

**LANGLADE COUNTY
JOINT EXECUTIVE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT**

Meeting Date: 4/11/2012

Time: 8:00 a.m.

CHAIRMAN: James Jansen and Dave Solin

MEMBERS PRESENT: James Jansen, Michael Klimoski, Richard Hurlbert, Doug Nonnenmacher, Ron Nye, Dave Solin, and Gene Kamps

MEMBERS ABSENT: George Bornemann and Dale Dahms,

OTHERS PRESENT: Robin Stowe, Gary Olsen, Becky Frisch, Tim Rusch, Pat McKinney-Rice, Clark Palmer, Jeff Zalewski, Bill Greening, and Brad Henricks.

The meeting was called to order at 8:20 a.m. by Chairman Jansen and Chairman Solin in the Law Library Room 205 of the Langlade County Courthouse, 800 Clermont St, Antigo, WI 54409.

Approve/amend minutes of joint meeting (Executive and Personnel Committees) on March 8, 2012.

Motion by Nye, second by Kamps to approve the previous minutes, all ayes, motion carried.

Discuss and study Employee Handbook as referred back from the County Board meeting on March 20, 2012.

Robin Stowe provided the Committee with a brief overview of the process used to develop the new Employee Handbook, which began with the Personnel Committee setting specific parameters for benefits - such as harmonizing the differing benefits found in the four union contracts and non-union employee handbook by selecting one benefit structure for all employees. The employees that comprised the work group did not prepare the handbook on their own but rather relied upon information from various "outside" sources in drafting the handbook, including "model" handbook provisions recommended by the Budget Repair Bill Consortium, legal advice from the labor law specialists at PhillipsBorowski law firm, the benefit structures found in various handbooks including local businesses, and input from County Board Supervisors. At the previous joint meeting, the work group went over each provision in the handbook and explained how the provision met the stated goals and objectives of the work group, including: reducing the costs of delivering government services; creating efficiencies in County operations; addressing employee morale and comparisons to other benefit structures including those used by other local employers.

Robin also explained the important functions of the handbook, such as clarifying that the employment relationship is "at will" and not based upon any express or implied contract as used by some municipal employers. Another important function is to ensure that the conditions of employment are applied equally in compliance the County's obligation as a Equal Opportunity Employer. Yet another important function is to identify when the employer is allowed to deviate from existing federal and state employment laws, such as deviating from the Fair Labor Standards Act by allowing for compensatory time off and identifying that federal and state family medical leave shall run concurrently with one another.

Since there exists a perception that the proposed paid time off system is a financial "windfall" for employees, Gary Olsen presented comparisons of payouts under the current system (vacation/sick leave) and under the proposed PTO system which demonstrates that the County will pay out less under

the PTO system as compared to the current vacation/sick leave payout system. A PTO system by definition incorporates all leave into one account. Without any specific accruals for sick leave, employees will be required to manage their PTO accounts wisely by deciding how much PTO to set aside in case of illness or extended medical leave.

The Committees discussed the concerns presented in the form a written document submitted on behalf of the local taxpayers league. Although the Committees appreciate public interest and participation in the local affairs of government, the Committees do not appreciate the description of public officials and/or employees as "inmates" of an asylum or institution as used in the correspondence from the taxpayers league. The Committees find this description offensive and demeaning to individuals within our community who may unfortunately suffer from various forms of mental illness or developmental disabilities and need inpatient treatment at mental health facility. The Committees do not condone the use of such descriptions in communications with government officials and employees.

The Committees incorporated certain suggestions to correct or clarify certain verbiage. However, the Committees had some difficulty understanding some of the concerns expressed in the taxpayer league correspondence, for example the change made to language for closing the County operations due to inclement weather was designed to allow the County to close operations at any time without having to pay employees for entire work day, so reverting to the old language would not benefit the County. Also, the employee work group proposed including random drug testing to the handbook. Subsequently, later was this proposal removed after the law firm of PhillipsBorowski issued a legal opinion to the effect that the County cannot adopt a "blanket" policy for random drug testing. The correspondence from the taxpayers league argues that the PhillipsBorowski legal opinion is somehow invalid, but does not cite to any other legal authorities to support their argument.

Motion by Kamps, second by Hurlbert, to approve the Employee Handbook. With the upcoming Reorganizational meeting, the County Board would not be asked to adopt the handbook until the May County Board, all ayes, motion carried. There was some discussion about providing information to the new Board members prior to the May County Board meeting.

Adjourn the meeting.

A motion was made by Klimoski, seconded by Hurlbert to adjourn the Personnel Committee meeting. All ayes, motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Gary D. Olsen