

Joint Unified Personnel Board/ Appointing Authorities  
Pinellas County  
March 22, 2023 Meeting Minutes

The Unified Personnel Board (UPB) and the Appointing Authorities met for a joint meeting at 2:00 PM on this date in the Clerk's Fourth Floor Conference Room at the Pinellas County Courthouse, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

Present

*Unified Personnel Board*

Joan Vecchioli, Chair  
Ricardo Davis, Vice-Chair  
Jeffery Kronschnabl  
Peggy O'Shea  
Ralph Reid  
William Schulz II

*Appointing Authorities*

Whit Blanton, Executive Director, Forward Pinellas  
Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller  
Barry A. Burton, County Administration  
Tim Closterman, proxy for Julie Marcus, Supervisor of Elections  
Kimberly Crum, Human Resources (HR) Director  
Steve Knox, proxy for Mike Twitty, Property Appraiser  
Jeffery Lorick, Office of Human Rights Director  
Kevin McKeon, proxy for Mike Twitty, Property Appraiser  
Jeff Rohrs, Chief Information Officer, Business Technology Services  
Charles W. Thomas, Tax Collector  
Jewel White, County Attorney

Not Present

Ken Peluso, Unified Personnel Board  
Julie Marcus, Supervisor of Elections  
Mike Twitty, Property Appraiser

Others Present

Jennifer Monroe Moore, Ogletree, Deakins, et. al., P.C., Board Counsel  
Lisa Arispe, Employees' Advisory Council (EAC) Representative  
Sarah Rathke, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk  
Other interested individuals

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Vecchioli called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **INTRODUCTIONS**

At the Chair's request, those in attendance introduced themselves.

## **2023 ANNUAL GOALS FOR HR DIRECTOR**

Ms. Crum presented a list of items from the HR strategic plan, which have not yet been accomplished, and Chair Vecchioli opened the floor up for discussion.

Mr. Burke indicated that he would prefer to evaluate the 2022 goals for the HR Director and the department separately, and the members concurred. In response, Chair Vecchioli invited discussion regarding areas of emphasis for the HR department to focus on in the coming year.

Mr. Blanton related that in previous years, Forward Pinellas had a business partnership with HR to work on agency and staff development objectives; and that he believes that the relationship worked well; whereupon, Mr. Reid stated that there is opportunity for setting some goals within the business partner program.

During discussion, the members highlighted the following areas of interest, and more:

- Supervisory training programs
- Compensation and classification system for exempt and classified employees
- Working relationship between the HR department, director, and the EAC
- HR department and County Attorney turnover rates
- County Attorney staff pay plans

Chair Vecchioli inquired about the members positions on merit pay, and some noted that it would be difficult to implement without a standardized and effective performance evaluation; and that some employees may prefer the cost of living increase over a merit pay system.

Mr. Davis referred to a 2017 evaluation of the HR Director performance standards and offered that a review of that may be helpful in the current process.

## **POTENTIAL REMOVAL OF VERBAL WARNING FROM DISCIPLINE**

Mr. Burton requested that the Board remove the ability for employees to grieve a verbal warning, relating that it is the lowest level of discipline; and that the removal will not be harmful, as there are still progressive discipline documentation measures.

Responding to concerns by Mr. Reid, Mr. Burton indicated that there is still work to be done regarding training managers on handling disciplinary situations and appropriately documenting the incidents.

Following discussion, Chair Vecchioli related that the UPB will take formal action on the change once they have more feedback from the EAC. She clarified that the potential action would be to keep a verbal warning as a disciplinary measure, which would not be grievable to the Informal Grievance panel.

Responding to a query by Mr. Reid, Mr. Burton confirmed that employees would still have the ability to appeal a verbal warning to a department director.

### UPB Policy #11 Grievance Process

Chair Vecchioli requested two volunteers to chair the Informal Grievance Committee in place of an HR representative for situations when the HR department is the Appointing Authority being grieved; whereupon, Mr. Burke indicated that the Clerk's Office will be the first alternate; and that the County Administrator could be the second alternate. Ms. Crum agreed to the said alternates, and discussion continued.

Responding to concerns by Mr. Closterman, Chair Vecchioli indicated that the reason for the designation of two alternates is to create a standard protocol.

*Chair Vecchioli recessed the meeting at 3:09 PM and reconvened at 3:24 PM. At this time, Mr. Thomas and Mr. McKeon left the meeting, and Mr. Knox assumed his proxy role.*

## **ADJUSTMENT TO LEAVE ACCRUAL POLICY FOR REHIREES**

### UPB Rule #4 Time Off

Mr. Burton presented the item and explained that the request is to allow rehires to receive credit for their prior service and start them at the same vacation accrual rate they had at the time they left the County.

The members discussed the possibility of a gap of service limitation of five years, retroactive application, record keeping, and other concerns; whereupon, Chair Vecchioli

indicated that HR staff would coordinate any additional work regarding the item before bringing it back to the UPB.

## **PERSONAL DAY POLICY DURING IN-SERVICE OR MANDATORY TRAINING**

### UPB Rule #4 Time Off

Mr. Burke related that the Supervisor of Elections is concerned with staff using a personal day on in-service and mandatory training days, which causes them to not be fully trained.

In response to concerns by the members, Mr. Burke indicated that the Appointing Authority would have to indicate whether the day is classified as in-service or mandatory training; and that the request applies only to use of personal days.

Mr. Burke extended his thanks to the Board members for their service; whereupon, Chair Vecchioli confirmed with the members that having two joint sessions a year is sufficient and noted that the Board would like to possibly look into scheduling a joint meeting with the EAC.

Mr. Davis recommended that the members of the UPB reach out to the Appointing Authorities outside of formal meetings, noting the importance of having a relationship with those that the UPB is serving.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Vecchioli adjourned the meeting at 3:43 PM.