

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL

DATE: JULY 9, 2014

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS TAYLOR
KENNY
SOKOL
DICKINSON
GIRARD
VANSELOW
SIMPSON

OTHERS PRESENT:

GRETCHEN STEFFAN, COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR
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 BROCK
CONOVER
FRASIER
SEEBER
BRIAN LAFLURE, FIRE COORDINATOR/DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES
JULIE PACYNA, PURCHASING AGENT
MIKE SWAN, TREASURER
BUD YORK, SHERIFF
TOM WADE, CITY OF GLENS FALLS RESIDENT
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
AMANDA ALLEN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS MERLINO
WOOD

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

Motion was made by Mr. Girard, seconded by Mr. Sokol 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 meeting minutes.

Commencing the Agenda review with Section III, Action Agenda, Mr. Taylor advised Items 1A-B consisted of requests from the Human Resources Department. Item 1A, he noted, requested to amend the County's ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) policy, approved by Resolution No. 356 of 2013, to change occurrences of "Personnel Officer" to "County Human Resources Director".

Motion was made by Mr. Girard, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the July 18th Board Meeting.

Mr. Taylor advised Item 1B included a request to authorize Gretchen Steffan, County Human Resources Director, to attend the NYSPERLA 40th Annual Training Conference in Saratoga Springs, NY on July 16-18, 2014 at a cost of \$350. He pointed out that funding was not available within the existing budget for the aforementioned conference costs.

Ms. Steffan interjected that funding had not been provided for training costs in her Departmental Budget; she noted that she could transfer funds from the Civil Service budget but she believed those funds were already earmarked for other expenses. Mr. Kenny questioned whether the conference costs included funding for hotel expenses and Ms. Steffan replied in the negative, noting that she would be traveling daily to the conference which was being held in Saratoga Springs.

Mr. Dickinson stated that he was not opposed to the request, but wondered where the funding for the conference costs would be provided from and Mr. Taylor answered with his assumption that the most likely source would be the contingent fund.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mr. Simpson and carried unanimously to approve the request and refer same to the Finance Committee to determine a source of funding for the aforementioned conference costs.

Moving on to Agenda Items 2A-B, consisting of referrals from the Health Services Committee, *Westmount Health Facility*, Mr. Taylor announced Item 2A pertained to a request to amend Resolution No. 252 of 2014 to reflect the reclassification of a position, rather than a deletion/creation of positions, as well as to backdate the reclassification to March 1, 2014 and amend the Table of Organization accordingly.

When asked for clarification on this item, Ms. Steffan advised that the Committee, and subsequently the Board of Supervisors, had authorized the reclassification of a Keyboard Specialist based on additional duties assumed, and the Administrator of the Westmount Health Facility was now requesting that the reclassification be backdated to March 1, 2014, when the additional duties were assumed, in order to appropriately compensate the employee for services provided. Paul Dusek, County Administrator, advised this request was currently under legal review to determine whether the County was legally able to backdate the reclassification; he added that in light of this fact, he recommended that the Committee table the request until the legal review was complete.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mr. Vanselow and carried unanimously to table Agenda Item 2A, pending the completion of a legal review.

Mr. Taylor advised Item 2B consisted of a request to delete the positions of CNA PT #36 and CNA PT #37, and create the position of CNA FT #28, *Grade 4, Annual Base Salary of \$25,851*, effective July 21, 2014 and amend the Table of Organization accordingly.

Mr. Dickinson questioned whether this change would incur a funding differential and Mr. Sokol said he recalled there would be a bit of a savings in salary costs. Mr. Dusek noted that this, and prior similar changes, were being made by Lloyd Cote, Administrator of the Westmount Health Facility, in an effort to make Westmount as functional as possible while keeping costs low by avoiding the need for contract nursing services. He continued that Mr. Cote had been making many changes to improve Westmount's staffing situation and Mr. Dusek stated that he supported these changes because they had been producing favorable results.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the July 18th Board Meeting.

Continuing to Agenda Item IV, Mr. Taylor noted the vacancies filled since the last Committee meeting, which included the following:

Countryside Adult Home

1. Institutional Aide, *Grade 3, Annual Base Salary \$24,699*, due to resignation, and any vacancies created by promotion. Approval to fill provided at the June 27th Social Services Committee Meeting.

DPW

1. Word Processing Operator, *Grade 4, Annual Base Salary \$25,851*, due to retirement. Approval to fill provided at the July 2nd Public Works Committee Meeting.

Probation

1. Probation Officer, *Grade 19, Annual Base Salary \$41,881*, due to retirement. Approval to fill provided at the June 30th Criminal Justice Committee Meeting.

Sheriff

1. Patrol Officer #47, *Annual Base Salary \$36,414; Current Budgeted Salary \$47,710*, due to resignation. Approval to fill provided at the June 30th Public Safety Committee Meeting.
2. Patrol Officer #29, *Annual Base Salary \$36,414; Current Budgeted Salary \$41,353*, due to

retirement. Approval to fill provided at the June 30th Public Safety Committee Meeting.

Mr. Kenny noted that the "Vacancies Filled" section constituted half of the Agenda and that the Committee had not taken action on any of it. He commented that pretty soon, they would be able to dissolve the Personnel Committee altogether because they would not have any business to address. Mr. Kenny stated that he was opposed to the new method of approving the filling of vacant positions and felt they should return to the old method which required approval by the Personnel Committee.

Mr. Dusek reminded the Committee members that they had made this change in order to remove the approval by resolution process which was lengthy and delayed the filling of vacancies, to the detriment of departments that were already thinly staffed. He noted that the revised approval procedures included an extensive review process, requiring separate approvals from the County Human Resources Director, the County Administrator, the Budget Officer and the appropriate Supervisory Committee to authorize the filling of a vacancy, followed by which the approvals were to be reported on the monthly Personnel Committee agendas. Mr. Dusek noted that since the economic downturn, many positions had been eliminated by attrition and jobs combined to reduce positions, leaving County Departments very thinly staffed; he added that a new culture had been adopted in County operations where Department Heads and key staff were always looking for means by which to further position reductions when they were able to do so. Mr. Dusek advised due to these efforts, which had led to lower staffing levels, the Departments were more susceptible to the problems associated with vacant positions. He continued that because requests to fill vacant positions were generally being approved on a regular basis by the Personnel Committee, the Committee had been in favor of a streamlined process that would avoid delays in filling positions, allowing Department Heads to hire staff more quickly than they had been able to in the past. Mr. Dusek concluded with his assurances that this new process was intended to provide directive to staff and streamline the process for filling vacancies and making less work for the Committee and the Board of Supervisors, while providing for an appropriate system of checks and balances.

Mr. Dickinson commented that he shared Mr. Kenny's feelings and while he understood the intent of the streamlined process, he felt the Personnel Committee should be provided the opportunity to review and consider each request before it was approved.

Chairman Geraghty commented that although he was not advocating the removal of authority from the Personnel Committee, he would note that all of these positions were discussed at length during Supervisory Committee meetings before approval was granted, and Mr. Dusek confirmed this was a correct assertion.

Mr. Vanselow opined that duplicate approvals by the Personnel Committee to fill vacant positions did seem somewhat redundant and he noted that he had received complaints from constituents regarding a lack of responsiveness and action on the County and State's part which could be attributed to insufficient staffing levels. He pointed out that requests to create or change positions still had to be reviewed by the Personnel Committee and that this new policy only applied to the filling of established positions upon being vacated.

Mr. Taylor said that most of the members of the Personnel Committee served on other Supervisory Committees and could voice their objections at those meetings, if they had any. He then commented that although he did not have a strong opinion on this issue, one could point out that secondary approvals from the Finance Committee were not necessary as Supervisory Committees had already provided their approvals.

Mr. Conover pointed out that the Personnel Committee maintained its authority to review and revise any departments organizational structure, especially during budget negotiations when positions could be easily added or eliminated.

In consideration of the opinions voiced, Mr. Dickinson stated that he no longer had any objection to the streamlined approval and withdrew his previous comments.

A brief discussion ensued, following which it was the consensus of the Committee to continue the current procedure for the time being.

Tom Wade, a resident of the City of Glens Falls, addressed the Committee expressing his appreciation for the Board of Supervisors decision to refrain from allotting funding in support of the Glens Falls Civic Center. Mr. Wade commented that the Civic Center had been a drain on the economy and to taxpayers of the City of Glens Falls and he said he felt the County's decision not to immediately provide funding had been the push the Mayor of the City of Glens Falls needed to put the facility up for sale, which he said was a good thing. Mr. Wade thanked the Supervisors once again for not making a hasty decision to provide funding, as well as for the opportunity to address them.

Concluding the Agenda review, Mr. Taylor noted the Pending Items section consisted of one item, referring to the presentation of suggested revisions to the proposed Warren County Ethics Law by the County Attorney. Martin Auffredou, County Attorney, apprised he was not prepared to provide an update on this matter today, but hoped to do so at the August Committee meeting.

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 9:21a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Allen, Deputy Clerk of the Board