

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL

DATE: DECEMBER 12, 2012

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS CONOVER
KENNY
SOKOL
MERLINO
TAYLOR
STRAINER
DICKINSON
GIRARD
MASON

OTHERS PRESENT:

DANIEL G. STEC, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS LOEB
THOMAS
WESTCOTT
PAT AUER, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH/PATIENT SERVICES
KATHY BARRIE, PERSONNEL OFFICER
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK
KEVIN HAJOS, DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
ROB METTHE, DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
JULIE MONTERO, FISCAL MANAGER (*DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES*)
MIKE SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER
SHARON SCHALDONE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, HOME CARE DIVISION (*PUBLIC HEALTH/PATIENT SERVICES*)
BARGARA TAGGART, ADMINISTRATOR, WESTMOUNT HEALTH FACILITY
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. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the prior Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Copies of the Personnel agenda were distributed to the Committee members and a copy of same is on file with the minutes.

Commencing the agenda review with the Action Agenda section, Mr. Conover announced that agenda items 1A - 1C consisted of requests from the Civil Service/Personnel Office. He advised item 1A included a request to extend the contract with National Employers Council (PeopleSystems) to administer the unemployment insurance program for the term commencing January 1, 2013 and terminating December 31, 2013 at a cost of \$2,614.40.

Motion was made by Mr. Girard and seconded by Mr. Taylor to approve the request.

Mr. Girard questioned whether this was the same contract used for the prior year and Paul Dusek, County Administrator, replied affirmatively, advising it was approved each year to assist with administration of the unemployment insurance program.

Mr. Conover called the question and the aforementioned motion was carried unanimously to authorize a resolution extending the contract with National Employers Council, as outlined above, for the December 21st Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Conover apprised that agenda items 1B and 1C pertained to requests for transfers of funds between various budget codes to balance funds for the end of the year. He said item 1B requested transfers

totaling \$810 within the Civil Service Budget, while item 1C requested transfers totaling \$2,026 within the Human Resources Budget.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to approve both items 1B and 1C and refer same to the Finance Committee. *Copies of the Request for Transfer of Funds forms are on file with the minutes.*

Agenda Item 2, Mr. Conover explained, consisted of a request from the Clerk of the Board to amend Resolution No. 333 of 2012, "Approving Standard Workday and Time Reporting Resolution for all Elected and Appointed Officials for Retirement Purposes" to include updated information, as well as verbiage allowing the Clerk of the Board to make changes to the Schedule A list of appointed officials as necessitated by changes in personnel and civil service status without the need for a resolution. He noted that any changes made to the Schedule A would be included in subsequent Standard Workday and Reporting resolutions.

Motion was made by Mr. Taylor, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to approve the above referenced request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 21st Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Conover advised agenda item 3 included a referral from the Economic Growth & Development Committee, Planning & Community Development, and he read aloud a request to amend the Departmental Table of Organization to increase the hours of the part-time Construction Cost Coordinator, Annual Base Salary of \$47,053, from 24 hours per week to 32 hours per week effective retroactive to November 30, 2012, in order to assume the E911 addressing responsibilities.

Motion was made by Mr. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Dickinson to approve the request.

Mr. Kenny questioned the need to increase the hours of the part-time Construction Cost Coordinator position, as well as whether the change would qualify the position for employee health insurance benefits. Mr. Dusek explained that any person working over 19 hours qualified for pro-rated vacation leave; however, in order to qualify for health insurance benefits, the position had to be classified as full-time, incurring 35 work hours or more per week. He further explained that in this case, the Construction Cost Coordinator position would not qualify for health insurance benefits. Mr. Dusek credited Wayne LaMothe, County Planner, for his plan to restructure the Planning & Community Development Department to incur a salary savings by increasing the hours worked by the Construction Cost Coordinator to cover duties previously assumed by the GIS (Geographic Information System) Coordinator, thereby allowing the position to be eliminated.

There being no further discussion on the matter, Mr. Conover called the question and the previously mentioned motion was carried unanimously to increase the hours of the Construction Cost Coordinator position and amend the Departmental Table of Organization accordingly, thereby authorizing the necessary resolution for the December 21st Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Moving on, Mr. Conover announced that agenda items 4A and 4B consisted of referrals from the Health Services Committee, Public Health. He advised agenda item 4A included a request to authorize Dorothy Muessig, RN (Registered Nurse), Community Health Nurse, to enroll in a job related course, NUR304 - Health Assessment, at SUNY Plattsburgh for the course term beginning January 28, 2013 and completing on June 9, 2013. Mr. Conover noted that the course was required for Ms. Muessig to obtain a bachelor's degree in nursing which would allow her to better perform the duties associated with her position. He added that if the request was approved, Ms. Muessig would be due reimbursement in the amount of \$425.10 for 50% of the total course cost (\$850.20), as well as for 50% of the text books

associated with the course, upon completion of the course with a final grade of "C" or better.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mr. Mason and carried unanimously to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 21st Board meeting. *A copy of the Application for Approval to Enroll in Job-Related Course by Employee form is on file with the minutes.*

Item 4B, Mr. Conover advised, was a referral from the Public Health Division, noting that the Department was suffering a lack of nurses due to the hiring freeze and notifying of the need to fill vacant positions as soon as possible, once the hiring freeze expired.

Mr. Dusek commented that while the County should continue to implement the hiring freeze due to the uncertain economic situation, one of the unintended consequences thereof was the inability to fill vacant nursing positions in the Public Health/Patient Services Division. He noted that they were currently suffering a lack of six nursing positions which remained vacant and he said the number of unfilled positions was higher than initially contemplated. Because of this exceptional condition, Mr. Dusek said he would recommend that the Public Health/Patient Services Division be permitted to make offers to fill three of the six vacant positions to increase their staffing levels to better meet the needs of their patients, leaving the remaining three positions vacant until the hiring freeze was lifted. He advised that due to the nature of the agency, which was the only one of its sort in Warren County, a lack of staffing and inability to provide services might encourage other regional agencies to try and attract some of the Public Health/Patient Services Divisions clients, taking business away from the County. Mr. Dusek noted that it would take some time to fill the vacant positions as the jobs would have to be offered and candidates would need time to provide proper notice to their current employers; he estimated that the positions would not be filled until at least December 21st or later.

Pat Auer, Director of Public Health/Patient Services, confirmed that her Department was lacking the appropriate staffing and she noted there were sick people in the community who were not being seen because of this issue. Speaking as Chairman of the Health Services Committee, Mr. Sokol agreed that Ms. Auer's Department was in dire need of nursing positions as they were approaching their busiest season; he said he hoped the collective bargaining negotiations would be concluded in the near future, allowing the hiring freeze to be lifted and positions to be filled as they became vacant. Mr. Strainer questioned if all six of the vacant nurse positions should be filled and Mr. Dusek replied that they were currently seeking for three to be filled, but depending on the situation of the Department, they may have to request that the remaining three positions be filled at the December 21st Board meeting. Ms. Auer noted that the vacant nurse positions were revenue producing.

Mr. Strainer questioned the salary figures associated with the positions and Mr. Dusek noted that the salary schedule for nursing positions was structured to allow a higher pay rate for candidates with five or more years of experience (fifth year differential), and a lower rate for lesser experienced candidates. He said that for hiring within both the Public Health Division and the Westmount Health Facility, they sought to utilize the steps included in the salary schedule in order to attract more qualified candidates at a higher salary, rather than hiring at the lower level and then requesting to increase the salary, as was the current practice. Mr. Dusek noted that in cases such as these, where the Department was already suffering a lack of staffing, it was important to have the ability to hire qualified candidates able to step in and pick up the workload, rather than hiring less experienced staff at a lower cost and providing training.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Taylor and carried unanimously to ratify actions taken by the Personnel Committee with regard to the hiring freeze policy in authorizing three vacant Nurse positions within the Public Health/Patient Services Division to be filled, and in doing so, to offer up to the fifth year salary rate based on experience, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 21st Board meeting.

Mr. Conover apprised that agenda items 4C-4E consisted of referrals from the Public Health Committee, Westmount Health Facility. He proceeded to outline item 4C, which included a request to increase the salaries for the Nurse Manager #1 and Nurse Manger #2 positions from a Grade 21 Annual Base Salary of \$43,905 to a Grade 21 fifth year differential Annual Base Salary of \$50,580 effective January 1, 2013, due to the level of expertise held by the persons hired to fill the positions. Mr. Conover noted that the additional amount of \$6,675 per position would be funded by a reduction in the budget code for per diem CNA positions.

Mr. Strainer questioned whether the employees filling the Nurse Manager #1 and #2 positions were new hires for Warren County and Barbara Taggart, Administrator of the Westmount Health Facility, replied affirmatively. In response to Mr. Strainer's inquiry as to how this was possible in light of the hiring freeze which was intended to prevent new employees from being hired, Mr. Dusek advised that the Westmount Health Facility was precluded from the hiring freeze, due to the nature of operations which mandated specified staffing levels.

Ms. Taggart requested that the salary increases for both positions be made retroactive to their original hire dates. Mr. Sokol commented that since the lapse was merely a matter of weeks and the difference in salary costs relatively minor, he felt they should appease Ms. Taggart's request.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to authorize salary increases for both the Nurse Manager 1 and #2 positions, as outlined above, retroactive to the date of hire, thereby amending the Departmental Table of Organization, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 21st Board meeting. *Copies of the requests are on file with the minutes.*

In response to Mr. Dusek's prior advisement regarding the need to hire qualified individuals, motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve a new policy allowing Public Health/Patient Services Division and the Westmount Health Facility to offer up to the fifth year salary rate, based on experience, when hiring for nursing positions, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 21st Board meeting.

Mr. Conover pointed out that agenda items 4D and 4E pertained to the creation of new positions, which was prohibited by the hiring freeze, and he noted that those items should be tabled. Mr. Dusek agreed, stating that while the requests represented a good initiative, he also felt the items should be tabled; he noted that he had discussed the positions with Ms. Taggart who indicated that the requests could be tabled and addressed at a later date.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mr. Mason and carried unanimously to table items 4D and 4E.

Continuing, Mr. Conover announced agenda items 5A and 5B consisted of referrals from the Public Works Committee, DPW. Item 5A he said, included a request to delete the position of MEO Light #16, Grade 5 Annual Base Salary of \$26,370, and create and fill the position of Laborer #47, Grade 2 Annual Base Salary of \$23,706, effective January 1, 2013, thereby amending the Departmental Table of Organization. Mr. Conover pointed out that this position was not mandated or reimbursed and would be used to sustain employment for a person cited for layoff through the 2013 Budget process. He apprised that prior to the Committee meeting, he had been contacted by Mr. Bentley, Chairman of the Public Works Committee, who requested that the MEO Light #16 position be retained in the DPW budget unfunded, rather than deleted.

Motion was made by Mr. Merlino and seconded by Mr. Dickinson to create and fill the position of Laborer #47 using funding earmarked for the vacant MEO Light #16 position which shall remain in the

budget unfunded, thereby amending the Departmental Table of Organization.

Mr. Kenny pointed out that if Mr. Bentley's request was heeded, an extra position would be added to the Department. Mr. Conover responded that although this was correct, the position would be unfunded and could be deleted at any time the Committee was in favor of doing so; Mr. Kenny countered that the position could just as easily be deleted now and added again in the future.

Mr. Conover called the question and the aforementioned motion was carried by majority vote, with Mr. Kenny voting in opposition, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 21st Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Agenda Item 5B, Mr. Conover stated, included a request to create and fill the position of Laborer #48, Grade 2 Annual Base Salary of \$23,706, effective January 1, 2013, thereby amending the Departmental Table of Organization. He noted this position was to be funded using monies identified for a vacant MEO Med #23 position in order to avoid any increase to the 2013 Budget. Mr. Conover pointed out that this position was not mandated or reimbursed and would be used to sustain employment for a person cited for layoff through the 2013 Budget process.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 21st Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Conover apprised that agenda items 6A and 6B consisted of referrals from the Social Services Committee, Social Services. Item 6A, he said, pertained to a request to authorize Christina Mastrianni, Foster Care Caseworker, to enroll in two job related courses at Sage Graduate School entitled "Family Law" and "Substance Abuse: Vulnerabilities, Prevention & Treatment", both commencing January 22, 2013 and completing May 13, 2013. Mr. Conover advised that if the authorization is provided, Ms. Mastrianni would be due reimbursement in the amount of \$1,980 for 50% of the total course costs (\$1,980 per course), as well as for 50% of the text book costs, upon completion of the course with a final grade of "C" or better.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Taylor and carried unanimously to approve the above referenced request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 21st Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Agenda Item 6B, Mr. Conover pointed out, reflected a request to appoint Suzanne Wheeler as Commissioner of the Department of Social Services at an annual salary of \$80,000 with four weeks of vacation.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Mason and carried unanimously to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 21st Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Conover congratulated Ms. Wheeler on her appointment and the Committee offered a round of applause.

Moving on to agenda item 7, Mr. Conover outlined a referral from the Support Services Committee, Information Technology, requesting authorization for reimbursement to Jeremy Scime, Senior Programmer/Analyst, for costs relating to job related courses taken online through the Florida Institute of Technology as follows:

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|------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| i) | Web Programming | |
| | Term: May 2012 - July 2012 | Cost: \$1,650 |
| ii) | Information Systems | |
| | Term: August 2012 - December 2012 | Cost: \$1,650 |
| iii) | Operating Systems | |
| | Term: August, 2012 - December 2012 | Cost: \$1,650 |

He advised the courses had been completed and a grade of "C" or better achieved; he added that if the aforementioned request was approved, Mr. Scime would receive reimbursement for 50% of the course costs at a total of \$2,475.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson and seconded by Mr. Taylor to approve the request.

Mr. Strainer pointed out that the Committee approved requests such as this quite often and he questioned whether the Department Head was responsible for making sure that the employee achieved the correct grade point average in order to receive reimbursement. Mr. Dusek replied affirmatively, advising that proof of the grade achieved had to be presented before reimbursement was approved.

Mr. Conover called the question and the motion was carried unanimously to approve reimbursements to Mr. Scime as outlined above. *Copies of the Application for Approval to Enroll in Job-Related Courses by Employee forms are on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Conover announced the final Action Agenda item pertained to a referral from the Tourism Committee requesting to create and fill the position of Clerk (part-time), Grade 2 pro-rated salary of \$10,878, effective January 2, 2013 to work at the satellite Tourism location in the Adirondack Outlet Mall. He pointed out that a copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position form was included in the agenda.

Motion was made by Mr. Merlino and seconded by Mr. Dickinson to approve the request.

Mr. Conover pointed out that the position would be created but not filled until 2013 and Mr. Dusek confirmed this was the intent. Mr. Mason questioned whether the request should be tabled due to the hiring freeze and Mr. Kenny suggested that the request be approved contingent upon approval of a collective bargaining contract which would eliminate the hiring freeze.

In response to an inquiry made by Mr. Westcott, Leisa Grant, Principal Account Clerk for the Tourism Department, apprised that the regular staff of the Tourism Department would adjust their work schedules to allow coverage for the satellite Tourism location during the work week. She continued that the part-time position requested was intended to cover the booth for the weekend days, when they anticipated it would receive the most attention. Ms. Grant said the effective date for the position should be January 1st, rather than January 2nd. Mr. Strainer commented that occupancy tax funding would be used to support the cost of the position, just as it sustained the rest of the Tourism Department.

Messrs. Merlino and Dickinson amended their motion and second to approve the request to create and fill the new position of Clerk (part-time) effective January 1, 2013, contingent upon approval of a collective bargaining contract, and the motion was carried unanimously, thereby authorizing the necessary resolution for the December 21st Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Concluding the agenda review, Mr. Conover questioned whether there was any new information to present relative to the Pending Items section, and Mr. Dusek replied in the negative.

There being no further business to come before the Personnel Committee, on motion made by Mr. Kenny and seconded by Mr. Strainer, Mr. Conover adjourned the meeting at 9:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Allen, Deputy Clerk of the Board