

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: SUPPORT SERVICES - COUNTY AUDITOR AND SELF-INSURANCE

DATE: JULY 1, 2010

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS TAYLOR
VANNESS
STRAINER
STEC
LOEB
MCCOY

OTHERS PRESENT:

MARY GALLAGHER, COUNTY AUDITOR
AMY CLUTE, SELF-INSURANCE ADMINISTRATOR
FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY/ADMINISTRATOR
NICOLE LIVINGSTON, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISOR THOMAS
KATHY BARRIE, PERSONNEL OFFICER
TODD LUNT, DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES
JULIE PACYNA, PURCHASING AGENT
JACK BIENIEK, COOL INSURING
JOHN WEBER, CAPITAL FINANCIAL GROUP
DON LEHMAN, THE POST STAR
AMANDA ALLEN, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR GIRARD

Mr. Taylor called the meeting of the Support Services Committee to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. McCoy, seconded by Mr. Stec and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the prior Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mary Gallagher, County Auditor, who distributed copies of the meeting agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is also on file with the minutes.*

Commencing with the agenda review, Ms. Gallagher presented a request to create a new position of part-time Audit Clerk. She explained this would be a Grade 4 position with a full-time base salary of \$24,908 which would be prorated to \$11.98 per hour and would not exceed 25 hours per week. Ms. Gallagher apprised she had worked with Kathy Barrie, Personnel Officer, to develop the position title and duties which included assisting the County Auditor in conducting internal auditing of expenses submitted by County Departments and agencies, as well as to provide clerical assistance and office coverage in the absence of the County Auditor. She said that in conjunction with this request she would also ask that the position of Deputy County Auditor/Principal Account Clerk, base salary \$35,225, be deleted; she added that this was the position she had filled prior to her promotion to County Auditor. Ms. Gallagher concluded that the savings resulting from these changes would be approximately \$8,800 for the remainder of 2010.

Mr. Loeb stated this was a very proactive approach to achieving cost reductions within the Department and he thanked Ms. Gallagher for her efforts.

In response to Mr. Geraghty's questioning with regards to the amount of vacation time earned, Ms. Gallagher apprised that she received approximately three weeks vacation each year, but explained the work schedule was typically prepared in advance for the entire year, allowing her to schedule time off so as not to interfere with audit work.

Motion was made by Mr. Stec, seconded by Mr. McCoy and carried unanimously to approve the request to create

the new position of Part-Time Audit Clerk and delete the position of Deputy County Auditor/Principal Account Clerk as outlined above and refer same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

As Ms. Gallagher had no further business to present, privilege of the floor was extended to Amy Clute, Self-Insurance Administrator, who distributed copies of the Self-Insurance agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is also on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Taylor pointed out that Agenda Item III included a notation regarding the need to select a firm to provide health insurance broker services for the term extending from September 22, 2010 through September 22, 2013. He reminded the Committee that during their prior meeting, Paul Dusek, County Attorney/Administrator, had requested the matter be postponed until the current meeting in order to provide more time to review the proposals submitted. Mr. Dusek counseled that because discussion on this issue would concern matters leading to the hiring of a particular firm, as well as the work history of said firm, he would recommend that an executive session be declared.

Motion was made by Mr. McCoy, seconded by Mr. Stec and carried unanimously that executive session be declared discuss the employment history of a particular corporation and matters leading to the employment of a particular corporation, pursuant to Section 105(f) of the Public Officers Law.

Executive session was held from 9:36 a.m. to 10:10 a.m.

Upon reconvening, motion was made by Mr. Stec and seconded by Mr. McCoy to accept the proposal received from Capital Financial Group for health insurance broker services for the term commencing September 22, 2010 and terminating September 22, 2013, with the option of renewal for a subsequent three-year term.

Mr. Dusek advised the commission for the broker services would be 1.4% for the CDPHP health insurance plan and standard commission rates for all others; he added that the stated commission rate would apply to both the initial three-year contract term, as well as the optional three-year renewal term.

Mr. Taylor called the question and the above referenced motion was carried unanimously, thereby authorizing the necessary resolution for the July 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request is on file with the minutes.*

Continuing, Mrs. Clute addressed Agenda Item IV, Old Business-Pending Items, which referred to the Return to Work Policy. She reminded the Committee that during a previous meeting she had presented a draft Policy for their approval which she had been directed by Mr. Dusek to present to the employee unions for their comments. Mrs. Clute apprised that she had submitted the Policy as directed and subsequently received demands for changes from the CSEA Union. She said she had been working with Todd Lunt, Human Resources Director, and the individual Department Heads to facilitate return to work procedures without an actual written policy in place, which seemed to be working well. Therefore, she stated, she would prefer to discontinue efforts to develop a written Policy and continue with the verbal procedure currently being used.

Mr. VanNess questioned what demands the CSEA had made and Mr. Dusek replied that an executive session would be necessary to discuss the matter in detail. Mr. VanNess said he was irritated by the fact the CSEA would seek to delay the implementation of a policy intended to assist their members in returning to work and noted that he was in favor of Mrs. Clute's desire to continue verbal procedures in conjunction with Mr. Lunt. Mr. Dusek apprised that the County was legally able to implement return to work procedures without a written policy, as Mrs. Clute had done in the past, and noted that the formalized policy was intended to encourage Department Heads to utilize return to

work procedures more frequently. He added that whether they negotiated the written policy with the CSEA or continued in the manner desired by Mrs. Clute, the same results would be achieved.

As the Committee was in agreement, it was determined that Mrs. Clute should proceed as desired to perform verbal communications and efforts to encourage return to work procedures without a written policy and that the item should be removed from the pending items list.

Moving on to Agenda Item V, Reports/Updates, Mrs. Clute announced that the Employee Safety Committee had recommended the Health Services Department be recognized with the first annual Safety Award for making Warren County a safer place to work with their suggestion to equip the Nurse's vehicles with snow tires; she added that the DPW staff would also be recognized for their part in the project. Mr. Lunt expounded that a certificate of appreciation signed by the Chairman of the Board would be presented to Pat Auer, Director of Public Health, on behalf of the Public Health Nursing staff in acknowledgment of their suggestion at an upcoming Board meeting. He added that no Committee action was necessary, this was simply an informational update.

Mrs. Clute apprised that the Safety Committee had also been working with Needham Risk Management to further develop the Emergency Action and Response Plan for the Human Services Building. She said that employees working in the Building would soon be trained on procedures to follow in the event of an evacuation, bomb threat, lock down and shelter in place events. Mrs. Clute noted that they had chosen to address the Human Services Building first as no such procedures were currently in place, and subsequently update the emergency procedure plans for the Municipal Center Building.

Mr. Taylor noted his concern with the increasing number of lost employee work days which directly effected the Self-Insurance Plan. Mrs. Clute responded that she intended to spend a considerable amount of time discussing this matter with the Committee and noted her opinion that reductions in lost work days could be achieved by the participants of the Self-Insurance Plan embracing safety measures in the workplace in order to stop incidents from occurring, and implementing return to work procedures when appropriate. She advised that she typically forwarded invoices to Plan participants which were accompanied by occasional visits for safety discussions; however, she said, she intended to change that procedure for the current year and instead invite representatives from each participating group to a session in which she and the safety consultant would distribute the invoices and discuss what steps could be taken to reduce future costs by promoting safety in the workplace.

Mr. VanNess noted that there were cases in which injured employees took advantage of the compensation benefits offered to them for work related injuries and he questioned whether there were procedures in place that allowed these employees to be terminated. Mrs. Clute replied affirmatively, but noted that these cases had to be considered individually as terminating an employee may lead to their drawing injury related benefits indefinitely. She added that in most cases, it was better for the employer if the employee returned to work on a light duty basis.

Mr. Dusek apprised there was a Civil Service Law in place which stated that an injured employee could not be removed from an employer's payroll unless they were out of work for a period of at least one continuous year. He noted that although Mrs. Clute's return to work procedure was preferable in most cases, it was not always favorable because if an employee out of work for an extended period returned to work for a short time and then left work once again, the one-year period would be reset. Mr. Dusek suggested that this issue be raised at the next Department Head meeting to raise awareness and advise of alternative options available for those employees suspected of abusing injury benefits.

Discussion ensued.

As there was no further Self-Insurance business to discuss, privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. Dusek, who wished to address the Committee with reference to a possible solution for the lack of personnel coverage for the Mail Room, Print Shop and Stockroom areas.

Mr. Dusek apprised that recently JoAnn McKinstry, Assistant to the Administrator, had been required to assume the Mail Room responsibilities on a day when both the employee charged with running the Mail Room and the person trained as back-up staff had been out of work. He said that although Mrs. McKinstry had done a very good job of covering the position, he felt there was another solution available which would prevent this issue from reoccurring in the future, while possibly reducing costs to the County. Mr. Dusek suggested that a request for proposal (RFP) be released for mailing services which would include pre-sorting procedures serving to lower the postage rates charged for all mail leaving the Municipal Center through the Postal Service. He added that by outsourcing some of the mailing services, the current Mail Room staff could be used to assist with the duties of the Print Shop, and possibly the Stock Room, thereby eliminating the need for the part-time Stock Room position. Mr. Dusek then requested authorization to proceed in drafting the RFP and developing a revised staffing plan, which he said he would present at the next Committee meeting.

Mr. VanNess noted that the County had contracted with an outside source for mailing services in the past, but had discontinued that service as there were issues with Tourism brochures and mailings not being delivered in a timely manner. Julie Pacyna, Purchasing Agent, advised that these services had been a requirement of the previous RFP, but the contractor had not provided them. Mr. Dusek noted that the Tourism Department already pre-sorted their mail and he felt they might be excluded from the contract for mailing services. He further noted that the Mail Room position would still be required, but would have fewer responsibilities which would allow for that staff member to work in other areas. In order to increase efficiency and reduce costs, Mr. Dusek said he would also suggest a single mail pick-up/drop-off, as was used in the Human Services Building.

Subsequent to a brief discussion, it was the consensus of the Committee that Mr. Dusek proceed in developing the RFP and revised staffing plan as previously indicated.

Chairman Monroe said there were a number of small, one-person offices in place throughout the County which might actually have enough work for another part-time person and he suggested they reconsider the possibility of introducing a "floater" position that could cover extra work in each of these offices, rather than hiring additional employees. Mr. Dusek noted that this situation had occurred in the Veterans' Services Department, which had led to the introduction of a part-time position that seemed to be working out well. As with the newly created position for the County Auditor's Office, Mr. Dusek said the staff hired to fill these positions needed to be flexible and able to work when needed. He advised that flexible positions were also necessary within Westmount Health Facility to attract personnel willing to float from shift to shift as needed. In all of these cases, Mr. Dusek noted that new positions had been created with the Civil Service Department and the appropriate Union organization so that they could be used as necessary with no possibility of interfering with Civil Service Laws or regulations. He concluded that as the needs for additional staffing within different Department's became prevalent, he would keep the idea of a floater position in mind as a possible solution.

As there was no further business to come before the Support Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. Stec and seconded by Mr. Strainer, Mr. Taylor adjourned the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Allen, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist