

Buffalo County Minutes

Committee/Board: Human Resources Committee

Date of Meeting: Monday, July 11, 2022

Mr. Steve Nelson called the meeting to order at 9:30 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Mr. Steve Nelson, Ms. Carol McDonough, Ms. Mary Anne McMillan Urell, and Mr. Nathan Nelson. Mr. Michael Taylor was excused.

Others Present for All or Parts of the Meeting: Mr. Ryan VanDeWalle, Ms. Lisa Schmitt, Ms. Carol Burmeister, Sheriff Michael Schmidtknecht, Mr. Dave Rynders, and Mr. Matt Prieur. Ms. Ana Rolbiecki, Ms. Tina Anibas, and Ms. Lisa Schuh attended remotely via Teams.

Public Comments Regarding Posted Agenda Items: None.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: Ms. Mary Anne McMillan Urell made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Nathan Nelson. Carried.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding a Resolution to Create a Case Manager Position and Reduce a Support Staff Specialist Position to Part-Time: Mr. VanDeWalle explained that this position was discussed at the DHHS meeting held on July 7th. It will reduce an existing support staff specialist position to a .4 part-time position and create a full-time case manager position. There is an increased demand in areas such as for producing client records that need to be redacted, foster care recruitment, youth services, and Children's Long-Term Services administration and case management. This position will generate revenue and is proposed to be put in Class I, Step 1 of the wage scales. It was discussed making this a Step 2 position if offered to a current employee and the wage will be determined later. Ms. Mary Anne McMillan Urell made a motion to approve this resolution to create a Case Manager position and reduce a Support Staff Specialist position to part-time, seconded by Mr. Nathan Nelson. Motion carried.

Review/Discussion/Action – Social Worker/Case Manager Job Description: Mr. Rynders explained this proposal is to add additional job description duties to the existing duties that a case manager would do. It adds foster care recruitment and retention work, record redaction work, and long-term services authorizations for children. There is a wider range of duties defining what a case manager does. The difference between Case Manager 1 and 2 and the pay classification of each position was explained by Mr. Rynders. Ms. Mary Anne McMillan Urell made a motion to approve the Social Worker/Case Manager job description, seconded by Ms. Carol McDonough. Motion carried.

Review/Discussion/Action – Remove One Year Limit and Amend Minimum Qualifications for the Public Health Specialist Position Job Description: Mr. VanDeWalle explained this position was created in 2021 and allowed for an employee to do one or two things, which were to obtain a bachelor's degree and then also to get an RN

license. The individual has obtained the bachelor's degree but does not have her RN licensure yet, so she is not able to give injections. The county currently does not have a nurse and this service is being contracted with a retired RN for \$50 an hour with no minimum hourly limit. The State of Wisconsin requires us to have an RN hired or else to contract this position. Mr. Rynders explained that it has been challenging to recruit an RN and that is why this position was initially created. The one-year requirement of the employee in this position ends soon and an amendment needs to be made. Mr. Rynders said they are proposing to waive the one-year requirement and change the job description to state a nursing degree is now required. The employee would also be compensated for having this degree. He said that our goal is to employ our own RN and the hope is that this individual will be able to get her licensure at some point soon. Mr. Rynders suggests setting a deadline for her to obtain this. If she gets her license, she will move into the nurse position and then this position would be eliminated. If she does not get her license according to the deadline, then this position is still eliminated, and her employment in this position would then end. This would then become a vacant Public Health Nurse position. Ms. McMillan Urell made a motion to amend the pay rate of this job position to Level G, Step 1, for a one-year period with an addendum added for the current employee to give notification within the next six months of her intent to pursue testing for RN licensure, seconded by Mr. Nathan Nelson. Motion carried.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding Policy on Employee Residency: Mr. VanDeWalle informed the committee that this discussion was brought up before and this is to get the committee's current thoughts on this. There hasn't been any action taken on this matter, it was only discussed. Other counties have a mileage limit as to how far away an employee can live from the courthouse. We currently have a few employees who live quite a distance away and we don't want to hinder them. Ms. McMillan Urell recommended that employees need to be within a certain driving distance to be available to report to the courthouse for work and meetings if needed. Mr. VanDeWalle will work with Ms. Rolbiecki to create a policy for this and bring a draft to the next meeting.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding Policy on New Employee Step Placement: This matter was reserved to be reviewed in conjunction with the 2023 Appeals Process discussion that follows.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding Policy on Elected Official Wages: Mr. VanDeWalle explained that a few months back the HR Committee decided on the wages for Sheriff, Clerk of Court, and Coroner for the next four years. The wage for the County Clerk, Register of Deeds, and Treasurer will need to be set next time in 2024 and he is wondering if there could be a policy made that whatever happened in the previous decision carry over to the other group of elected officials in two years. Mr. VanDeWalle doesn't want to set any dollar amount, but just wants to make sure the committee reviews the percentage increase the previous officials received. He said an amendment could be made to the Employee Handbook to state that the HR Committee must review the percentage increase and align this increase identically or as closely as possible to the other group. Ms. McMillan Urell said that they previously looked at comparable counties population wise, which she said would be the same type of workload. Counties used for comparison of other employees' wages were neighboring counties. Ms. Burmeister, Sheriff Schmidtkecht, and Ms. Anibas all agreed that it is hard to compare wages between counties but that the same counties should be used for comparison for the elected officials, department heads and other employees. This should be

consistent and not change each time it is reviewed. Sheriff Schmidtknecht suggested talking to other counties to see how they handle this and feels that experience and the number of years served in the position should factor into the wage. Mr. VanDeWalle said he is willing to meet with all elected officials to create something to add to the policy currently in place that covers the recommendations discussed.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding 2023 Appeals Process Discussion: Mr. Steve Nelson met with Mr. VanDeWalle and Ms. Rolbiecki to get some history on the past appeals process as he is new to this committee. Ms. McMillan Urell feels we need a subcommittee for this as was previously done. She suggested that maybe this should be discussed with the department managers to understand what they and their employees are thinking. We need something in place for wage scales but possibly what we currently use should be changed. The challenging part is comparing the different job descriptions and putting them into classes. Some counties, including Trempealeau County, have hired Carlson Dettman, a consulting firm, to assist them in making the wage scales. Mr. Nathan Nelson was wondering if Trempealeau County could tell us if this was effective for them and if it was a positive outcome. Ms. Rolbiecki will reach out to Trempealeau County to see if they are willing to share some information without going into detail. Mr. Steve Nelson would like to meet with members of the prior employee wage subcommittee to get some history to move forward. Ms. McMillan Urell also offered to meet with them and anyone else on the current HR Committee who would like to take part is invited to do so. At the next meeting, ideas can be brought forward to pursue.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding Administrative Assistant Position Status

Discussion: Mr. VanDeWalle stated that we currently have four Administrative Assistant positions who are exempt status and are getting paid salary. He is proposing to move them to a non-exempt status which would make them eligible for overtime, although these positions do not typically work overtime. They do not meet the qualifications of the Fair Labor Standards Act to be considered exempt status. Ms. Rolbiecki has questioned why these positions were ever considered exempt as they do not meet the criteria for this by law. Ms. McMillan Urell made a motion to move these Administrative Assistant positions from exempt to non-exempt status, seconded by Mr. Nathan Nelson. Motion carried.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding Employee Trust Fund Income Continuation

Incentive Discussion: Ms. Rolbiecki said this is income incentive insurance that the Employee Trust Fund offers. Employees and the county don't have to pay anything. There is currently a premium holiday where there is enough money in the fund to cover the premiums. The county tried to get this implemented last fall and she feels it was too rushed. She doesn't think that the employees had enough facts on this and so there wasn't enough interest. For the county to offer this, 65% of eligible employees must sign up. This can be introduced through a resolution at any time. There is no cost for this, so there is no reason not to participate. If the free program is discontinued, employees would have the option and enough time to sign up for other disability insurance. Ms. Rolbiecki would like to introduce this again and get more information to the employees on the insurance. It was decided to create a resolution as there is no financial impact to the employees or the county. Ms. Rolbiecki will create this for the next meeting.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding CCO Position Paid Time Off Discussion: Mr. VanDeWalle informed the committee that there are six CCO's that are approaching their PTO allotment, and one of them that is over, mainly because of staffing issues in this department. Right now, PSLB can't be used for a normal sick day. If an employee is going to be out ill for three days or less, they would need to use PTO. To use PSLB, it must be for an illness greater than three days and a doctor's note is required. Policy 208 shows exceptions for CCO employees with more than 480 hours of PSLB up to 720-800 hours depending on the hire date of the employees. It also states that no additional hours may be added to a PSLB account if that amount exceeds 480 hours. There are two different options being presented to amend this for the CCO employees. Option 1 is to change the 480-hour limit of PSLB to 960 hours. We would be relaxing what PSLB can be used for to allow an employee to use PSLB for illness instead of using PTO. With PTO there is a liability to the county that an employee could be at their max limit of 320 hours and would need to be paid out that amount if they leave the county. Under Option 1, the employee would have the choice twice a year to convert the PTO hours to PSLB. With PSLB, the county's liability would be to pay the employee \$30 per an 8-hour workday if they were to retire with the county. Option 2 is that after an employee reaches 320 hours of PTO, the hours would automatically go into PSLB up to 960 hours. We would need to relax what the PSLB can be used for with either option for this to be advantageous to the employees. Both options would eliminate the hiring date differences. These are just two options being presented and Mr. VanDeWalle is looking for other options from the HR committee and the CCO employees affected to be discussed at the next meeting. He has sent a detailed email regarding these two options to the CCO's and asked for them to give a response to him by July 22nd with their input to this.

Chairperson's Report: Chair Nelson has contacted an individual at the University of Eau Claire. They have beginning and advanced courses on grant writing that the county might want to look at sending an employee to. That would then become their job, and it normally is considered a 60% position. It sounds like the counties who used this have had a good success rate in finding new grants. He also commented on how the County Board Chairman was elected in April and would like to have them only speak at that meeting and eliminate any calls to other board members ahead of time to get votes.

Administrative Coordinator's Report: Mr. VanDeWalle will work on the items discussed today to have in place for the next meeting.

Personnel Advisor Report: Ms. Rolbiecki shared that a new account clerk will be starting soon, and two highway workers accepted positions. Interviews will be taking place for the Zoning/Land Conservation Administrative Assistant and the Resource Management Specialist. There are a few other openings still being advertised. Our benefits' broker will be joining us virtually at the next meeting to give an update as we approach our enrollment period.

Public Comments: None.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding the Next Meeting Date and Time: August 8, 2022 at 9:30 a.m.

Adjournment: Ms. McMillan Urell made a motion to adjourn at 11:32 a.m., seconded by Mr. Nathan Nelson. Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Schmitt
Buffalo County Deputy Clerk

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