



Employees' Advisory Council

to continually improve the Pinellas County classified employees' quality of work life



Employees' Advisory Council – Delegate Meeting Minutes

Extension Services, Magnolia Room, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo, FL
Thursday, July 27, 2023, 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Prepared by Zach Bloomer

Call to Order/Pledge

The EAC Delegate meeting was called to order at 8:10 A.M. by Chair Lisa Arispe.

HR Update – Peggy Rowe, Interim Director of Human Resources

- Introduction by Lisa Arispe of new Interim Director of HR, Peggy Rowe, to delegates.
- Peggy Rowe led with acknowledgement that other paygrades not as greatly affected by the increase of minimum of salary of \$18/hour are not as high as we would like; asked for questions.
- **Question** – Who is the new representative for Nationwide?
Answer – Denny, appointments are recommended.
- **Question** – When will we find out if insurance premiums are going to go up?
Answer – We don't know yet. Hopefully minimal. We're still in discussion with Cigna about the recent claim increase and associated costs.
- **Question** – I attempted to cancel my Omada subscription, and they kept billing us after I withdrew from the program, just to use the scale. Also, I didn't like the representative and was told I was stuck with them. Can you address this?
Answer – Let benefits department know as soon as any incorrect billing issue arises, as that should not have happened. You are allowed to change representatives. If you get pushback, please also follow up with benefits.
- **Question** – It feels like the county is taking advantage of veterans' families. The insurance opt-out amount has not risen while associated costs have increased. If costs have gone up, and the opt-outs save on costs, why hasn't the opt-out amount gone up?
Answer – Sorry you feel that way, it's not the case. Opt-out amounts are not directly correlated; however, we'll review it.
- **Question** – Can we receive a confirmation of biometric results? – Quest lost my blood, and I didn't find out for a long time. Only after I followed up with them did I find out.
Answer – We've requested this from Quest, and they can't do that. It's recommended to check the app regularly for your results. Personalized health information is not sent via email. Follow-up communications to those that have not completed the biometric screening and health assessment before the deadline are sent.
 - Remember to complete both ASAP and give six weeks, at a minimum, for the physician form to be processed prior to the deadline. Most issues arose out of the physician form.
 - The health assessment can be completed multiple times a year, so get that done now and simply re-enter the new numbers when you have them.
- **Question** – Why should we have to fill out this personal information in the first place?
Answer – I understand. We try to find solutions to minimize difficulty.
- **Question** – Can you please go over the Voice Survey dates?
Answer- Irene will cover that, but for now, remember the November 30th biometric screening deadline!

- **Question** – The newsletter mentioned a calculator for the general increase, where/when?
Answer – Brennan is working on that calculator. Leena advised that an individual could do the math. If current wage is over the new minimum levels of general increase: Your wage * 1.045 + \$0.29 = new wage. Example: \$20.00/HR (current) * 1.045 = 20.90+0.29 = \$21.19/hr.

Irena Karolak, Human Resources Officer Presentation on Employee Voice Survey

- Employee Voice Survey will be conducted from August 21st through September 11th, 2023.
- Timeframe was expanded to allow for unexpected external events and to give all employees a chance to take the survey; HR recommends field-based employees take the survey when submitting their timecard.
- Polco, an outside agency will be conducting the survey, look for an email link from Polco.
- Three identical information sessions will be available, look out for these emails.
- The survey should take about 5 to 10 minutes to complete, is very similar to the 2021 survey and is anonymous. Only Polco gets the raw data.
- Although Polco intends to remove any identifiable data, it's advised to not put in any obviously discernable language. A summary of trends, as well as true comments will be provided to appointing authorities.
- Multiple surveys can be taken on the same computer, but individual links need to be used and the employee should attempt to complete the survey in one sitting.
- UPS wide results will be shared in the following Pen after analysis, however separate appointing authorities' data will not be shared to other appointing authorities directly.
- Neither, HR, nor AAs will be informed whether an individual employee took the survey.
- Departments/groups with five or less employees will have comments/data rolled together to help provide anonymity.
- AAs have discretion as to what comments and data they share with the employees.
- AAs can request meetings with HR to review results and consult as they feel necessary.
- **Question** – Will we see the national comparisons of results?
Answer – Roughly 60% of the questions are standardized questions. Yes, these will be shared.
- **Question** – How do we know results are anonymous?
Answer – Polco is a nationally recognized company that will not risk its reputation by releasing personal data. They plan on removing identifiable data if submitted, as well as rolling data together from small groups of five or less.
- **Question** - The additional \$0.29 is confusing. Please explain.
Answer – If your wage is higher than the new minimums of pay grade, you will get the \$0.29. This is an effort to reduce the wage compression.
- **Question** – Regarding the 4.5% actual increase as opposed to midpoint and the moving of the minimum by 2.5%, did the AAs discuss this?
Answer – No, did not discuss, promoted it in effort to move people through pay-grades. Encouraged movement of employees within their roles via skill recognition, etc. We felt it necessary to bring up the minimum as much as possible.
- **Question** – What about people with no potential movement, already at the high end of their ladder positions?
Answer – Brennan is working on career paths for moving up within established roles, specifically with the Clerk.
- **Question** – With the max not moving, people at the top getting only a lump sum, they're unhappy, would like to see it moved.
- **Answer** – Not this year, maybe next. Market based.
- **Comment** – The low-end paygrade increase is life changing. Thank you.

- **Question** – The \$600 is in addition to the 4.5% and \$0.29?
- **Answer** – Yes.
- **Comment** – The new minimum is going to bring people that are training making similar pay as those training them.
- **Response** – The \$0.29 increase is an attempt to dampen this sentiment, we acknowledge it won't cure it.

Guest Speaker – Mike Twitty, Pinellas County Property Appraiser

- Presentation of new “.gov” website. The old “.org” website will be phased out soon.
- New website is mobile and ADA friendly, tools easier to find, page refined for usability.
- Overall taxable value increase of 11.7 % Year over year (YoY) - about \$12,000,000,000
- New Construction down to \$1,060,000,000 from \$1,120,000,000 from previous year, which is still pretty good for a built-out county like Pinellas, similar in density to The Keys.
- \$60,000,000,000 of value is under the Save-our-Homes (SoH) or 10% non-homestead Cap (untaxed), protecting established homeowners from large increases in YoY tax bills.
- Median value Pinellas County single family home as of Jan 1, 2023, is ~\$460,000, with a 1.8 Month supply, average of 14 days on market. Median condo/townhouse: ~\$299,000, 3-month supply, 24 days on market.
- “Milestone” Inspections now required for 25+ year old 3 sty+ condos within 3 miles of coast – require at least a visual inspection of structural defects. If visual fails, phase 2 architect or engineer repairs required.
- Milestone phase 2 projects can potentially cause large special assessments.
- **Question** – How much of the county is within three miles of the coast?
Answer – Most of them, especially those that are three stories or more.
- **Question** – Will a typical home inspection cover this?
Answer – No, recommend reading the minutes to see what discussion is happening within board.
- **Question** – Is this driving HOA/COA fees?
Answer – Yes, but minimally, it's often offset by reserves. It's affecting insurance rates more.
- **Question** – How do reserves play into this?
Answer – If well-funded, they can blunt an expense. An underfunded reserve would result in a potentially large special assessment. Some larger repairs have already hit over \$200,000.
- **Question** - Does the new law address funding of reserves?
Answer – Yes.
- **Question** – Does this affect 2-story condos?
Answer – No.
- Review of Notice of Proposed Taxes (f.k.a. Truth in Millage, yet still called “TRIM” notice).
- TRIM notices are mailed out yearly and show prior value, new value, millage (tax) rates and estimated taxes based on budget proposals. They are being mailed out August 21st this year.
- Property taxable values reset to full market value the year after a purchase, resulting in often dramatic increases of property taxes.
- Attempting to get legislature to support more transparency in expected taxes on new purchases.
- Currently, data vendors are using current taxes, resulting in a “bait and switch” type of data for cost estimates to unsuspecting and/or uninformed buyers.
- Tax Estimator Tool on www.pcpao.gov can give insight into more realistic taxes after purchase.
- Review of website tools: advanced search, tangible personal property, links to Clerk/Tax Collector.
- Fraud Alert Service link to Clerk; recommended to prevent mortgage fraud on your property.
- **Question** – Does fraud alert work with liens?
Answer – Yes, certain ones.

- **Question** – With strained budgets and reduced new taxable values coming in, as well as the increase in popularity of short-term rentals, what questions should we ask when considering turning in homestead fraud if we see a homesteaded property in our neighborhood being rented?
Answer – Don't hesitate to turn in homestead fraud with the link on the website. We'll investigate. Misconceptions about requirement for homestead, "6 months and a day" rumor false. If a property is rented out for more than 30 days per calendar year over two consecutive years, homestead would be removed.
- **Question** – If a property is half rented, what would happen?
Answer – Proportional homestead exists. Example: A duplex, half-rented, half owner-occupied, would get 50% homestead benefit, other half would have the non-homestead 10% Cap.

Open Discussion/Meet with Delegates

Adjourned

Meeting adjourned 9:50 a.m.

*EAC Representatives in attendance at this meeting:

Jeff Albenzio*

Lisa Arispe*

Donna Beim

Zach Bloomer*

Samuel Chambray*

Leena Delli Paoli*

Katiah Fitzpatrick*

Henry Gomez

Bill Gorman

Lora Kyle-Woodall*

Clarethia McClendon

Maggie Miles

Willie Roundtree

Robyn Sparrow*

Charles Toney*