

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING

December 3, 2008 – 2:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairman Peck; Supervisors Daly, A. Johnson, Lucia, Richardson, Wood, Hargrave; David Wickerham, Co. Administrator; Bill Baker, Jack Kalinkewicz, Personnel; Sue Lent, Self-Insurance; Ron Revers, CSEA President; Patrick Patenaude, Sewer Dist.; Frances Mantell, LWV; Steve Williams, Daily Gazette

Chairman Peck called the meeting to order.

Mr. Richardson moved to approve the minutes of the November 5th meeting. Mr. Wood seconded. Unanimous.

Chairman Peck thanked the Committee and the Personnel Department for their outstanding work this year.

Mrs. Lent distributed copies of the Self-Insurance Pool Report for the period 1/1/08 through 11/30/08 and compared it to last year's report: cases for the month down by 22; cases for the year down by 58; expenses through October up by \$339,164; expenses for November up by \$92,183; year-to-date expenses up by \$431,347. She said 76% of the budget has been used.

Mr. Baker requested a one-year contract with Blue Shield of Northeastern New York (BSNENY) for the County's health insurance. He stated there will be a 13% increase. Next year, we may go out to bid and shop around, as we will be in heavy negotiations with CSEA, he said. He said right now, we are at \$18 million, and it is going to \$20 million. He said the money is in the budget. Mr. Johnson asked when was the last time we went out to bid. Mr. Baker stated two years ago. We need to look at this on a periodic basis, he added. He said we have the Point of Service plan which a lot of people like, and we have a Traditional plan. He said there are 540 employees under our contract. Mr. Lucia stated his town did a study with six different agencies, and none of them came close to Blue Shield.

Mr. Revers pointed out that Schenectady County is going with Canadian drugs for prescriptions. We have to start looking at different ways of doing this, as they are definitely saving money. Chairman Peck said he does not know the legality of shipping the drugs across international lines. He

suggested that Personnel call Schenectady County to see how they are doing it.

Mr. Lucia moved to approve a one-year contract with Blue Shield of Northeast New York for the County's health insurance. Mr. Johnson seconded. Unanimous.

Chairman Peck introduced Patrick Patenaude who works at the Sewer District as a Laborer. He has filed a grievance, due to being overlooked for a promotion, and that decision is pending. Mr. Patenaude said he has been employed at the Sewer District for 4 years and 10 months. He said for 2 ½ years he worked on the collection system, and then he was transferred in the plant for 2 years. He said he was recently transferred back to the collection system when a Helper position was offered to him. In May, 2007, two people from outside of the Sewer District were hired as Maintenance Workers with very little experience. He said he filed a grievance at that time, has gone to court and is currently waiting on the arbitrator's decision. He said in November, three more people were promoted to Maintenance Worker, and he believes he is better qualified and more experienced than these five people who were recently hired at Maintenance Workers. He said he does not know the procedures of how they are hiring. He said he was interviewed for the promotional position. The Executive Director said they used the general rating system, he stated. He said he feels this has been in injustice to him. He stated he has letters of recommendation from people in the plant, including his supervisor and acting supervisor. He said his biggest concern is with the recently hired people with lack of experience for a two step up job title. He asked how they are deemed to be better qualified. He thanked the Committee for their time.

Mr. Revers said he is finding across the board where respect for employees is very low. He said at Maplewood Manor, there is a CNA who needed to go to the school to pick up her sick child, but she was told she would have to wait until her lunch hour. He said an employee who has to leave for one hour and being told no is a shame. It is very disrespectful for a County employee to be denied, he said. He said he was told there were seven people on the floor that day for staff. Mr. Lucia asked if that was a common practice of the employee. Mr. Revers said he was told her work record is good. He stated in DSS, the way those employees are talked to when they are brought in front of the Commissioner is disgusting. He is very disrespectful to them, he said. He stated employees should be reprimanded

in a professional manner and not belittled. He said when someone is interviewed for an upgrade and not selected for the job, they should at least be told why so that they know what they have to do in the future to do better. Let the employee know where they have to improve, he added. He said he doesn't tolerate slackers, but he tells employees to do their best. There needs to be a little more respect and decency, he stated. He said if you show employees respect, you will always have a good work force. He said he is proud of this County. We have to work together, he said. I would appreciate anything you can do to prevent this from happening, he said.

Mr. Richardson said if someone doesn't get a promotion, it would only make the work force better if they were told where they were lacking. Ms. Daly said it is important for the interviewee to remember they are advocating for themselves. She asked if the Union gives employees counseling sessions regarding interviews to let them know they have to advocate for themselves. Let that person know how to ask about their shortcomings, she said. Mr. Revers said that has not been done, but it should be looked into. He said Mr. Patenaude went through this once before. Maybe he should have been told what the problem was the first time, he said. It would be good to have better communications, he said. I am sure we will get through this by working together, he stated.

Chairman Peck said he will follow up on some of these issues.

On a motion by Mr. Lucia, seconded by Ms. Daly, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine M. Sodemann