

Human Resources & Insurance Committee Minutes
November 4, 2020 – 3:00 p.m.

Present: Vice Chairman Bill Peck; Committee Members Alan Grattidge, Dick Lucia, Sandra Winney, Mo Wright; Supervisors Tara Gaston, Todd Kusnierz, and Chairman of the Board Preston Allen; Spencer Hellwig, Chad Cooke, Matt Rose, County Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Marcy McNamara, Adam Kinowski, Wendy Tennant, Human Resources; Eileen Bennett, Information Technology; Pat Maxwell, Social Services; Brendan Beardsley, Paul Iachetta, Saratoga County Sheriff Officers Association, Inc.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Grattidge, seconded by Mrs. Winney, the minutes of the October 7, 2020 meeting were approved unanimously.

The workers compensation report for October was distributed and Ms. McNamara gave a brief overview. For October there were 28 new cases, 7 were report only. Total paid out YTD is a little over \$2M and is at 60% of the budget. Of the 28 cases only 2 did not call the 24/7 1-800 number.

Mr. Peck said that CorVel is the management team for Workers Compensation. Next month's meeting will have their 2 year contract renewal agreement.

A motion was made by Mr. Grattidge, seconded by Mr. Lucia, to authorize an amendment to the County's property insurance coverages for the new Public Safety Building and a premium increase totaling \$10,905.78. Unanimous.

Mr. Hellwig said that the Public Safety Building is now online and it represents an additional \$29.3M in property value. This resolution will authorize additional property liability coverages on that building. The policy was pro-rated through the renewal date in May 2021. The \$10,905.78 represents the pro-rated amount.

A motion was made by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mrs. Winney, to authorize an amendment to the County's 2020 Compensation Schedule to reclassify (1) Computer Programmer to (1) PC Network Technician, Create (1) PC Technical Network Specialist in the IT Department. Unanimous.

Mr. Kinowski said that the reclassification of a Computer Programmer to PC Network Technician is to aid in the growth in the network systems. The creation of the PC Network Technician will support the technology in the new Public Safety Facility. The reclassification is budget neutral. The new position has a base salary of \$64,106, however the cost for 2020 would only be for two pay periods at an amount of \$7,597.75 which includes fringe. Ms. Bennett said that the reclassification is being requested as they are currently not creating as much in house software anymore since most applications within departments have gone to a cloud based solution. The reclassification will assist with providing more response to the helpdesk tickets that come in with the increase of the network and users. They have also in the course of the last two years taken

over the telephone communication system as well as the security cameras. The addition of the PC Technical Network Specialist will assist with the new technologies that came with the new Public Safety facility. The Sheriff also needs additional support due to the jail reform act as well as the DA's office.

A motion was made by Mr. Grattidge, seconded by Mr. Wright, to authorize ratification of the 2020 Collective Bargaining Agreement with the United Public Service Employees Union, amending the 2020 Compensation Schedule and amending the 2020 budget. Unanimous.

Mr. Peck introduced Paul Iachetta, the labor relations specialist for Corrections, and Brendan Beardsley the Union President, and thanked them for attending today. Mr. Peck said that negotiations have been ongoing with the Corrections Unit and gave a brief highlight of the collective bargaining agreement. The prior CBA expired in 2018, and in the springtime an MOA was signed to bring them up to the end of 2019. This current agreement is for the years 2020, 2021 and 2022. It includes a 2% COLA for each of the years with 2020 being retroactive. There are management right amendments for the Sheriff, comp time amendments, civil clerk compensation changes, revisions to vacation time, and changes in the value of sick leave that can be applied to health insurance premium upon retirement. Mr. Peck thanked the Corrections Unit for their efforts in negotiating this. Mr. Peck said that the agreement was brought to the membership and was passed 85/12. Mr. Peck also thanked Mr. Wright and Mr. Grattidge who were also on the negotiating team. Mr. Peck stood in for Mr. Wood. Mr. Peck said that this item will go from this committee to Law & Finance and onto the full Board for action in November. Mr. Kusnierz asked Mr. Peck to elaborate on the changes to vacation. Mr. Peck said that one of the overall thought processes during the negotiations was that there is a retention issue, and we are currently understaffed. Mr. Peck said that they were trying to find a way to figure out how to draw in new employees. Mr. Peck said that employees will be credited with one week of vacation upon the date of hire, previously they had to wait a year. Upon completion of 6 years until the completion of 12, employees will get 4 weeks of vacation, which is a 1 week increase. Upon completion of 12 years the employee will go to 5 weeks. Mr. Peck thanked Mr. Iachetta and Mr. Beardsley for their assistance and said it was a pleasure working with them through the various issues during the negotiations.

Mr. Peck said that a sub-committee of this committee was set up regarding the 2021 Department Head position requests. 12 Departments requested position amendments for the 2021 Budget. The sub-committee has met twice and they are still reviewing the 31 individual requests for position creations, reclassifications, salary adjustments, title changes, abolishment etc. Mr. Peck said that the final recommendations will be brought to the Law & Finance Budget Hearing scheduled for November 12th at 4:45pm.

A motion was made by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mrs. Winney, to expand the flexible schedule policy to other Departments as written in the current policy. Unanimous.

Mr. Peck said that last month a Flex Time trial period was initiated in two different Departments, Social Services and the Auditors office. They are currently 2 weeks in. Mr. Kinowski reported that for the Auditor's office things are going well. They have established staggered shifts and the Auditor has communicated his efforts with Department Heads throughout the County. Mr.

Kinowski said that the Auditors office is reporting a very positive outcome. Mr. Maxwell, Deputy Commissioner of Social Services, said that that he would compare and contrast the Auditors office as a speedboat and the Department of Social Services as an ocean liner. DSS has 220 employees with 13 units, mandated services required by the State. Their progress so far is to start out the assessment process. They have met with the administrative team which includes Mr. Maxwell, the Commissioner, Director of Administrative Services, Director of Services, Director of Eligibility, and Staff Development Coordinator, to try to get their assessment of how they will even be able to undertake an efficient review of the whole process. Two days following that meeting, they met with the 13 unit Supervisors, gave them copies of the Resolution and policy to review in advance, and asked them to meet to speak to their concerns, where they saw pros and cons and how they would go about implementing it. At this point in time, each of them has been requested to put a written summary together of how their divisions/units would go about implementing, or if it was even possible. Mr. Maxwell said that in the State mandates, there is Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, Cash Assistance, Homeless. Mr. Maxwell said that 11 requests from staff have been submitted to date. The Commissioner and Mr. Maxwell have met with 8 of these individuals, frontline staff, to find out the benefit to the employee and to also share with them some of the concerns of the Department regarding the impact on their co-workers, clients and other agencies they work with. For example, with Child Protective Services, they are in and out of Family Court every day, which has fixed hours and fixed schedules. Mr. Maxwell said that their individual units themselves have interaction with each other, Cash Assistance Unit works with Homeless, Adult Services Unit works with Employment programs. There is cross functioning needs within the Department and they need to make sure people are available for communication on all of the different cases. Mr. Maxwell said that the policy mentions "to attract and retain a diverse and talented workforce" Mr. Maxwell said that they believe they already have this in their Department. Mr. Maxwell said that their net budget since 2012 is actually lower than it was in 2012. Improved productivity among employees, Mr. Maxwell said that the model they have in place, and the way they serve the public currently, is better than other Counties. For example, CPS, for the 13 different districts across the region, Saratoga has zero overdue CPS reports at the end of the month, the average is 40% of the cases throughout the region are overdue. Delays creates trauma for the families that are involved. Mr. Maxwell said that in terms of productivity, DSS is very productive, however this does not mean that there are not some sections of the Department that they are trying to look at as to how they would implement some of these policy changes regarding flex time. As an example of the 11 requests they have had; one worker has requested to work 10-6, some in support collection unit were looking to change their hours 8-4, 8-3:30 and take ½ hour lunch, one individual in the Child Protective unit wanted to work 7am – 5pm 4 days a week and take Fridays off, one in the Temp assistance unit requested 8:30 – 4:30 in order to leave early to pick up her son from daycare which closes at 5:30. Mr. Maxwell summarized that the Department is working with the 13 different divisions to see where they can keep efficiencies and also meet some of the desires of the staff. Ms. Gaston asked Mr. Maxwell if they had a timeline for potential implementation. Mr. Maxwell said that they are trying to look toward what would happen with a permanent resolution, they would need a longer time period in order to assess and get back all of the information from their department supervisors to ensure it can be done without costing any efficiencies, realizing that at the end of all of their programs are families, clients, children who represent the most vulnerable population in the County. Ms. Gaston said that part of the implementation was to see how it worked for the two departments, and it seems that it has not been implemented in DSS, but is still being analyzed. Mr.

Maxwell said that additional information will be brought back from the unit supervisors on what they can do in their individual units. He expects that some of them will be unable to do it, for example, if a unit is open to the public from 9-5 and the phone is answered by someone who has requested flex time, the phone won't get answered. Some Departments don't have as much direct access with the public and they are trying to assess where those spaces are. Ms. Gaston asked if the Commissioner could present an update on the timeline at the upcoming Board meeting this month. Mr. Maxwell said that he believes she anticipates doing that. Ms. Gaston said that it would be helpful as they can't decide to move it to other Departments if they are not actually seeing the implementation and analysis that's currently going on.

Mr. Peck said that Supervisor Gaston makes a good point, the idea was to move to the next step to give other department heads the opportunity and discretion to implement flex time in their own departments and asked if this should be moved forward. Supervisor Gaston said that to be clear she is not opposed to opening it up, if any department feels that they can handle it, absolutely, she supports it. Mr. Peck recommended that it be opened up to departments at the discretion of the Department heads. There are positives that can be achieved in some departments, for not only the employees but the public at large. Mr. Peck said that they need to make sure there are limitations on the degree of outside the normal work hours because of IT requirements or other departmental interactions. Mr. Wright said that he agrees to opening it up to other departments but believes that a plan should be put in place prior to implementation. Get with the Department heads to see how it would work for each department. Ms. McNamara said that DSS and Auditors were chosen because they were one of the larger and one of the smaller departments. They have had input and feedback from both Departments. Ms. McNamara said that the plan was at the next Board meeting to open it up to either more Departments or the entire County, knowing the issues that arose. Ms. McNamara said that at the next Law & Finance meeting, DSS will be a little further along, and there will be a greater understanding of what employees are asking for. Ms. McNamara said that the requests seem to be more 1 hour in the morning, or 1 hour in the afternoon changes, and depending on the department, this can make a difference and is harder to implement operationally in some departments than others. Mr. Wright asked Mr. Brackett what the Union's position is on this. Mr. Brackett said that they have had a lot of people over the years that have required flex time. They tried negotiating it several times in the contract. Mr. Brackett said that he is not opposed to flex time, to help the employees help the employer. Mr. Brackett said that he would suggest opening it up to a 6 month trial, and review it at that point to see if it's worth it or not. Ms. McNamara said that the option for the Department head to pull it back is already in the policy. Ms. McNamara said that at any time, the County could abolish the policy. Mr. Brackett said that there are no grievances associated with this due to the fact that the change in hours is voluntary and not mandated by the County, and therefore not a violation of the contract. Ms. McNamara said that several questions were raised such as if it had to be related to COVID, or if you had to have a child. Ms. McNamara said that the request would be submitted to the employees supervisor, the request and reason for the request. Mr. Peck said that it was left up to the discretion of the Department Head due to the disparity between departments, there is no one size fits all. Ms. Gaston said that they can better decide on a sunset provision based on feedback from the Departments and the length it takes to transition. Mr. Wright said that in order to see this work, other departments need to get involved and find out exactly what departments it will work in and what departments it will not. Mr. Kusnierz said that County selected two departments at both ends of the scale and believes it's not enough information. Mr. Kusnierz said that he believes it should be opened up within the confines of the policy that was adopted, let the Department heads make the decision to

try to implement it to make it work, or find out it may not work. Mr. Kusnierz said that the Board needs this information in order to figure out where the County goes from there. Ms. McNamara said that this was the intent, for action at the next board meeting, to open it up as the policy is written. Mr. Peck and Mr. Wright agreed to open it up to get a better idea on how it may work. Mr. Wright said that he would not put a sunset clause on this as it could be months before departments such as DSS may be able to get it implemented. Ms. Winney suggested getting periodic updates with the Departments to see how it is working. Mr. Wright said that it would be nice to get a monthly update at the HR meetings to see how it is going. Mr. Peck said that the HR Department could give an update next month, the following month a progress report. Mr. Peck said that they don't need the details of every department, just a general sense of where it works, where it doesn't, and the overall issues that are being addressed. Mr. Wright said that he would like to hear any concerns from the unions throughout this process also. Ms. Bennett requested that as Department heads decide on an alternate schedule, that IT be included to avoid any issues. One issue that they had last week was an employee that came in early and the server was not available. Another time an employee worked on the weekend, phones were not ringing, because the phones are put on auto voicemail over the weekend. Mr. Wright said not only should IT be considered, but also any other department that interacts with their department. This all needs to be part of their plan.

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

Mr. Peck said that interviews were done for the Commissioner of Public Health Position. An offer was made to an individual and the Doctor has since declined that offer. They will now be reaching out to other qualified candidates. Ms. Gaston questioned if the reason for the decline was something the County was capable of changing, for example if it was salary related. Mr. Peck said that it was a variety of issues, personal and the timing was not right.

A motion was made by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Grattidge, to temporarily appoint Thomas Speziale as the Interim Commissioner of Public Works from November 18th until such time a Public Works Commissioner is hired with a temporary salary increase of \$1,868. Unanimous.

Mr. Peck said that Keith Manz, Commissioner of Public Works will be retiring on November 11th. The advertisements went out for that position and the application period is closed. HR will be setting up interviews for the position. Mr. Peck said in the meantime, Mr. Speziale is the Deputy Commissioner, and Mr. Peck is requesting that Mr. Speziale be appointed Interim Commissioner of Public Works until the new Commissioner is hired. Ms. Gaston asked if this will create a change in salary as it did with Director Medick. Mr. Peck said it should. Mr. Peck said that this will be for a short period of time, approximately 6 weeks. Mr. Speziale has been employed by the County for a long time and therefore his pay may be higher than base pay of an entry level Commissioner. Mr. Peck said that in other Departments the temporary salary has been raised up to the rate of the outgoing Commissioner. Mr. Peck said that he spoke with Mr. Speziale to make sure he was agreeable to the temporary appointment. Mr. Peck said that Mr. Speziale indicated that he would appreciate any thoughtfulness in regards to the temporary raise in salary however he is here to serve and would not refuse to do the job without extra pay. Mr. Peck said that he had HR calculate

the difference in salary and it would come out to \$1868. Mr. Peck said that in working with Mr. Speziale over the past two years during the construction of the Public Safety Building you can really see the level of detail and commitment he exhibits in his job at the County. Mr. Peck said that Mr. Speziale was instrumental, to say the least, in seeing this building through completion.

Mr. Peck said that the County Attorney position was advertised and the application period has also closed. HR will be setting up interviews for that position shortly.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board