

Human Resources & Insurance Committee Minutes  
January 26, 2021 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Darren O'Connor; Committee Members Joe Grasso, John Lant, Jon Schopf, Tom Richardson, Matt Veitch, Tom Wood; Supervisors Phil Barrett, Tara Gaston, Bill Peck; Steve Bulger, Matt Rose, County Administrator; Jason Kemper, Planning; Daniel Kuhles, Public Health; Marcy McNamara, Adam Kinowski, Wendy Tennant, Human Resources.

Chairman O'Connor called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

**On a motion made by Mr. Lant, seconded by Mr. Wood, the minutes of the December 2, 2020 meeting were approved. Mr. Grasso abstained from voting.**

Mr. O'Connor announced the appointment of Mr. Schopf as committee vice chair.

**A motion was made by Mr. Lant, seconded by Mr. Veitch, to authorize an amendment to the 2021 Compensation Schedule to create (2) Public Health Epidemiologist, Grade 15, Step 1A Base \$73,127, (1) Supervising Public Health Epidemiologist, Grade 17, Step 1A Base \$83,444, and (1) Senior Public Health Educator, Base \$59,522 under the Public Health Department and amending the budget in relation thereto. Unanimous.**

Dr. Kuhles said that the County is on a path towards becoming a full service Health Department, which will greatly increase the spear of responsibilities. One of the things that is currently lacking are Epidemiologists. Dr. Kuhles said that we have seen now, during the middle of the pandemic, some areas where the Public Health services has been strong in terms of vaccination, and areas where Public Health services has struggled with data analysis, displaying data and also case investigation and contact tracing. Dr. Kuhles said that moving forward, not just to get us through the remainder of Covid-19, but to prepare the County to move toward a full service Health Department, epidemiology skills are needed. Mr. Veitch asked, in addition to this, what are the additional roles of a full service Health Department, and how it is structured differently from what we do today. Dr. Kuhles said that there are a few big differences, the most prominent one is conducting environmental health services. The most common one that people recognize is inspecting restaurants and leading food borne illness investigations. Dr. Kuhles said that we are also one of the handful of counties where early intervention service coordination is separated from the billing and administrative part of the budget under Youth Services. Dr. Kuhles said that the level of involvement that we would have to be able to control for our own county and our own residents, in any sort of infectious disease investigation, whether it be general communicable disease, STD's, it really gives the Health Department the ability to implement things in the way that is best for our County residents rather than asking someone to do it for us, like Environment Health, or to be told, as we are now with Covid Vaccines, how to do something that may not fit what our needs are for our population. Dr. Kuhles said that right now the State Health Department conducts the inspections of restaurants. There is a lot of education that goes with this, we have good health educators and will probably need more with this coming down the pike, because you never want to get to a point where you have an outbreak, or you have a restaurant that has a problem, we want businesses to be open. So, the more education you can do up front, to prevent

things from happening, the better. Mr. Veitch and Mr. Lant said that they support the plan, Mr. O'Connor agreed. Mr. Grasso asked if these are permanent positions and if so, are we expecting additional positions in the future to round out what is needed for a full service Health Department. Dr. Kuhles said that the epidemiologists are needed now and in the future. If you look at comparably sized full service local Health Departments, you will see that they probably have 5 or so people in the 250K population range doing epidemiology programming. He believes that this is what is needed right now. In terms of other positions, the biggest one that will be needed are sanitarians, people with specific training and certification to do the restaurant inspections. He is unsure of what that number will be, because it will depend on the number of food service establishments that need to be permitted, but also depends on how many the State have found to be at high risk because of poor inspections. If a food establishment has a bad inspection, they need to be inspected more frequently, and this is why the education is so important. The more we can prevent them and partner with them to keep establishments from breaking the States regulations, the less problems we will have, and the less sanitarians we will need. Ms. Gaston said that one of the big questions that we have been asked is, what is Dr. Kuhles doing, why is he not on TV? A lot of that is because we don't have these positions, our Epidemiologist in Public Health right now is Dr. Kuhles, along with his other job responsibilities. Ms. Gaston said that she believes, and in speaking with Dr. Kuhles before, that there will be a plan on adding additional staff and how it will be structured. Ms. Gaston said that hopefully a comprehensive plan about this will come out in the future about how many positions should go where, but at this point, these positions are important right now. Certainly from the perspective of the Health & Social Services committee, she supports this item.

Mr. O'Connor said that he is happy to hear that we are moving forward in replenishing the reserve account for Workers Comp. due to the good work of CorVel. Mr. O'Connor asked Ms. McNamara to give a brief overview of the distributed report. Ms. McNamara said that for December 2020 there were 26 new claims for a total of 204 open claims. There was a settlement from Maplewood. The total paid out in December was approximately \$263K. Ms. McNamara said that 70% of the budgeted funds were expended in 2020. Remaining funds from the 2020 budget will go into the Contributory Reserve. Ms. McNamara said that the budget for 2021 is approximately \$4.8M and reflects a reduction of 7.8% from the previous year. Mr. O'Connor thanked CorVel and Human Resources for the great job they have done.

The vacancy review report was distributed and Ms. McNamara gave an overview on the positions that are vacant at this time. In DPW there is an MEO and an Automotive Repairer, in DSS - a Caseworker and a Senior Caseworker, in the District Attorney's office - one Assistant District Attorney, and in Real Property - a Real Property Tax Research Assistant. Mr. O'Connor asked how difficult it is to fill these positions. Ms. McNamara said that we do not have any issues with filling these positions.

**On a motion made by Mr. Lant, seconded by Mr. Veitch, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Therese Connolly  
Deputy Clerk of the Board