

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL

DATE: SEPTEMBER 11, 2012

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS CONOVER  
KENNY  
MERLINO  
STRAINER  
DICKINSON  
GIRARD  
MASON

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS SOKOL  
TAYLOR

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING CAPITAL FINANCIAL GROUP, INC.:  
JOHN WEBER, PRESIDENT  
KRISTY LANEY, VICE PRESIDENT  
LORI BURCH, SUPPORT STAFF  
REPRESENTING BLUE SHIELD OF NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK:  
MATTHEW RIENHARDT, EMPLOYER GROUP REPORTING CONSULTANT  
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD  
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER  
SUPERVISORS BENTLEY  
MCDEVITT  
THOMAS  
WESTCOTT  
WOOD  
KATHY BARRIE, PERSONNEL OFFICER  
AMY CLUTE, SELF-INSURANCE ADMINISTRATOR  
MIKE SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER  
SUZANNE WHEELER, ACTING COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*  
AMANDA ALLEN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

Mr. Conover called the meeting of the Personnel Committee to order at 9:00 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Mason and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the August 8<sup>th</sup> Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Copies of the meeting agenda were distributed to the Committee members, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Commencing the agenda review with Item III(1), privilege of the floor was extended to Paul Dusek, County Administrator, to make a presentation concerning Employee Health and Wellness, including the impact on employees, the workplace and health insurance costs. Mr. Dusek advised he had met with Amy Clute, Self-Insurance Administrator, and representatives of the County's insurance broker, Capital Financial Group, Inc., insurance carrier, Blue Shield of Northeastern New York, and the Glens Falls Hospital to review interesting statistics and information pertaining to the state of County employees' health and what measures could be taken as an employer to improve employee health conditions. Resulting from these discussions, he said they had discovered the main objective was to improve the health of County employees which would lead to happier employees in the workplace and fewer unplanned personal and sick time absences, as well as savings on health insurance costs. Mr. Dusek noted Mrs. Clute, along with representatives from Capital Financial Group, Inc. and Blue Shield of Northeastern New York were in attendance to participate in a presentation to the Committee which would include information regarding the health status of County employees as a group, the benefits of a Wellness Program and the

proposal for establishment of a Wellness Committee. Mr. Dusek then introduced Kristy Laney, Vice President of Capital Financial Group, Inc., to begin the presentation.

Ms. Laney distributed a packet of information produced by Blue Shield of Northeastern New York which outlined claims data for Warren County employees and listed the wellness challenges, programs and services that the proposed Wellness Program would provide; *a copy of the information distributed is on file with the minutes*. Ms. Laney proceeded with a brief review of the information provided for the Committee's benefit, during which she indicated that the Wellness Program would be implemented at no cost to the County, but would provide positive health benefits to employees and insurance cost savings for the County. She said that, ideally, they would like the Wellness Program and Committee to be established prior to the end of 2012 and ready for active use by County employees beginning in January of 2013, when health insurance open enrollment meetings were being held. Ms. Laney apprised that the first step to reaching this goal would be the establishment of the Wellness Committee and the distribution of surveys to County employees. She noted that Blue Shield had already promised to provide for six seminars in the first year of operation and she pointed out some of the Wellness Programming Options listed in the informational packet distributed. Ms. Laney advised the first program they sought to implement would be a Walking Works program for which they would provide a pedometer to each participant for tracking the number of steps taken each day; she said other intended activities included a benefit fair that would include medical screenings, chair massages and various weight loss and walking challenges for which both team and individual prizes would be awarded. She noted that Capital Financial Group, Inc. already had motivational posters available to encourage employee participation, as well as cook books encouraging healthy eating habits. Ms. Laney stated that the program would focus on motivational aspects to motivate County employees to improve their health and habits both at home and in the workplace. She concluded that if they were able to implement the Wellness Program, Warren County would qualify for supporting grant funding and services available through the Glens Falls Hospital. Ms. Laney then introduced Matthew Rienhardt, Employer Group Reporting Consult for Blue Shield of Northeastern New York, who would provide a brief accounting of how this program had been successfully implemented by another municipality.

Mr. Rienhardt advised this type of wellness programming was offered to other clients and had led to positive results for both the employer and employees. He noted a similar Wellness Plan had been implemented by another Blue Shield client about three years ago with positive results. Mr. Rienhardt said the first step had been helping the employer to understand the nature of the claims being incurred, as well as the cost and utilization patterning and the clinical drivers of costs; secondly, he continued, they determined employee interests from a programming perspective by distributing surveys to be completed by the firm's employees, following which they launched the Wellness Program, offering classes and programs similar to those proposed for Warren County. Mr. Rienhardt advised that although participation levels had initially been low, over the last three years those figures had grown, eventually lowering the medical claims incurred, decreasing in-patient claims by 16% and increasing compliance statistics for annual exams and cancer screenings. He added that absenteeism rates had also improved. Mr. Rienhardt stated it was important to note that the Wellness Program would not yield immediate claim results and he likened the process to a marathon, rather than a sprint. He continued that the true road to wellness took time and commitment, but said it was proven that over time the Wellness Program could achieve the desired claim reduction results.

Relative to the Wellness Committee proposed, Mr. Dusek advised the best way for these types of programs to take shape and become sustainable for the long term was to set up a Committee of interested employees and representatives of other interested parties to encourage the Program to continue and become successful. He noted a similar situation with the development of the Safety Committee which had been developed primarily to address Workers' Compensation issues and avoid accidents in the workplace, achieving very successful results. Mr. Dusek apprised the Safety Committee was comprised of a group of individual employees who had joined together to spot

troublesome issues which were brought to the Committee's attention, as well as to produce the types of information and programs that were meaningful to other employees. For the Wellness Committee, Mr. Dusek said he would propose a nine member Committee comprised of Mrs. Clute; Dan Durkee, Health Educator from the Warren County Public Health Department; two representatives of Capital Financial Group, Inc.; one representative from Blue Shield of Northeastern New York; and four County employees. Mr. Dusek stated that the four County employees chosen to serve the Committee had not yet been identified and would be selected from different aspects of the County based on discussions with Department Heads to determine which were best suited to participate and relate information to other employees in an effort to promote and maintain the Program. He said that although more participation would be required in the beginning stages of the Program's implementation, he did not anticipate more than one hour per month would be spent at Committee meetings and he proposed that they be held during work hours. Mr. Dusek stated that in light of the benefits to the County and its employees, he felt it was fair to pay the employees serving the Committee for the time spent at meetings to encourage participation. He added that he expected there to be lesser time commitments and effort required on the part of the Committee members as the Program progressed. Mr. Dusek said he felt implementation of the Wellness Program and Committee provided Warren County with an opportunity to make strides in a number of areas and provide benefits for employees, especially in light of the inability to provide salary increases in prior years, while eventually achieving a reduction in the number of health insurance related claims incurred and commensurately decreasing health insurance costs.

Following a brief discussion on the matter, motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to authorize the implementation of the Wellness Program and development of the Wellness Committee, to be overseen by the County Administrator, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the September 21<sup>st</sup> Board meeting.

Moving on to Item 2, referral from the Economic Growth & Development Committee, Planning & Community Development, Mr. Conover apprised of a request to amend the Departmental Table of Organization and Salary Schedule to increase the hours for the Grade 7 Office Specialist position from 24 hours per week to 40 hours per week with an annual salary of \$35,820 and decrease the hours for the Construction Cost Coordinator position from 40 hours per week to 24 hours per week at an hourly rate of \$22.6216.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason and seconded by Mr. Kenny to approve the request.

Mr. Kenny questioned the purpose of the Cost Coordinator position and Mr. Dusek replied that it provided inspections in connection with housing grant awards. In this instance, Mr. Dusek continued, the hours worked were being reduced commensurate with the lessening availability of grant funding; he added that if the level of grant funding available were to increase, the hourly work week associated with the Cost Coordinator position would, as well. Mr. Dusek noted that the individual also worked 18 hours in the Fire Prevention & Building Code Enforcement Department, completing building inspections, and he said those work hours would not be reduced.

In response to a question posed by Mr. Strainer, Mr. Dusek advised that the hourly salary was not being reduced, only the number of hours worked by the Cost Coordinator in the Planning & Community Development Department. Relative to the request for an increase in the number of hours worked by the Office Specialist position, Mr. Dusek advised Wayne LaMothe, County Planner, had made a strong case for the increase, outlining the need for additional assistance within the Planning & Community Development Department. He added that from his own dealings with Mr. LaMothe, he could personally attest to the need for increased work hours to handle some of the more menial tasks being performed by Mr. LaMothe which had resulted in the need him to work extra evening and weekend hours to maintain the effectiveness of the Department. Mr. Strainer asked if this request related to the GIS (Geographic Information Systems) position in any way and Mr. Dusek replied in the negative.

Mr. Merlino entered the meeting at 9:25 a.m.

There being no further discussion on the matter, Mr. Conover called the questioned and the aforementioned motion was carried unanimously and the necessary resolution was authorized for the September 21<sup>st</sup> Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Moving on to Item 3, Mr. Conover outlined a request from the Public Works Committee, DPW, to fill the vacant position of HEO (Heavy Equipment Operator) #3, Grade 8, Annual Base Salary of \$30,230, due to retirement, as well as any vacancies created due to promotion. He noted that this position was not mandated and received no reimbursements.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the September 21<sup>st</sup> Board meeting. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Conover announced that Item 4 consisted of two requests from the Social Services Committee, Department of Social Services, the first, 4A, being to create and fill the position of Keyboard Specialist #5, Grade 3, Annual Base Salary of \$24,215, and delete the Grade 4 Account Clerk #2 position, Annual Salary of \$26,239, thereby amending the Departmental Table of Organization accordingly. He apprised that the Keyboard Specialist #5 position was a mandated, Union position which received 62% Federal reimbursements and 10% State reimbursements for administrative fees.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the September 21<sup>st</sup> Board meeting. *Copies of the request to amend the Departmental Table of Organization and the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position form are on file with the minutes.*

Item 4B, Mr. Conover advised, included a request to fill the vacant position of Social Welfare Examiner #31, Grade 8, Annual Base Salary of \$30,230, due to resignation. He noted this was a mandated, Union position which received 100% Federal and State reimbursements.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. Girard and carried unanimously to approve the request and authorize the necessary resolution for the September 21<sup>st</sup> Board meeting. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Conover apprised that Item 5, referral from the Support Services Committee, Information Technology, included a request for Jeremy Scime, Senior Programmer/Analyst, to enroll in three (3) job-related courses, as follows:

- A) Advanced Programming - Online course through the Florida Institute of Technology  
Term: January 9, 2012 - April 30, 2012 Cost: \$1,650
- B) Computer Organization - Online course through the Florida Institute of Technology  
Term: January 9, 2012 - April 30, 2012 Cost: \$1,650
- C) Web Programming - Online course through the Florida Institute of Technology  
Term: May 14, 2012 - July 31, 2012 Cost: \$1,650

Mr. Conover pointed out that the courses had been completed and a grade of "C" or better achieved; he added that if the aforementioned request was approved, the employee would receive reimbursement for 50% of the cost at a total of \$2,475. Mr. Conover advised of a suggestion made by Mr. Dusek to refer this item back to the Support Services Committee for further review and consideration and the Committee unanimously agreed.

Addressing the final agenda item, Mr. Conover outlined the Pending Items section, as follows:

- 1) Filling of the vacant Director of Nursing position at the Westmount Health Facility was authorized with a salary range of \$65,000 - \$80,000 with the final salary to be determined dependent upon qualifications and experience, contingent upon final review and approval by the County Administrator. A firm salary figure will need to be identified and the Departmental Table of Organization amended accordingly; and
- 2) Filling of the vacant Assistant Engineer #2 position within the Department of Public Works was authorized with a salary range of \$43,000 - \$48,000 with the final salary to be determined dependent upon qualifications and experience, contingent upon final review and approval by the County Administrator. A firm salary figure will need to be identified and the Departmental Table of Organization amended accordingly.

Mr. Dusek advised there was no new information to present on either item.

Mr. Kenny noted that he had seen the notice advertising the vacant Director of Nursing position in the local newspaper and felt that it was pitiful. He continued that given the cost involved with the interim services being used to substitute for the vacant position, he would have assumed that a more prominent ad would have been placed. Kathy Barrie, Personnel Officer, agreed the ad was poor and included a lot of mis-information on benefits and such; Mrs. Barrie advised she had discussed the matter with Barbara Taggart, Administrator of the Westmount Health Facility, and asked that the standard rule of submitting all employment ads to her office for review and approval prior to being published be adhered to in the future. Mr. Dusek advised that all Department Heads had funding in their budgets which allowed them to place advertisements for employment as necessary, but he agreed that Mrs. Barrie's Office should be reviewing them for accuracy before they were placed. Mrs. Barrie said that she would send an email to all Department Heads advising of the need to forward employment advertisements to her Office for review in order to avoid an occurrence such as this in the future.

Mr. Conover announced that, at Mr. Dusek's request, an executive session was necessary to discuss collective bargaining negotiations.

Motion was made by Mr. Girard, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to declare executive session pursuant to Section 105(e) of the Public Officer's Law.

Executive session was held from 9:31 a.m. to 9:40 a.m.

Upon reconvening, Mr. Conover announced that no Committee action had been taken during the executive session.

There being no further business to come before the Personnel Committee, on motion made by Mr. Dickinson and seconded by Mr. Strainer, Mr. Conover adjourned the meeting at 9:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amanda Allen, Deputy Clerk of the Board