

Unified Personnel Board
Pinellas County
June 1, 2023 Meeting Minutes

The Unified Personnel Board (UPB) met in regular session at 6:29 PM on this date in the County Commission Assembly Room at the Pinellas County Courthouse, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

Present

Joan Vecchioli, Chair
Ricardo Davis, Vice-Chair
Jeffery Kronschnabl
Peggy O'Shea
Kenneth Peluso
Ralph O. Reid IV

Not Present

William Schulz II

Others Present

Peggy Rowe, Interim Human Resources (HR) Director
Maria Ciro, HR Assistant Director
Irena Karolak, HR Officer
Jennifer Monrose Moore, Ogletree, Deakins, et. al., P.C., Board Counsel
Sarah Rathke, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk
Other interested individuals

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Vecchioli called the meeting to order at 6:29 PM; whereupon, she led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

None.

EMPLOYEES' ADVISORY COUNCIL (EAC) REPRESENTATIVE

Chair Vecchioli noted that she would be sharing information from the EAC, as Representative Lisa Arispe could not be present today. Thereupon, she indicated that

the joint meeting between the Appointing Authorities and the EAC has been rescheduled to June 13 at 3 PM; and that taking into consideration the Board's oversight function, Ms. Arispe suggested for Ms. Rowe to provide the members with budgetary information related to the HR Department. Mr. Davis remarked on the value of reviewing the Department's budget on an ongoing basis to identify potential issues or concerns, and Mr. Reid concurred. Ms. Rowe explained that the Department's budget has historically been provided to the Board prior to its approval; and that she will present the proposed budget at the next UPB meeting, followed by the official budget once it is approved by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC).

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes of the Regular Personnel Board Meeting held May 4, 2023

A motion was made by Mr. Reid to approve the May 4 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Davis and carried unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Office of Human Rights Anti-Harassment Policy

Deviating from the agenda, Office of Human Rights (OHR) Director Jeffery Lorick indicated that the Anti-Harassment Policy has not been updated since 2017; that OHR staff is recommending changes to the policy to resolve several gaps related to investigations; and that he wanted to ensure that the UPB had no issues with modifications to the policy prior to its ratification at the next Human Rights Board meeting. Chair Vecchioli noted that Attorney Moore will review the updated policy to determine whether the UPB should adopt it as a personnel policy for the County. In response to queries by the members and Attorney Moore, Mr. Lorick provided clarifying comments regarding the proposed changes to the policy and related that the Human Rights Board members would also like some clarity regarding the process for adoption; and that the policy only applies to County employees.

Thereupon, discussion ensued regarding the policy revisions and the procedures surrounding its adoption, and Attorney Moore noted that she would review the matter.

HR Update

Ms. Rowe acknowledged the retirement of Senior Assistant County Attorney Carole Sanzeri and commented on her positive impact on the HR Department; whereupon, Ms. Rowe referred to the *HR Update* document included in the agenda packet and provided

information regarding various events, organizational and talent development, and turnover metrics.

Responding to queries by the members, Ms. Rowe, with input from Ms. Ciro, provided clarifying comments regarding the above and explained that April's turnover rate of 16.39% is high, compared to the County's historical trends, but not to other local governments; that employers have experienced higher than normal turnover during the COVID-19 pandemic due to various reasons; and that HR is working with Appointing Authorities and County Departments to monitor and investigate reasons for turnover.

Findings on Employee Communications Survey

Ms. Karolak discussed the core purpose and key efforts of HR's communications and presented the results of the Employee Communications Survey. She indicated that the survey is conducted every couple of years to identify employees' preferred method(s) for receiving information; that approximately 981 employees responded, for a response rate of about 31%, which mirrored the engagement recorded two years ago; and that 80% of respondents chose emails as their preferred method of receiving information from HR.

She related that key takeaways from the survey include that employees want emails from HR to be searchable, more concise, and able to be sent to their personal email accounts; that HR staff will be improving upon its information outreach with supervisors, employees, and department liaisons; that 88% of respondents found current platforms for employee communications to be sufficient, while 9% thought there was room for improvement; and that platforms currently being explored are text messages, SharePoint, a reformatted version of The Pen Newsletter, email blasts, supervisor emails, and videos; whereupon, she discussed upcoming projects.

In response to queries by Mr. Reid and Chair Vecchioli, Ms. Karolak elaborated on communications with retirees, the County's internal communications group, and the upcoming Employee Voice Survey. She highlighted that based on feedback from the UPB, EAC, and Appointing Authorities, comments submitted via the Employee Voice Survey by employees in small divisions will be made visible; and that HR will ensure affected employees are made aware through information sessions and messaging in the survey.

Action Taken Under Authority Delegated by the Personnel Board

Ms. Rowe referred to the above-titled document, included in the agenda packet, indicating that it lists the actions taken. At the request of Chair Vecchioli, Ms. Rowe explained that the original intent of the delegated authority was to increase efficiency by allowing the HR Director to act on behalf of the Board on job title and classification modifications outside

of the HR Department, after which the Board would ratify said action; whereupon, Chair Vecchioli noted that the Board is entitled to ask questions or scrutinize the action(s), as well as revoke the delegated authority if the members so choose.

MEMBER DISCUSSIONS/CLOSING REMARKS

Deviating from the agenda and in response to a query by Mr. Reid, Attorney Moore clarified that two members have provided her with feedback regarding the evaluation process for the HR Director; that she can meet with Ms. Rowe to discuss the process and come up with a proposal if all members who wish to weigh in have done so; and that a draft may be prepared by the Board's meeting in August.

Chair Vecchioli reminded the members that the July UPB meeting was rescheduled to July 13; and that there is an appeal scheduled, which requires five members to be present.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Vecchioli adjourned the meeting at 7:19 PM.