

Unified Personnel Board
Pinellas County
December 7, 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
Ricardo Davis, Vice-Chair
Jeffery Kronschnabl
Peggy O'Shea
Kenneth Peluso
Ralph O. Reid IV
William Schulz II

Others Present

Lisa Arispe, Employees' Advisory Council Representative
Jennifer Monroe Moore, Ogletree, Deakins, et. al., P.C., Board Counsel
Peggy Rowe, Interim Director Human Resources (HR)
Krista Johnson, 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 joint Appointing Authorities and EAC meeting was held earlier in the week, with discussions taking place regarding the grievance process and an alternative for new employees' use of floating holidays and personal days. She noted that there was an agreement among the Appointing Authorities

to close on the June 19 holiday, except for the Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller due to the court schedule; and that the Clerk's Office will be closed in observance of the holiday on a different day.

In response to a query by Chair Vecchioli, Ms. Arispe related that the EAC members will discuss a potential joint workshop between the UPB and the EAC at their next meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes of the November 2, 2023 meeting

A motion was made by Ms. O'Shea to approve the November 2 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Peluso and carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Revisions to Personnel Rule 3, Compensation

Ms. Rowe discussed four proposed revisions to Personnel Rule 3 and pointed out that they are related to opportunities for increasing salaries of employees based on certain milestones being reached:

- Reclassification or Reallocation Increase
- In-Grade Adjustment
- Career Path Increase
- Market Adjustment

Ms. Rowe discussed a fifth proposed change to Personnel Rule 3, noting that it addresses a revision of a policy which had been created to satisfy a reimbursement requirement by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regarding compensation of exempt employees working during a declared emergency; whereupon, discussion ensued with remarks and queries by the members, and Attorney Moore provided information related to the Board's purview of employees, premium pay versus overtime, and compared emergency pay between classified and exempt employees.

Attorney Moore recommended that staff consult with the County Attorney's Office regarding the language in the proposed revision related to the reimbursement policy for exempt employees working during a declared emergency; whereupon, Mr. Peluso made a motion to accept the first four changes and to await language on the fifth. The motion was seconded by Ms. O'Shea and carried unanimously.

Reappointment of the Personnel Board Member Appointee for 2024-2025

Chair Vecchioli reviewed how the Board's membership is determined, including that one member is collectively appointed by the UPB; that the current appointee is Ricardo Davis; and that he has indicated a willingness to continue to serve on the Board. Mr. Schulz made a motion, which was seconded by Ms. O'Shea and carried unanimously, that Mr. Davis be reappointed for a two-year term.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

HR Update

Ms. Rowe referred to the *HR Update* document included in the agenda packet and highlighted the following items:

- Enhancements to Learning Paths for 2024
- Cameras On Campaign to ensure active participation during training sessions
- Personnel Rule Updates sessions

She provided an update on recruitment for a new HR Director, indicating that a brochure advertising the position has been published; that 50 people have applied thus far; and that the job posting closes in December.

Reappointments of the Following Personnel Board Members for 2024-2025

Ms. Rowe stated that Chair Vecchioli and Mr. Reid have been reappointed to the Board by the Constitutional Officers and the EAC, respectively; and that the reappointment of the Board of County Commissioners' (BCC) appointee, Mr. Peluso, is scheduled to go before the BCC for approval in January.

Action Taken Under Authority Delegated by the Personnel Board

Ms. Rowe referred to the document titled *Action Taken Under Authority Delegated by the Unified Personnel Board*, which is included in the agenda packet, and indicated that it lists the HR Director's actions authorized by the Board.

Unified Personnel Board Schedule for 2024

Chair Vecchioli indicated that the January UPB meeting was moved due to a holiday; and that workshops with the Appointing Authorities have been added to the calendar, noting that it may be amended to add a meeting with the EAC at a later date.

In response to comments and queries by the members, Ms. Rowe indicated that the interview date for the HR director candidates is February 27, and the members came to a consensus to schedule the meeting for 6:00 PM.

At the request of Chair Vecchioli, Ms. Rowe provided an overview of the recruitment process for the HR Director, explaining that the Appointing Authorities and the EAC Chair have each had a one-on-one meeting with the consulting company to share the attributes that they envision for the next HR Director; that the draft recruitment brochure was reviewed by the Appointing Authorities, which provided an opportunity for input, and the final version was then launched on the Monday following the Thanksgiving holiday; whereupon, she described the process that the consulting company will utilize to select the candidates who will meet with the Appointing Authorities for face-to-face interviews, noting that the candidates will be further narrowed down by the Appointing Authorities; and that those final candidates will be provided to the UPB for consideration.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding concerns related to the proposed turnaround time during which the UPB would be tasked with selecting the final candidate, including an appeals hearing which will be heard at the March 7 Board meeting, as well as other potential options which would afford the members more time, if needed; whereupon, Chair Vecchioli suggested a meeting start time of 5:30 PM for the March 7 meeting, pending the outcome of the February candidate interviews, and requested that Ms. Rowe forward the final version of the HR Director recruitment advertisement to the members.

EMPLOYEE VOICE SURVEY RESULTS

At the request of Chair Vecchioli, Ms. Rowe deviated from the agenda and provided a high-level summary of pertinent key findings resulting from the employee voice survey as related to the Unified Personnel System (UPS) and the HR Department, including that there was an increase from both groups related to recommending working for Pinellas County.

She indicated that high ranked responses for both groups showed that a work environment free from violence and drug abuse is being maintained; and that low ranked responses were related to the connection between compensation and performance; whereupon, she noted that efforts are being made by the Appointing Authorities to identify career paths so that employees can see potential next steps and salary increases based on knowledge and skills being gained; and that there are additional areas of opportunity related to employee morale and management of underperforming employees.

With respect to the HR Department, Ms. Rowe reported that survey findings revealed high rankings in many categories, including a 94% satisfaction with work being done by the

Department overall, but that some of the low rankings, including management of low performers and development of career paths, revealed areas of opportunities.

She commended the HR Department's leadership and staff, as well as the County's staff overall, for the work that has been done to make improvements over the last couple of years and for reviewing the survey results to make adjustments and changes for providing a work environment where employees can be successful.

In response to requests by Mr. Schulz and Chair Vecchioli, Ms. Rowe indicated that she will provide the members with additional information regarding the requested sections of the survey results; whereupon, a lengthy discussion ensued and included the topics of performance and compensation, disciplinary conversations, career path opportunities, turnover rate, and exit interviews.

Chair Vecchioli requested that Ms. Rowe provide the Board with quarterly updates regarding exit interviews; and that Mr. Reid, with the Board's approval, be deputized to work with Attorney Moore for developing an evaluation process for the HR Director position, which will be brought back to the Board for review.

APPELLANT'S MOTION FOR RECONSIDERATION OF TERMINATION APPEAL

Dustin Guinta v. Pinellas County Department of Administrative Services

Mr. Reid noted that the appellant's motion for reconsideration of termination appeal has been withdrawn and indicated that he would like to clarify the language regarding the timeframe related to motions for reconsideration; whereupon, Attorney Moore provided information related to the rule as it is written and with regard to the recent motion for reconsideration of termination appeal, indicating that she would like to solicit the Board's thoughts regarding when it considers that a decision has been made and when the 15-day timeframe for a motion to appeal would begin.

A lengthy discussion ensued; whereupon, the Board arrived at a consensus for the rule to be changed to clearly reflect when the 15-day appeal timeframe begins and requested that Attorney Moore draft the amended language for review by the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Vecchioli adjourned the meeting at 7:43 PM.