

Unified Personnel Board
Pinellas County
August 3, 2023 Meeting Minutes

The Unified Personnel Board (UPB) met in regular session at 6:30 PM on this date in the County Commission Assembly Room at the Pinellas County Courthouse, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

Present

Joan Vecchioli, Chair
Jeffery Kronschnabl
Peggy O'Shea
Kenneth Peluso
William Schulz II

Not Present

Ricardo Davis, Vice-Chair
Ralph Reid

Others Present

Peggy Rowe, Interim Director of Human Resources (HR)
Jennifer Monroe Moore, Ogletree, Deakins, et.al., P.C., Board Counsel
Jenny Masinovsky, Sr. Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk
Other interested individuals

All documents provided to the Clerk's Office have been made a part of the record.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Vecchioli called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM; whereupon, she led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

None.

EMPLOYEES' ADVISORY COUNCIL (EAC) REPRESENTATIVE

EAC Representative Lisa Arispe indicated that the proposed Personnel Rules changes, included on today's Board agenda, have been agreed upon with the EAC and the

Appointing Authorities and vetted by the Board Attorney; whereupon, she informed the members that she may not be representing the EAC after December due to accepting a position with another County department.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes of the Regular Personnel Board Meeting held June 1, 2023

Mr. Peluso made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Ms. O'Shea and carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Pay Plans Adjustments

Ms. Rowe presented a request to approve the FY24 Pay Plans Adjustments, increasing the minimum pay rates by 2.5% to ensure that no County employee will earn less than \$18/hour as of October. Referring to the table titled *FY24 Draft Classified and Firefighter Pay Plans* in the agenda packet, she noted that other pay grades have subsequently been moved up to reduce compression as much as possible.

Mr. Peluso made a motion, seconded by Ms. O'Shea, that the request be approved. Upon call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Proposed Waiver of Personnel Rule 3.C.1.e.iii. Compensation, Related to the General Increase

Ms. Rowe indicated that the reason for the proposed waiver of a portion of the above-referenced rule is to recognize the longer-tenured County employees by providing them with a general pay increase of 4.5% calculated based on their actual salary, rather than the pay grade midpoint, just for FY24.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Peluso made a motion, restated for clarity by Attorney Moore and seconded by Ms. O'Shea, that the portion of the Rule 3, which states, *the amount of a percentage increase will be calculated on the midpoint of the pay grade established for the employee's associated pay grade*, be suspended for the purposes of the general increase that becomes effective on October 8, 2023. Upon call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Proposed Changes to Personnel Rule 4: Time Off

Ms. Rowe presented the following proposed changes to Rule 4 provisions regarding Annual Leave Eligibility, Extended Illness Leave, and Personal Day:

1. Add verbiage regarding annual leave eligibility for returning employees, specifically, that a former employee who returns to employment with the County after a break in service of less than three years will retain their previous years of service for annual leave time accrual purposes and will earn annual leave accordingly;
2. Delete the Extended Illness Leave provision, applicable to a few employees hired before 1995 who have the Extended Illness Leave balances remaining, with those remaining balances to be rolled into the employees' annual leave balances; and
3. Add verbiage regarding disallowing taking a Personal Day on an In-Service or on mandatory training days.

Responding to a query by Mr. Schulz, Ms. Rowe explained that a Personal Day is not meant to be used either in conjunction with a holiday in order to increase the time off or for purposes of avoiding mandatory training.

Ms. O'Shea made a motion, seconded by Mr. Schulz, that the proposed changes be approved. Upon call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Proposed Changes to Personnel Rule 6: Discipline

Ms. Rowe referred to the proposed changes detailed in the agenda packet and indicated that they include categorizing infractions, eliminating "stacking" of infractions, changing the current Verbal Warning level of disciplinary action to Level 1 Warning/Notification and the Written Warning to Level 2 Warning/Notification, as well as providing various options under Level 3 Warning/Notification.

Ms. Rowe read the proposed verbiage pertaining to Final Warning/Notification under Level 3 of disciplinary action, noting an additional non-substantive change made to the red-lined version. She explained that Level 3 under the current rule has typically involved a pay reduction, demotion, or suspension; and that the proposed change provides an opportunity for a manager to issue a final written warning as an alternative to suspension, noting that a final written warning would require a pre-disciplinary hearing; whereupon, she provided information about automatic inactivation of disciplinary documentation, unless requested otherwise by the manager or Appointing Authority.

Responding to a query by Chair Vecchioli, Ms. Rowe discussed the rationale for the proposed change regarding the Level 1 (formerly Verbal Warning) disciplinary documentation not being added to the employee's HR personnel file, indicating that Level 1 disciplinary action will not be grievable beyond the department head; that there are very few employees who reach a disciplinary phase, and the hope and intent is that they correct their behavior at Level 1; and that the Level 1 documentation will still exist but will not be a part of the official personnel file, unless disciplinary action progresses to Level 2.

Chair Vecchioli added that the Appointing Authorities have previously expressed a concern that supervisors were reluctant to administer the verbal warning because it could lead to a grievance or an appeal, and Ms. Arispe provided input; whereupon, Ms. Rowe agreed with the Chair's suggestion to change the word "areas" to "departments" in the first line under Level 3 – Final Warning/Notification section of the rule and provided other clarifications pertaining to the proposed changes, including the additional option for temporary pay reduction.

Mr. Peluso made a motion, seconded by Mr. Schulz, that the proposed changes be approved with the aforementioned alternative verbiage. Upon call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Proposed Changes to Personnel Rule 7: Employee Grievances

Ms. Rowe indicated that the proposed changes would mirror the pertinent language regarding disciplinary levels discussed under Rule 6.

Mr. Peluso made a motion, seconded by Ms. O'Shea, that the proposed changes be approved. Upon call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Rowe noted that the changes relating to Rules 6 and 7 would be effective October 1. Chair Vecchioli recapped that changes pertaining to other rules will become effective as of today, and Attorney Moore provided input regarding making a motion pertaining to the effective date for Rules 6 and 7; whereupon, Mr. Peluso made a motion, seconded by Ms. O'Shea, that the proposed Rule 6 and 7 changes be effective October 1, 2023. Upon call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Human Resources Classification Specification Recommendations

Ms. Rowe requested that a position reclassification detailed in the agenda packet be approved, noting that authority for changes pertaining to position reclassifications, titles, or pay grades delegated to the HR Director by the Board does not apply to HR Department positions; whereupon, she responded to a query by Mr. Schulz.

Ms. O'Shea made a motion, seconded by Mr. Peluso, that the recommendation for reclassification be approved. Upon call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Workshop Agenda Discussion for September 20, 2023 Joint Meeting with the Appointing Authorities

Chair Vecchioli indicated that the next UPB regular meeting will take place on September 7, and a joint meeting of the UPB and the Appointing Authorities will take place at 2:00 PM on September 20, both in the Clerk's Conference Room, 4th Floor, 315 Court Street, Clearwater. She invited discussion regarding the joint meeting topics, proposing to include items pertaining to the Special Act, status of the search for the permanent HR Director, the HR Director evaluation process, and any additional items requested by the members and the Appointing Authorities; whereupon, Mr. Peluso expressed support for the items proposed by the Chair.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

HR Budget

Ms. Rowe indicated that copies of the HR budget and an organizational chart are included in the agenda packet; whereupon, she recommended that the next HR Director present the HR budget for the Board's consideration earlier in the year and prior to it going to the Office of Management and Budget in order to provide the Board an opportunity for oversight regarding the budget requests, as well as inform the Board of County Commissioners of the Board's review of the HR budget.

HR Update

Ms. Rowe introduced the new HR Executive Assistant, Ashley Jackson, noting that Ms. Jackson will begin her employment on August 28; whereupon, she thanked HR Executive Assistant Judy Breadon for her hard work over the past several months, and Chair Vecchioli echoed the sentiment on behalf of the Board.

Ms. Rowe referred to the *HR Update: August* document included in the agenda packet and highlighted various departmental events, activities, and accomplishments.

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 by the HR Director under the authority delegated by the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Vecchioli adjourned the meeting at 7:15 PM.