

Unified Personnel Board
Pinellas County
June 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes

The Unified Personnel Board (UPB) met in regular session at 6:31 PM on this date in the County Commission Assembly Room at the Pinellas County Courthouse, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

Present

Ricardo Davis, Chair
Ralph O. Reid IV, Vice-Chair
Jeffery Kronschnabl
Kenneth Peluso
William Schulz II

Not Present

Peggy O'Shea
Mark Strickland

Others Present

Lisa Arispe, Employees' Advisory Council Representative
Wade Childress, Chief Human Resources Officer
Jennifer Monroe Moore, Ogletree, Deakins, et. al., P.C., Board Counsel
Jessica Oakes, Board Reporter
Other interested individuals

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Davis called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

No one responded to the Chair's call for citizens to be heard.

EMPLOYEES' ADVISORY COUNCIL (EAC) REPRESENTATIVE

Ms. Arispe indicated that several EAC members are present; whereupon, those in attendance introduced themselves. Ms. Arispe also related that the EAC will be filling a vacancy created due to the promotion of an EAC Representative to an exempt position.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes of the Regular Personnel Board Meeting Held May 1, 2025

Chair Davis indicated that the next item on the agenda is the Consent Agenda and requested a motion to approve the minutes of the May 1, 2025, meeting; whereupon, Mr. Peluso made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Reid.

In response to a query by Chair Davis, Ms. Arispe related that she provided staff with a correction to the minutes; whereupon, Mr. Childress indicated that the minutes have been corrected; and that the copy provided to the Board is the corrected version.

Following a query by Chair Davis, Messrs. Peluso and Reid agreed to amend their motion to include the correction. Upon the Chair's call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Complaint received from the Division of Inspector General

Chair Davis indicated that the members should have received a complaint from the Division of Inspector General; and that he also received at least six phone calls from Human Resources (HR) employees and other individuals; whereupon, he invited the members to discuss the topic.

Mr. Peluso indicated that this item concerns an anonymous letter, not a formal complaint, which was received by the Division of Inspector General and shared with the Board; and that he does not believe that it bears discussion by the members; whereupon, he made a motion for the Board to take no action.

Responding to a query by Chair Davis regarding whether a motion for no action is necessary, Attorney Moore indicated that Mr. Peluso may make a motion if he would like; and that if there is a second, then the motion will be discussed and entertained.

Discussion ensued regarding specific allegations included in the letter and whether any action by the Board is required; whereupon, Mr. Childress provided brief comments

regarding his role as Chief HR Officer and his efforts to effectively serve the Appointing Authorities and their employees.

Chair Davis indicated that part of the complaint related to the non-competitive method by which Mr. Childress filled a particular position, which he does not believe is an HR best practice; and that he would like to provide Mr. Childress an opportunity to discuss his perspective.

Thereupon, Mr. Childress discussed the hiring of a Recruitment Manager, noting that the Special Act allows for the Appointing Authorities to hire exempt employees; and that they may do so in any way they choose. He also related that he chose a candidate that he previously worked with for 18 years and who he believes will be a good fit for the needs of the County; whereupon, referencing Chair Davis' feedback related to the utilization of a competitive hiring process, he indicated that he would likely employ that method in the future.

Responding to a query by Mr. Peluso, Attorney Moore provided information related to the process for handling complaints received through the Division of Inspector General. She also indicated that the legal opinion she rendered is that there was not a rule violation with respect to a non-classified exempt employee position being filled.

Attorney Moore related that the only way for the Board to discuss this topic would be in a public meeting, due to Sunshine Law requirements; and that the Board has the authority to investigate what it may perceive as possible violations of the rules, in conformance with the Special Act; whereupon, she indicated that holding this meeting and making a determination related to investigating the claims are within the purview of the Act.

Mr. Peluso made a motion for the Board not to pursue this matter any further and to dismiss the action; whereupon, Attorney Moore indicated that her understanding is that Mr. Peluso is amending his prior motion, which essentially failed for lack of a second; and that Mr. Peluso would like to remake that motion. Later in the meeting, the motion was seconded by Mr. Kronschnabl.

Chair Davis indicated that Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller Ken Burke is present; and that he requested an opportunity to address the Board; whereupon, Mr. Burke explained that Inspector General staff knew that there was no rule violation since it is within the purview of the Appointing Authorities to hire individuals for exempt positions as they see fit. He also discussed recent history related to the HR Director position, challenges faced by Mr. Childress, and next steps.

In response to a comment by Mr. Reid, Chair Davis clarified the rationale for scheduling today's meeting.

Responding to a query by Mr. Schulz, Mr. Childress indicated that he maintains an open-door policy.

Upon the Chair's call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Unified Personnel Board Attorney Jennifer Monrose Moore's Contract through the County Attorney's Office

Following introductory comments by Chair Davis regarding the potential retention of Attorney Moore as the Board's legal counsel, Attorney Moore indicated that she welcomes criticism and feedback from the members and invited them to evaluate her performance at this time.

In response to a query by Mr. Peluso, Chair Davis confirmed that action is required by the Board to retain Attorney Moore; whereupon, Mr. Peluso made a motion to retain Attorney Moore as the Board's attorney, which was seconded by Mr. Schulz and carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.