

Human Resources & Insurance Transcript

3/3/2022

SPEAKERS

Matt Rose, Diana Edwards, Adam Kinowski, Michael Hartnett, Kevin Veitch, Kevin Tollisen, Mark Hammond, Bridget Rider

Kevin Tollisen

Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to Human Resources and Insurance and attendance has been taken.

Bridget Rider

It has.

Kevin Tollisen

Right, so the first item on our agenda is the approval of the minutes of the February 3, 2022 meeting.

Mark Hammond

So moved.

Kevin Tollisen

Supervisor Hammond. Is there a second?

Kevin Veitch

Second.

Kevin Tollisen

Second.

Diana Edwards

Second.

Kevin Tollisen

Supervisor Veitch.

Diana Edwards

Edwards.

Kevin Tollisen

Thank you, supervisor Edwards. I'll put you down for a second second.

Diana Edwards

OK.

Kevin Tollisen

All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Kevin Tollisen

Any opposed? Motion is carried. And our Deputy Director today, Mr. Kinowski is here. Workers Compensation report.

Adam Kinowski

All right, this report is for the month of January. The January payout total was 154,506. In 2021 the January payout total was 165,614. This month we had 14 new claims for the month. Four were report only and there are total of 199 open claims. In comparison in 2021, there were 22 new, 9 report only and 195 open claims. We are 3% of our operational budget and in comparison, in 2021, we were at 5% of our operating budget expensed.

Kevin Tollisen

Any questions on that? Right. Next on the agenda is authorizing a contract with Bishop House Consulting.

Adam Kinowski

So this is authorizing a major contract with Bishop House Consulting. Saratoga County is committed to training great leaders and teams. This training will be offered to department heads, directors and certain management positions. Bishop House teaches leaders at all levels how to lead well and leverage their own style and talents in building cohesive teams. This contract will not exceed 31,000, includes 12 licenses for the 2022 year. Funds for this training are available under human resources and were discussed in the budget process.

Kevin Tollisen

Does anyone have any questions regarding this item? Can I have a motion to approve that contract?

Kevin Veitch

So moved.

Kevin Tollisen

Supervisor Veitch.

Mark Hammond

Second.

Kevin Tollisen

Supervisor Hammond. Any further discussion? All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Kevin Tollisen

Any opposed? Thank you. Motion is carried. The next item number five amendments to the 2022 compensation plan. I think we'll take those one at a time.

Adam Kinowski

So this resolution will authorize changes to the 2022 compensation scheduled to one, eliminate two security guard positions under Department of Social Services and two, create three Deputy Sheriff patrol positions in the sheriff's office. And if I could just explain a little bit further before we kind of go and break it apart. This request and resolution would allow for the Department of Social Services to enter into an agreement with the sheriff's office to provide security services at the Saratoga County Services Building. With this agreement, a portion of the costs associated with the two of the Deputy Sheriff positions will be reimbursed by New York State. The third deputy position will allow for the creation of the duty station at the entrance to building 40 McMaster Street to provide security services in that building and county complex. There is no budget impact funds for the new deputy positions are available in the sheriff's office budget due to current vacancies.

Kevin Tollisen

Any questions on this item? If not, a motion to approve that.

Mark Hammond

So moved.

Kevin Tollisen

Supervisor Hammond. Is there a second?

Kevin Veitch

Second.

Kevin Tollisen

Supervisor Veitch. Any further discussion? All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Kevin Tollisen

Any opposed? Motion carried.

Adam Kinowski

We have item number six resolution authorizing amendment to the compensation plan,

Bridget Rider

Oh wait.

Adam Kinowski

I apologize. Oh, yes.

Kevin Tollisen

Let's go back to the Sheriff.

Bridget Rider

Under the Sheriff Department, the two deputies, we're doing each of those separately?

Adam Kinowski

Oh understood. So under Sheriff Department create two deputy sheriff positions. Okay, so the two deputy sheriff positions, as I had indicated, would go to

Kevin Tollisen

So, is that all one resolution?

Adam Kinowski

It's two, Mike, if you could kind of help out here.

Michael Hartnett

I apologize. When Deputy Clerk Rider asked me, I thought you were referring to item six and seven. I believe item five, which was just voted on, is one singular resolution that's going to accomplish the items.

Kevin Tollisen

Alright. Now we're all on the same page. Sorry about that.

Adam Kinowski

Yay.

Michael Hartnett

I apologize for any confusion.

Kevin Tollisen

For those of you on the phone, Mr. Kinowski looked at me like I had 14 heads which apparently, he should have looked at me like that. So alright, so we have one resolution. It was all approved. Number six. Sorry about that.

Adam Kinowski

No, it's fine. It's my maiden voyage up here. Alright, so item number

Kevin Tollisen

I'm not making it any easier for you.

Adam Kinowski

Item number six, resolution authorizing an amendment to the compensation plan under management matrix. Authorizing an amendment to the compensation plan under management matrix to align the Director of Finance with a salary decrease to grade 19. Resolution 310-2021 authorized the creation of one Budget Director at a grade 19 and whereby the Director of Finance became vacant. A thorough review of the position resulted in a determination that a decrease in pay rate from grade 21 to grade 19 would better reflect the roles and responsibilities of the said position.

Kevin Tollisen

Any questions on this resolution? If not, can I have a motion to approve?

Kevin Veitch

So moved.

Mark Hammond

Second.

Kevin Tollisen

Supervisor Veitch, second supervisor Hammond. Any further discussion? All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Kevin Tollisen

Any opposed? Motion is carried. Thank you.

Adam Kinowski

Item number seven, authorizing an amendment to the compensation plan under Human Resources to reclassify Typist to Human Resource Clerk. In a similar way, a thorough review of the vacant position determined that the roles and responsibilities reflected a Human Resources Clerk as opposed to a Typist. This is a budget neutral item.

Kevin Tollisen

Any questions on this? If not, could have a motion to approve.

Mark Hammond

So moved.

Kevin Tollisen

Supervisor Hammond.

Kevin Veitch

Second.

Kevin Tollisen

Supervisor Veitch. Any further discussion? All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Kevin Tollisen

Any opposed? Motion is carried. Thank you very much.

Adam Kinowski

Thank you.

Kevin Tollisen

Under other business, the Human Resources and Insurance Committee has taken a hard look at identifying employees who have gone above and beyond in the service to the residents of Saratoga County. And just this month, an individual was brought before as a nominee for a special recognition for going above and beyond their normal and dedicated service to our county. And so Mr. Hartnett I'm going to turn this over to you and let you explain this employee recognition for us.

Michael Hartnett

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yeah, so this was a nomination that I submitted. And I'm going to read this mission and just as a bit of background, my background is in child welfare work, so these types of cases are near and dear to me. And I've seen a lot of them. And I've seen good work, and I've seen really great work and this was just an outstanding example. So, in response to the recent call for submissions of employee recognition, I wish to submit my observations of outstanding effort and conduct from a County employee with the Department of Social Services, Susan Hoefer. Caseworker Hoefer is currently an investigative Caseworker assigned to the Adult Protective Services Unit of the Department of Social Services. Previously, Ms. Hoefer was a Caseworker within the Foster Care Unit of the Department of Social Services, where she was responsible for monitoring the well-being and safety of children placed in foster care and assisting in the rehabilitation and reunification of families when children are placed outside their homes through Court proceedings. Recently, the above-referenced case – In the Matter of Isaac YY. – finally concluded the appeal process, which has prompted me to submit this long-overdue letter of recognition. The underlying case involved over five years of litigation, multiple hearings, and appeals including a multi-day Neglect trial in 2017 and an eight-day Termination of Parental Rights trial that spanned several months in the summer of 2019. Throughout the extensive litigation, Caseworker Hoefer played an integral part in the process of preparing the case for Family Court and was also responsible for providing testimony on multiple occasions. Beginning in early 2016,

Isaac was placed in foster care as a result of actions taken by Child Protective Services to protect his safety. Caseworker Hoefer was almost immediately assigned to Isaac's case and maintained responsibility for the foster care case until 2021 when Isaac was freed for adoption. Ms. Hoefer was exhaustive in her efforts to attempt to effectuate positive changes and reunify the family. Throughout her assignment, Ms. Hoefer was regularly subjected to vitriol, verbal abuse and constantly acrimonious behavior by the Respondent in the case. Despite those barriers, Ms. Hoefer remained steadfast, objective and respectful in taking all the appropriate steps to continue to ensure Isaac's safety and well-being. When reunification became untenable, Caseworker Hoefer then took all the necessary steps to enable the Department of Social Services to obtain Court Orders which ensured Isaac's safety and provided for his best interest. I have personally handled thousands of foster care cases in Family Courts throughout New York State in my experience representing Child Protective agencies in all types of abuse and neglect cases. During that experience, I have interacted with hundreds of Caseworkers and other Child Welfare staff. I can say unequivocally that Ms. Hoefer's conduct was some of the most effective, reverent, and impactful casework that I have observed. Not only did each of the attorneys involved in the court proceeding comment on her casework, the presiding Family Court Judge specifically referenced and acknowledged her positive work in rendering the Court's decision. It is rather unfortunate we live in a world where effective social work and social programming is substantially under-appreciated as a whole. It is my opinion that Child Welfare staff are the unsung heroes that carry the immense burden of keeping some of our most vulnerable population safe. In the public domain, Child Protective Services and Foster Care often only make the headlines when something goes wrong or when the system fails – and when a case is successful, it generally goes entirely unnoticed by the public. In that vein, I am compelled in this scenario to highlight and take note when an individual has surpassed all expectations in their efforts to help families in our community. Not only does this reinforce those positive attributes, but it helps to recognize just how critically effective work in this field can be in helping families and our community as a whole. Not only did Ms. Hoefer go "above and beyond" in working with this family, she then doubled down on her good work by providing remarkably effective testimony which enabled the Department of Social Services to obtain Court Orders which contributed to a positive outcome in the related Court proceeding. In summary, I believe that Ms. Hoefer should be commended for her valuable and effective work on this case which directly and significantly contributed to a positive outcome through the Family Court proceeding and subsequent appeals. In doing so, she provided an excellent and praiseworthy example of everything that our County workforce strives to provide our community. Most importantly though, Caseworker Hoefer made an immensely positive impact on the trajectory of a child's life – and for that she should be applauded. I thank you for your time and attention, Chairman and I appreciate the opportunity to acknowledge Sue's great work. We worked together on this for a matter of years and she did an awesome job.

Kevin Tollisen

I'll take a motion to congratulate and commend the great work of caseworker Hoeffer on behalf of this committee.

Mark Hammond

So moved.

Kevin Veitch

Second.

Kevin Tollisen

Supervisor Hammond. Second supervisor Veitch. Is there any discussion? All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Kevin Tollisen

Opposed? Motion is carried. Caseworker Hoeffler is here, stand up please.

Kevin Tollisen

So this is the small part of the embarrassing part. There's only a few of us here today but we would ask you to come to the regular board meeting and, you know, except our gratitude, and thanks for a job very well done. And when I read Mr. Hartnett's letter to the committee, I actually read it three times because I myself am an attorney and just the effort and time, and the amount of hours you've spent on something like this is simply amazing. And despite, it sounds like an enormous effort against you, you did it, and you made it happen and for that, that child's life is so much better. So congratulations and thank you from all of us here on the Board of Supervisors. So we'll see you at the next meeting. We'll let you know when that is. And then again, thank you for a great job. Any other business to come before this committee? If not, I'll accept the motion to adjourn.

Kevin Veitch

So moved.

Mark Hammond

Second.

Kevin Tollisen

Motion Second. Any further discussion? All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Kevin Tollisen

Have a good afternoon, everyone.