

Human Resources & Insurance Committee Minutes
October 7, 2020 – 3:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Tom Wood; Committee Members Alan Grattidge, Jack Lawler, Dick Lucia, Bill Peck, Sandra Winney, Mo Wright; Supervisor Matt Veitch and Chairman of the Board Preston Allen; Spencer Hellwig, Chad Cooke, Brian O’Conor, Matt Rose, County Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Marcy McNamara, Adam Kinowski, Wendy Tennant, Human Resources; David DeCelle, Coroner; Eileen Bennett, Information Technology; Tina Potter, DSS; Scott Brackett, CSEA.

Chairman Wood called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Mr. Peck, seconded by Mr. Grattidge, the minutes of the September 29, 2020 meeting were approved. Mr. Wood abstained on voting.

The workers compensation report for September was distributed. The number of new claims in September was 18, of which 9 were report only. There are currently 187 open cases, which is the best number since they began with Corvel. The YTD budget is at 54%. The 24/7 line is at 89% utilization. One case was an ambulance transportation and another was a new employee. Mr. Wright asked how many cases were still open from Maplewood. Ms. Tennant said that she did not have the exact figure but believes it is under 20. Ms. Tennant said that they are still actively trying to close cases. They recently just came to an agreement on one.

A motion was made by Mr. Peck, seconded by Mr. Wright, to authorize an amendment to the 2020 Compensation Schedule to add (2) Deputy Coroner positions. Unanimous.

Mr. Wood said that the additional two positions are being requested due to the uncertainty of the current pandemic and other unforeseen issues. These appointments would be vital in keeping the Coroners’ office running smoothly. The Coroners provide 24 hour coverage, 365 days per year and by adding two additional Deputy Coroners it would allow them to have two teams available should the need arise. The rate of pay is \$100 per case plus mileage. Mr. DeCelle said that unfortunately there was a situation this past summer where one of the Coroner’s was out with an unexpected medical issue for approximately 3 week and one of the Deputies had to go into quarantine, so at that time there was only one Coroner on call 24/7. Mr. DeCelle said that the Deputy Coroner position is only paid when they go out on a case. Mr. Dorsey added that the resolution will also appoint two individuals to hold the Deputy Coroner positions. The two individuals recommended by the Coroners for those positions are Robert Ball from the Town of Ballston, and Danielle Jourdan from the City of Saratoga Springs.

A motion was made by Mr. Lawler, seconded by Mr. Lucia, to authorize an amendment to the 2020 Compensation Schedule to add (1) Conflict Defender attorney position in the Conflict Defender’s Office at the base salary of \$90,530 and (1) Confidential Secretary position in the Conflict Defender’s Office at the base salary of Grade 9 (\$46,716) and amend the budget in relation thereto. Unanimous.

Mr. Cooke said that earlier this year the Board accepted an amended grant package from Indigent Legal Services. They provide financial assistance to the County for three different departments, Public Defender's office, Conflict Defenders office, and the County's 18B Assigned Counsel Program. The positions of the additional Conflict Defender and Confidential Secretary were included in the grant package the Board adopted earlier this year, however we physically did not have an office for these positions. Now that Emergency Services has moved out, the Conflict Defender's office will expand to that location. Any case that can be handled by the Conflict Defenders office means that it does not have to be assigned to the 18B Assigned Counsel Program, which is 100% County funded. By handling more cases through this office, we can potentially save money as it is 100% grant funded. Mr. Cooke said that we are currently in the middle of year 3 of a 5-year grant cycle.

A motion was made by Mrs. Winney, seconded by Mr. Grattidge, to authorize an amendment to the 2020 Compensation Schedule to reclassify (1) Employment Program Supervisor to (1) Senior Social Welfare Examiner under Social Services. Unanimous.

Mr. Wood said that this will result in a net savings of approximately \$3K. Ms. Potter said that the Employment Program Supervisor works in the eligibility unit and has been in this position since the early 1990's. The individual just retired from the position. The distinct functions of that position are still unique, however each of the Senior Social Welfare Examiners, of which there are currently 17 throughout the eligibility wing, have similar duties with their own specialties such as domestic violence, homeless and housing services for example. Ms. Potter said that it makes sense have the individual be a Senior Social Welfare Examiner to allow for latitude for back up and support to the various other divisions.

A motion was made by Mr. Grattidge, seconded by Mr. Lucia, to authorize a 1-year renewal agreement with MVP for retiree health insurance coverage in the amount of \$3,620,561.16. Unanimous.

A motion was made by Mr. Peck, seconded by Mrs. Winney, to authorize a renewal dental health insurance contract with Metlife for 2020 in the amount of \$880,884.24. Unanimous.

A motion was made by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Grattidge, to authorize a renewal contract with CDPHP to administer the County's medical and prescription insurance services, including stop loss insurance, in the amount of \$23,497,352.88. Unanimous.

Mr. Wood said that for each of the above three resolutions 2021 is the 3rd and final year of the original bid. For all three resolutions there is a 0% increase for 2021. The agreements run from 1/1/2021 to 12/31/2021.

A motion was made by Mr. Lawler, seconded by Mr. Peck, to authorize a flexible schedule policy be included in the Policies and Procedures Manual on a trial basis for certain departments. Unanimous.

Mr. Wood said that a special meeting of this committee was held a couple of weeks ago to discuss looking at alternative work arrangements. Mr. Wood said that one thing he heard coming out of that meeting was that there was a great deal of variation between Departments, and even variation within Departments. This is potentially quite a complex matter. Mr. Kinowski has spent a great deal of time gathering information and checking with Department heads to find out additional thoughts. A draft alternative work arrangement policy was distributed. Mr. Kinowski said that after speaking with the labor counsel, it would be wise to conduct a trial period of 30 days to see whether or not it would work within a department. Mr. Kinowski said that there are various degrees of possible operation hiccups and it would be wise to proceed slowly. Mr. Kinowski said that he briefly spoke with Scott Brackett from CSEA prior to the meeting and if this was something to be implemented, an MOA would be needed to change the standard work hours to meet the needs of the employees and the departments. Mr. Kinowski said that from the Department Head feedback, flexing time would be as minimal as 15 minute increments to 2 hours either at the start or end of the day. The Information Technology Department, DPW and other departments have a trickle-down effect as work hours change. Mr. Peck said that in review of the summaries from the various departments, and listening to the Director of IT's concerns for availability, it would appear to him that they should not go outside of 7am at the earliest and 6-7pm in the evening. Security was a concern along with IT coverage. Mr. Kinowski also said that another concern to consider is snow days, people driving to work early, and parking lots are generally plowed by a certain start time, these lots may not be plowed if employees comes in early. Mr. Kinowski said that if the policy was implemented on a trial period, it can be reevaluated after 3 months so if any time it is not working, it can be terminated by the Department Head. The onus would be on the Department Head to approve or disapprove the request, whether it would work or not work for that Department. Mr. Lawler asked if there was any possibility of a grievance due to a denial of a flex schedule request. Mr. Kinowski said yes. There are so many different variables to work with the Union on this. Mr. Lawler thanked those who put the policy together and he believes trying to incorporate flex scheduling is a good idea. It will enable the County in a competitive position to be able to recruit employees. However, like all new policies and new work environments, it has to be tried out and learn from the feedback. Mr. Brackett said that he received the rough draft of the policy from Mr. Kinowski and forwarded it out to his Labor Relations Specialist, who in turn forwarded it to her boss at CSEA. Additional comments were received and he will review with Mr. Kinowski. The MOA would be one blanket agreement, however departments can be listed individually in the MOA with specific hours.

Mr. Wood said that Sexual Harassment Prevention Training & Workplace Violence Acknowledgement is required by law for all employees of governmental agencies. This year for the first time it will be conducted online. Each employee will go through the program online and sign documents following the completion of the program. This is in the interest of efficiency. Supervisors will also be required to do this as County employees. Ms. McNamara said that an email will be sent out to all employees and Supervisors.

The vacancy review report was distributed and Mrs. McNamara gave an overview on the positions that are vacant at this time.

Mr. Wood said that the HR Department is in the process of setting up the interview schedule for the Commissioner of Public Health. They have identified 3 top applicants to be interviewed.

Mr. Wood said that the County Administrator's office has been working preparing the 2021 budget. Departments have made requests for staffing for the upcoming year. Traditionally Mr. Wood has appointed a sub-committee to work with the HR Department as well as the County Administration to review the departmental requests. Mr. Wood said that it is a very challenging job and they met at least 4 times last year. Mr. Wood said that he spoke with Supervisor Winney and she has agreed to serve on the sub-committee. Mr. Wood also requested that Mr. Peck serve on the sub-committee. Mr. Peck agreed.

Mr. Wood announced the retirement of two county employees. Keith Manz and Steve Dorsey have both submitted their retirement notices.

On a motion made by Mr. Grattidge, seconded by Mr. Wright, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board