

**LANGLADE COUNTY  
PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Meeting Date: 3/01/2012**

**Time: 9:00 a.m.**

**CHAIRMAN:** James Jansen

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** James Jansen, Michael Klimoski, Dale Dahms, Richard Hurlbert and George Bornemann

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Robin Stowe, Gary Olsen, Honorable Fred Kawalski, Joy Pecha, Marilyn Baraniak, Kari Lazars, Chet Haatvedt, Tim Rusch

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Jansen in the Law Library Room 205 of the Langlade County Courthouse, 800 Clermont St, Antigo, WI 54409.

**Approve/amend minutes of the February 2, 2012 meeting.**

Motion by Dahms, seconded by Hurlbert, to approve the minutes of February 2, 2012 as printed. All ayes, motion carried.

**Discuss creation of one casual employment position of Bailiff/Courtroom Security for the Circuit Court.**

Judge Kawalski presented a request for a casual employee for courtroom security to be put into the Circuit Court budget for 2013. The Personnel Committee had previously approved a retired deputy for transportation and courtroom security. There hasn't been the presence of a uniformed officer for security in the courtroom in the past. Discussion followed. No action taken.

**Discuss request to refill permanent full-time 4-H support staff position in the UW Extension Office as referred by the Agriculture and Extension Education Committee.**

The position to be refilled is a full-time secretarial position for the front desk and reception in the UW Extension office which works primarily with the 4H program. Although, this position has been vacant for two years, the County has retained a casual employee to provide clerical services to the 4H program. Given the total amount of compensation currently budgeted to this casual employment position there would be a minimal financial impact to simply refill the full-time position. Kari Lazars presented information regarding the level of job duties of the casual employee currently in this position. Robin explained the department heads requesting to refill or create new positions are being asked to complete a time study, however since we just started these time studies, we only collected this data over a short period of time. Also, more importantly, the time study data does not tell the whole story, as this only tells us "how much" work is being done; it does not tell us whether there may be a more efficient way to perform the work or answer the question as to how this work fits within the County's funding priorities. Discussion followed regarding whether to refill this position at this time along with the need to collect more information and to establish a methodology to examine these requests that can be applied on a consistent basis. Motion by Hurlbert, seconded by Dahms, to table the request for one month pending additional information. All ayes, motion carried. Motion amended by Klimoski, seconded by Dahms that there will be a decision on the request after the 30 days, at the Committee's next regular meeting. All ayes, motion carried.

### **Discuss revisions to No Weapons in the Workplace Policy.**

The Committee adopted this policy in November of 2011 to prohibit its employees from bringing weapons into the workplace. Robin explained that the County has not decided to post all its buildings and grounds as "weapons-free" and therefore in absence of this policy, employees would have the right to bring (concealed) weapons into the workplaces that have not been posted under the terms of the new conceal carry law. The proposed revision to the standard language of this policy requires "reasonable suspicion" to inspect personal property in the employee's presence. Motion by Bornemann, seconded by Hurlbert to revise the No Weapons in the Workplace Policy. On call of the Motion, three ayes, two noes. Motion carried.

### **Discuss status of adding random drug testing to the County's drug free workplace policy.**

The work group for the Employee Handbook proposed adding random drug testing to the employee handbook. The County currently requires pre-employment drug testing and reasonable suspicion testing for all positions that are subject to random drug testing under federal law (i.e., CDL licensure). The attorneys retained by the Budget Repair Bill Consortium have advised that a public employer cannot create a "blanket" policy that subjects all employees to random drug testing. According to previous decisions of the United States Supreme Court, random drug tests are considered a "search" under the Fourth Amendment and therefore the County would need to demonstrate a "special need" to subject employment positions to random drug testing. Special need for suspicion-less (random) tests has been found for public positions which involve performing high risk, safety sensitive tasks. Therefore in the absence of a blanket policy, the County could identify those positions that would qualify for random drug testing. No action taken.

### **Review status of employee handbook.**

Copies of the employee handbook were distributed to the Committee. The work group, consisting of department heads and Jim Jansen, has been working on the handbook for the past two months. Rather than simply copy a handbook from some other County, the work group went through the work of creating an employee handbook tailored to fit Langlade County government operations and condition of employment. Members of the work group highlighted how the handbook addressed the following goals.

#### **Reduce the costs of delivering services.**

With few exceptions, the handbook requires that compensation will be based upon the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The County will see significant savings in reduced overtime from this change. Certain provisions of union contracts which required payment of "automatic" overtime will end on January 1, 2013. New provisions will allow the County to close operations or change work schedules with the only requirement to pay for actual hours worked. Any payouts at retirement will be less by paying out accruals at the rate of pay at time it was accrued which will be less than the rate of pay at time of retirement.

#### **Enhance the efficiency of County operations.**

The new handbook does not include provisions of union contracts that the work group did not view as an enhancement to operational efficiency, including: assigning work based upon seniority; posting union positions; and "bumping" less senior employees out of jobs.

The proposed Paid Time Off (PTO) system will create efficiency in the administration of requests for leaves of absence. The PTO system effectively places the burden on each employee to manage their paid leave of absences from work to cover any vacation request, medical emergencies and illnesses. The PTO will eliminate the "use it or lose it" functioning of the current vacation and sick leave benefit schedules.

Build up employee morale as the County transitions from collective bargaining.

Although all employees were not part of the work group, all employees had an opportunity to present their comments and ideas. Members of the work group routinely considered comments and ideas from other employees as it prepared this handbook. The work group has proposed that after this handbook takes effect, a Handbook Advisory Committee be created to review the handbook and present recommendations for revisions (similar to the Health Insurance Advisory Committee). This Committee would be comprised of County Board members and employees.

From an employee recruitment perspective, this handbook more accurately describes the conditions of employment with Langlade County. In developing this handbook, the work group was aware that current employees have earned greater benefits than those proposed in this handbook. The work group attempted to minimize this impact by proposing to "grandfather" existing employees at their benefit levels as of the end of this year. The work group also proposed to retain certain "incentive pay" provisions found in existing union contracts. These incentive payments apply to employees assigned to work a certain shift (i.e., to work on a holiday), employees called-in to work, employees that are required to be "on call" by responding to a pager, and workers who take on other additional responsibilities. The work group also proposed to retain most of the requirements to compensate employees for certain out-of-pocket expenses or to supply work materials, such as uniform allowances, training and travel reimbursements.

By following the Committee's instructions to "equalize" or harmonize differences in benefit structures between unions and between union and non-union employees, in most instances, the union employee will now receive benefits sooner than they did previously and will have higher caps of paid leave benefits than before. Overall, the work group recognizes that any issues with employee morale will only be addressed with the passage of time. County management rights have been greatly expanded under the BRB, and how the County management staff decides to exercise these rights will greatly influence employee morale.

Address perceived and factual differences between employee benefit plans.

In the process of putting this handbook together, the work group reviewed the benefit structures from local businesses and from similar counties. The work group believes that this handbook addresses not only the issues of employee recruitment and retention but also the perceived differences in the benefits offered by Langlade County and other public and private businesses. In comparing benefit plans, the work group noted that it is sometimes difficult to compare certain positions and for those positions that are easier to draw comparisons, they may be explanations regarding the factual differences in benefits. For example, an employee performing similar work in the private sector may earn more or have the opportunity to earn more (bonuses, profit-sharing, etc.) while the employee in the public sector may have been offered more benefits (vacation, etc.) in lieu of monetary compensation.

The Personnel Committee will meet jointly with the Executive Committee on Thursday, March 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:30a.m. to review the handbook in greater detail.

**Review and approve payment of monthly bills for the following departments: Corporation Counsel, Circuit Court, Probate/Juvenile, Register of Deeds and District Attorney.**

Motion by Dahms, seconded by Bornemann to approve payment of bills as presented. All ayes, motion carried.

**Adjourn the meeting.**

A motion was made by Klimoski, seconded by Bornemann to adjourn meeting. All ayes, motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Gail Dunlop