

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING

February 6, 2008 – 1:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairman Peck; Supervisors Lucia, Richardson, Rowland, Wood; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt. Analyst; Jack Kalinkewicz, Personnel; Sue Lent, Self-Insurance; Dale Angstadt, Hans Lehr, Mental Health; Barbara Thomas, LWV; Press

Chairman Peck called the meeting to order.

Chairman Peck appointed Mr. Wood as Vice-Chair of the Committee.

Ms. Lent stated Self-Insurance is strictly for Workers' Compensation. She distributed copies of the Self-Insurance Pool Report for the period 1/1/08 to 1/31/08 and the report for the same period last year for a comparison. She stated there are 40 total cases for the year which is up by 6 from last year. She said the expenses have increased by \$29,987. Chairman Peck asked if there were any large cases in the mix. Ms. Lent said there are substantial cases out there, but we will always have those.

Ms. Lent also distributed a Specific Excess Employer's Liability Insurance history showing the premiums from 2002 through 2007. She said this is coverage in our plan in the event someone sues. She pointed out you cannot sue your employer, but you can sue a manufacturer, etc. She said she is gathering information to get a quote on the premium for 2008, and we will have to do something on that next month. She said our carrier for this is through Sutton and Tarantino, and there are few people who provide this coverage.

Mr. Kalinkewicz distributed copies of informational sheets on Saratoga County Legislative Reporting Lines; Saratoga County Organizational Chart; Saratoga County Workforce Categories; and a listing of County Worksites that shows the location of each department and how many employees each has. He mentioned there are a number of department heads and their deputies getting to retirement age. In the near future, we will be looking for department heads and deputies, and you will see deputy requests to move up.

Mr. Angstadt said they have a staff Psychiatrist recruitment problem for the Mental Health department. Two years ago, we created a fifth position for a Psychiatrist for doing clinic work half time and half time in the medication clinic at the Jail. We have had recruitment activity for this position since May, 2006, and have not been able to get anyone to show serious interest at the salary scale we have, he said. We have four full-time Psychiatrists and a retirement coming up June 26th, he stated. He said they have not been able to recruit for vacancies due to the salary scale that they have. He then introduced his deputy, Hans Lehr.

Mr. Angstadt said the salary scale for Psychiatrist is falling behind. There is a general shortage of Psychiatrists nationwide, he said. We have no problem recruiting in the other Mental Health positions, he added. We are behind what other area hospitals are paying

for starting Psychiatrists, he said. He stated last year, he talked to someone twice and offered the position to him at \$158,000. He called me back and said he was sorry and that he was taking the job in a neighboring hospital at \$182,000 to start, he stated. He said he checked with Directors of Psychiatry at other hospitals, and they were paying \$179,000 to \$185,000. He said we are out of the ballpark for the starting salary of \$162,221.

Mr. Angstadt stated the other issue is our vacation schedule. The Psychiatrist would get two weeks vacation per year for seven years. Most hospitals offer four weeks to start, he stated. After we tell them the salary scale and vacation time, that ends the conversation, he said. Mr. Kalinkewicz stated our employment policy is two weeks vacation after one year. Mr. Richardson asked what the comparison is as far as retirement benefits that we offer that hospitals do not. Mr. Angstadt said he didn't know. When you talk to somebody coming out of their residency program or with one to two years of experience, they are not looking at that, he said. He stated they have thousands in medical school bills to pay off, and they are not looking at retirement.

Mr. Richardson said unfortunately, the realization is our salaries are too low, but he does not know if they can be the same as a hospital when we are also paying for pensions. He asked what hospitals offer besides salaries. Somehow, we have to do a little sales pitch to recruit these people, he said. Mr. Kalinkewicz said he will get that information. Mr. Wood suggested checking with the other neighboring counties to see what their level of salaries and benefits are. Mr. Angstadt said some counties run their own program like we do, and others contract out. He said one of the benefits to running your own program is that we provide services to other County departments, and there is no cash involved for our services to those departments. We serve people on Medicaid, and we see individuals who have no insurance, he said. He mentioned the various other services that they provide.

Chairman Peck asked if there was any leeway in negotiating. Mr. Kalinkewicz said traditionally, we used Board of Supervisors' authority to hire above base on any particular salary line. He said the Board gave special authority to the Chairman and to Law & Finance to hire above base salary for people in the nursing field. That isn't without problems, he said. When you hire someone new making more money, compared to people who have been there for awhile, that may cause some problems, he said. Mr. Rowland said could we offset the retirement package with the ability to take some of the loan off of their back? Mr. Kalinkewicz said they must join the Retirement System, as we have no control over that. If you offer something as an addition, that is something the Committee has to work out. Mr. Angstadt said his current people get recruited all of the time to neighboring hospitals, but some stay because of loyalty. We must adjust the salary scale, he said. Chairman Peck said we should probably continue discussions with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board. Mr. Richardson said he hopes Mr. Kalinkewicz can find out information regarding our competition. He said he knows in most hospitals, their pension plans are little or nothing with very few perks.

Mr. Lucia said there is an urgency to this situation. Chairman Peck said we have a budget in place, and this would alter that. I want to talk to Chairman Hargrave and Vice-Chairman Johnson to see what we can do and bring it back to this Committee in a couple of weeks.

Mr. Angstadt said their contract rate is \$104.36/hr., and they are not able to attract anyone part-time. He said the going rate in neighboring counties is between \$125 - \$135/hr. when they contract out. In our Compensation Plan, we have had X number of hours to hire on contract at an hourly rate, he said. We purchase time from Saratoga Hospital when they have a second Psychiatrist, but last year, they did not have one. Usually, we have 2 – 3 other Psychiatrists who are practicing in the community, and they sell us time by the hour -- \$100 last year, but they were not willing to sell it to us at \$125/hr., he said. We adjusted for COLA at \$104.36/hr., and we are not getting anybody to come to work under contract for that. He said the issues are giving the department more flexibility with salaries, vacation time, and the hourly contract rate.

Mr. Richardson said he feels a sense of urgency that we need to do something. Also, what will the impact be if we adjust the rate for the entire department. Chairman Peck said we need to know what it will be for the four Psychiatrists currently on.

Chairman Peck said we need to make a decision fairly rapidly so we can negotiate in a manner productive for us. He set the next Committee meeting for Wednesday, February 13th at 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Kalinkewicz distributed copies of an overview of the Personnel/Civil Service Department, and he briefly reviewed it.

Chairman Peck said he would like to set up subcommittees of 2 – 3 members to go to different departments to visit with the department head to learn about what is done in the various departments. He said he will put together a schedule with the help of the Personnel Department.

Mr. Lucia moved to adjourn to executive session to discuss litigation. Mr. Richardson seconded. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine M. Sodemann