

Warren County Board of Supervisors

Committee: Personnel

Date: August 7, 2013

Committee Members Present:

Supervisors Taylor
Kenny
Sokol
Merlino
Montesi
Strainer
Girard
Mason

Others Present:

Kevin Geraghty, Chairman of the Board
Paul Dusek, County Administrator
Martin Auffredou, County Attorney
Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board
Frank Thomas, Budget Officer
Supervisors Bentley
Conover
Frasier
Monroe
Wood

Committee Member Absent:

Supervisor Dickinson

Kathy Barrie, Personnel Officer
Jeffery Tennyson, Superintendent, Public Works
Karen Putney, Administrator, Fire Prevention &
Building Codes
Rob Metthe, Director, Information Technology
Suzanne Wheeler, Commissioner, Department of
Social Services
Bud York, Sheriff
Don Lehman, *The Post Star*
Nicole Livingston, Second Deputy Clerk

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

Motion was made by Mr. Montesi, seconded by Mr. Mason and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the prior 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.

Mr. Taylor mentioned there had been some criticism of the Personnel Committee due to the amount of positions that were being created. He said he disagreed, noting the only significant change recently had been the authorization to create the position of a Human Resources Director. He pointed out the majority of actions taken by the Personnel Committee were resultant of the reorganization of various departments; however, he cautioned the Committee members to keep the criticism in mind while reviewing the Agenda.

Commencing the agenda review with Section III, Action Agenda, Mr. Taylor apprised Item 1 listed no requests from the Civil Service/Personnel Office. Continuing, he announced that Item 2 consisted of a referral from the Criminal Justice Committee, Probation, which requested to amend the Departmental Table of Organization to delete the part-time position of Senior Typist (*Grade 4, Annual Base Salary of \$25,344 - pro-rated to \$12,672*)

and create and fill the new part-time position of Probation Assistant (*Grade 7, Annual Base Salary of \$29,031 - pro-rated to \$14,515*) effective August 19, 2013. The Probation Assistant position is a non-mandated Union position which will receive 12% State reimbursement.

Motion was made by Mr. Montesi and seconded by Mr. Kenny to approve the request as presented.

Mr. Montesi questioned if there benefits associated with this position and Mr. Taylor responded in the negative, noting it would be a part-time position. Mr. Girard asked why the pay grade was being increased from a Grade 4 to a Grade 7. Kathy Barrie, Personnel Officer, explained a Probation Assistant would better serve the needs of the Department as this person could perform more duties than a Senior Typist, such as drug testing.

Following discussion, Mr. Taylor called the question and the motion was carried unanimously to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Mr. Taylor noted Items 3A through G were referrals from the Social Services Committee, Department of Social Services (DSS). Item 3A, he said, was a request to amend the Departmental Table of Organization to delete the position of Caseworker #17 in the Foster Care/Adoption Unit (*Grade 14, Annual Base Salary of \$35,385*) and create and fill the position of Sr. Caseworker #6 (*Grade 15, Annual Base Salary of \$36,410*) effective August 19, 2013, as well as to authorize the filling of any vacancies created by promotion. The Caseworker #17 position is being vacated due to resignation effective August 16th; the Sr. Caseworker #6 position will be a mandated, Union position which will receive 50% Federal and 23% State reimbursements. This action will actually result in a savings of \$724 as the person previously filling the Caseworker #17 position received a total salary of \$37,134 due to longevity pay.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Mason and carried unanimously to approve Item 3A as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Mr. Taylor apprised Item 3B was a request to fill the Caseworker #10 position in the Foster Care/Adoption Unit (*Grade 14, Annual Base Salary of \$35,385*) due to resignation. This is a mandated, Union position which receives 50% Federal and 23% State reimbursements; there will be a \$500 budget savings as the person currently filling the position receives a salary of \$35,885 due to longevity pay.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. Girard and carried unanimously to approve Item 3B as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position form is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Mr. Taylor stated Item 3C was a request to amend the Departmental Table of Organization to delete a Caseworker position (*position number to be determined*) in the Family Preservation & Youth Development Unit (*Grade 14, Annual Base Salary of \$35,385*) and

create and fill the position of Sr. Caseworker #7 (*Grade 15, Annual Base Salary of \$36,410*) effective August 19, 2013, as well as to authorize the filing of any vacancies created by promotion. The Sr. Caseworker #7 position will be a mandated, Union position which will receive 50% Federal and 23% State reimbursements. This action will result in an increased expense of \$1,025.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve Item 3C as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Item 3D, Mr. Taylor remarked, was a request to amend the Departmental Table of Organization to delete a Social Services Investigator position (*position number to be determined*) in the Fraud Unit (*Grade 11, Annual Base Salary of \$33,026*) and create and fill the position of Sr. Social Services Investigator #1 (*Grade 13, Annual Base Salary of \$34,564*) effective August 19, 2013, as well as to authorize the filling of any vacancies created by promotion. The Sr. Social Services Investigator #1 position will be a mandated, Union position that receives 50% Federal and 23% State reimbursements. This action will result in an increased expense of \$2,538. *Note: Creation of the Sr. Social Services Investigator position is contingent upon CSEA approval.*

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Montesi and carried unanimously to approve Item 3D as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Chairman Geraghty entered the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

Mr. Taylor advised Item 3E was a request to amend the Departmental Table of Organization to delete to position of Sr. Intake Clerk #2 in the Temporary Assistance/Reception Unit (*Grade 5, Annual Base Salary of \$26,370*) and create and fill the position of Intake Clerk #5 (*Grade 4, Annual Base Salary of \$25,344*) effective August 19, 2013, as well as to fill any vacancies created by promotion. The Intake Worker #5 position will be a mandated, Union position which receives 50% Federal and 23% State reimbursements. This action will result in a savings of \$8,953.

Motion was made by Mr. Girard, seconded by Mr. Mason and carried unanimously to approve Item 3E as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Mr. Taylor expounded Item 3F was a request to amend the Departmental Table of Organization to delete the position of Social Welfare Examiner #1 (*vacant*) in the Temporary Assistance/Welfare to Work/Foodstamp/HEAP Unit (*Grade 8, Annual Base Salary of \$30,230*) and create and fill the position of Sr. Social Welfare Examiner #9 (*Grade 11, Annual Base Salary of \$33,026*) effective August 19, 2013, as well as to fill any vacancies created by promotion. The Sr. Social Welfare Examiner #9 position will be a mandated, Union position which receives 50% Federal and 23% State reimbursements. This action will result in an increased expense of \$2,796.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason and seconded by Mr. Montesi to approve the request as presented.

Mr. Montesi questioned what the net increase to the budget would be following the actions that were approved and Suzanne Wheeler, Commissioner of DSS, replied these actions resulted in an overall savings of approximately \$3,000.

Mr. Sokol entered the meeting at 9:12 a.m.

Mr. Taylor called the question and the motion was carried unanimously to approve Item 3F as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Mr. Taylor stated Item 3G was a request to authorize Christina Mastrianni, Caseworker in the Foster Care Unit, to enroll in the following job-related course, Abnormal Psychology at Sage Graduate School, from August 29, 2013 through December 12, 2013 at a cost of \$1,980. He noted that if approval to enroll in the aforementioned course was approved, Ms. Mastrianni would be due reimbursement of 50% of the course costs, upon completion with a grade of "C" or better.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. Montesi and carried unanimously to approve Item 3G as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Mr. Kenny referred to the reorganization of the DSS over the past few months and he wondered if the number of changes would be decreasing soon. Suzanne Wheeler, Commissioner of DSS, responded there were still a few upcoming retirements that would require additional reorganization actions.

Continuing to Item 4, a referral from the Support Services Committee, Information Technology, Mr. Taylor presented a request to fill the vacant position of Web/Intranet Developer (*Annual Salary to be determined based on a salary study*), due to resignation. This is a non-mandated, non-Union position which receives 25% reimbursement for services provided to other County Departments, primarily the Tourism Department.

Motion was made by Mr. Girard, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to approve Item 4 as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position form is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Mr. Taylor announced that Agenda Items 5A through D consisted of Items to be discussed by the County Administrator, which he asked Paul Dusek, County Administrator, to address. With reference to Item 5A, pertaining to amending Resolution No. 350 of 2013 to clarify the source of funding for two previously unfunded DPW positions, Mr. Dusek explained the Table of Organization was not properly funded and the language in the resolution needed to be corrected to reflect the funding for those positions.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Montesi and carried unanimously to approve Item 5A as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 16th Board meeting.

Moving on to Item 5B, Mr. Dusek requested to amend Resolution No. 502 of 2012 regarding less than part-time employees and per diem nurses in the Public Health Division. He recognized this was a technical amendment; however, he requested to table any action on this item until next month when he could provide a more detailed explanation for the request.

Moving on to Item 5C, request to amend the Table of Organization to create an unfunded Temporary Help position at the Westmount Health Facility (*EF.72600 100*), Mr. Dusek advised the Facility was in need of temporary help in various departments and this action would allow for that to occur. He added they would be looking to implement similar action in other departments throughout the County in the near future.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Girard and carried unanimously to approve Item 5C as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 16th Board meeting.

Mr. Dusek remarked Item 5D concerned new retiree health insurance contribution rules. He recalled when the Union agreements were renegotiated, significant changes had been implemented in health insurance, health insurance in retirement and the provisions that affected current retirees; however, he noted, all necessary matters had not been addressed at that time. He distributed two draft resolutions for the Committee members to review, *copies of which are on file with the minutes*.

Mr. Dusek highlighted the previous changes that had been made with regard to health insurance, such as the provision that all new County employees would contribute 20% towards their health insurance and upon retirement, unless they were employed by the County for 20 years and were 65 years of age, they would not receive health insurance coverage in retirement. He pointed out the same change had been implemented for new non-Union employees, as well. He recalled that the contribution rates had been raised for existing employees from 10%, 11%, 12% to 13% for both Union and non-Union employees. For existing retirees in the bargaining unit, he continued, those under the age of 65 received insurance under the old system, noting that new employees would not receive that benefit. Mr. Dusek referenced one of the draft resolutions distributed which stated that current retirees in the bargaining unit that were under age 65 would pay the same amount for insurance that active employees were paying. He added the retirees that were over age 65 had traditionally received the Medicare Advantage Plan without having to make a contribution because that Plan was very inexpensive and that would remain the same. He asserted another group of retirees that needed to be addressed were those that were under age 65 but would eventually become age 65. He opined that group should be treated the same as the retirees that were over 65 years of age. Mr. Dusek clarified that this only applied to those that were currently retired. For those that retire in the future, he said, they would pay the same rate that active employees paid for health insurance at all times.

Discussion ensued relative to employees that would retire prior to age 65 with less than 20 years employment with the County that would not receive health insurance. Mr. Dusek reiterated that situation only applied to those that began employment with the County after December 21, 2012 and he noted that the Affordable Health Care Act could change all of this in the future.

Mr. Dusek advised the other draft resolution that was distributed concerned health insurance benefits in retirement for current non-bargaining unit employees. He stated it was very similar to the previous resolution for bargaining unit employees and the same rules would be applicable that had been discussed.

Motion was made by Mr. Montesi, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to establish health insurance benefits for eligible retirees from bargaining units as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 16th Board meeting.

Motion was made by Mr. Girard, seconded by Mr. Mason and carried unanimously to establish health insurance benefits in retirement for current non-bargaining unit employees employed by the County prior to December 21, 2012 and current eligible retirees employed by the County prior to December 21, 2012 as outlined above. The necessary resolution was authorized for the August 16th Board meeting.

Concluding the agenda review, Mr. Taylor outlined the Pending Items section, as follows:

- 1) Committee approved preparation of RFP's for codification of all County laws/rules/policies and for consultant services relating to salary and wage studies.

Mr. Dusek reported this item related to the package of Human Resources (HR) items that had been discussed at prior meetings. He acknowledged that the HR Director advertisement had been released and résumés were due at the end of the month. The second and third parts to this, he continued, was a codification of all County laws, rules and policies and a completion of a salary study. He informed that the ordinance piece would cost under \$20,000; however, he said, he needed to refine that research more and he requested that matter be carried forward to next month. With regard to the comprehensive wage and salary studies, Mr. Dusek apprised two proposals had been received for that service. He remarked one proposal would cost approximately \$100,000 and he did not recommend using that group; however, he added, the second proposal included completion of the requested work for an estimated amount between \$43,000 to \$68,000. He opined the work could be accomplished for \$43,000 or less. Mr. Dusek announced that he was impressed with the second company's credentials and the institutions they had worked with.

In response to an inquiry relative to funding such studies, Mr. Dusek recommended utilizing the Contingent Fund, which currently had an approximate balance of \$129,000 and an additional estimated amount of \$57,000 would be available from the Hudson River-Black River Regulating District settlement, as well as Union contract settlements. He advised that to complete the aforementioned actions, both the codification of County laws and the comprehensive wage and salary studies, it would cost about \$63,000. He added there would be a continuing expense each year in connection with the codification of laws, rules and policies.

Mr. Merlino entered the meeting at 9:46 a.m.

Mr. Montesi suggested moving forward with these actions prior to the new HR Director starting employment in order to provide the necessary information to the Director. Mr. Taylor countered the new HR Director should probably be involved with these studies and he recommended waiting until that person was hired to progress with this. Mr. Strainer expressed his opposition to hiring a new HR Director. Mr. Sokol agreed with Mr. Taylor that waiting was a good option and he questioned if any consideration had been given to outsourcing the County's human resources needs. Mr. Dusek responded he had looked into that; however, he said, based on the County's needs, he felt an official should be at the County on a daily basis that could be a manager and run that whole operation and he did not believe an outside agency would be successful at doing that.

Motion was made by Mr. Montesi and seconded by Mr. Girard to authorize the commencement of a comprehensive wage and salary study. The motion failed due to the lack of a majority vote.

There being no further business to come before the Personnel Committee, on motion made by Mr. Kenny and seconded by Mr. Sokol, Mr. Taylor adjourned the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Livingston, Second Deputy Clerk