREAS, according to a study done in 2006 by the AFCU, the 2007 living wage for a single individual who has no children but does have health insurance is at least \$9.83 per hour for a 40-hour workweek and that a single individual with no children or health insurance needs at least \$11.18 per hour (the \$1.35 per hour difference being what it would cost the individual to purchase insurance through Healthy New York) in order to maintain himself or herself without public or private assistance, and

WHEREAS, it would be more efficient and cost effective for individual departments to create and manage their own positions, distribute, gather and process their own timecards, and not have to perform manual budget adjustments to reconcile accounts, and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that the Commissioner of Personnel maintain control over the recruitment and placement of interns in order to ensure that the program continues to meet the goals outlined in paragraphs two and three above, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Personnel Committee, That the internship program shall continue indefinitely,

RESOLVED, further, That Project Assistant positions (76/049) shall have a standard work-week of up to 40 hours, with no benefits, and up to a maximum eighteen-month duration,

RESOLVED, further, That each department may create, upon Legislative approval, a sufficient number of Project Assistant positions (76/049) to address individual departmental needs, that these positions shall be funded from the budget of the creating department, and that the Commissioner of Personnel will maintain involvement and oversight with regard to recruitment and placement,

RESOLVED, further, That departments may offer a livable wage to Project Assistant employees anywhere from \$11.18 per hour to \$20.00 per hour, with no fringe benefits,

RESOLVED, further, That no additional funding is required.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Central Services Vehicle Replacement

Ms. Fitzpatrick reviewed the specifications of four vehicles the Department considered for replacement of the Central Services vehicle. She reminded the Committee that the rollover funds were approved but she was asked to report back to the Committee prior to the purchase of a vehicle. The original request of a Hybrid vehicle was rejected and therefore other vehicles were researched. The County Administrator has agreed with the four options the Department presented and there is agreement with the purchase of a Jeep Liberty.

Ms. Kiefer expressed concern that some of the models presented do not have stability control and also questioned the information presented concerning the mileage estimates as they are different from Consumer Reports.

Ms. Herrera asked about the original request to purchase a Hybrid vehicle. It was stated that the County Administrator felt at the time the request to purchase a Hybrid vehicle was originally presented,

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that the Department did not drive enough miles to justify the payback. Ms. Herrera reminded the Committee of the County's Sustainability Team and their efforts of sustainability and the purchase of Hybrid vehicles being one area. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said there was discussion about this and the Committee believed it was not a good buy at that time as well as the information received about the fire and safety issues of Hybrid vehicles.

Ms. Kiefer stated for the record that she agrees with Ms. Herrera's comments about the importance of Hybrids.

2008 Personnel Budget

It was felt that this topic should be discussed in more detail at a September meeting to allow sufficient time to address questions and/or concerns.

Ms. Fitzpatrick and Ms. Thomas provided a brief overview of the Department's 2008 proposed budget. The Department was directed by the County Administrator to reduce the fiscal target by \$35,000. This amount will affect professional services lines including the contract for the health insurance consultant and the training line. Ms. Fitzpatrick asked for some guidance on how much detailed information the Committee would like to have prior to the budget process. As she understands the process, over-target requests will be presented if a department believes the service is necessary to sustain operations.

Ms. Kiefer briefly spoke about the structure and responsibilities of the Department suggesting that Central Services and Records Management could find another home. Ms. Fitzpatrick provided an overview of the Central Services and Records Management programs and how the Personnel Department has assumed the responsibilities.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said she would like to see options for reducing the Department's budget by \$35,000.

Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Resolution

It was MOVED by Mr. Sigler, seconded by Mrs. McBean-Clairborne, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne gave a brief explanation of the resolution and the desire to recognize this individual for the work and time contributed with the development of the Diversity Logo. Mr. Stevenson understands wanting to compensate someone for their work, but expressed concern with setting a precedent. He supports paying someone for a service but is concerned with paying someone for a volunteered service.

A voice vote resulted as follows: Ayes – 4, Noes – 1 (Stevenson). RESOLUTION CARRIED.

RESOLUTION NO. – AUTHORIZATION OF PAYMENT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOMPKINS COUNTY DIVERSITY LOGO

WHEREAS, Ann Stephenson provided professional service in the design and layout of the Tompkins County Logo free of charge to the County, and

WHEREAS, the services represent a significant contribution to the Tompkins County Diversity program, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Personnel Committee, That in recognition of the valuable contribution made by Ann Stephenson in support of the County's diversity initiative, the

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Tompkins County Legislature hereby authorizes the Director of Finance to disperse \$500 in appreciation of the effort provided.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Committee Goals

The goals as adopted by the Committee were distributed with the agenda. No discussion followed.

Employee Handbook

Ms. Fitzpatrick displayed a draft of the employee handbook and said it is in progress.

Approval of Minutes

It was MOVED by Mr. Sigler, seconded by Mr. Stevenson, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to approve the minutes of the July 11, 2007, meeting as submitted.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.