



Employees Advisory Council



to continually improve the Pinellas County classified employees' quality of work life

Approved by the EAC

Employee Advisory Council – Representatives Meeting Minutes Wednesday, April 18, 2012

1. Charles Toney called the meeting to order at 2:30 P.M.

2. Introductions

- A sign-in sheet has been filed and made part of the record.
- Mark Woodard, Assistant County Administrator
- Gabriel Serrano, Clerk of Circuit Court
- Franklin Seesmaan, DEI

3. Approval of Minutes

- Minutes for the March 21st, 2012. Motion made by Ira Wolf, 2nd by Clare McGrane.

4. Peggy Rowe introduced Assistant County Administrator, Mark Woodard. In response to questions from county employees, Mr. Woodard explained the various county funding sources their spending restrictions and regulations as set out by the state. The \$600,000 Pinellas County has set aside for the RNC event at Tropicana Field came out of the 5% bed tax. This tax goes into the tourist development fund and is restricted by state law as to any expenditure and cannot be used for employee raises. Although it is levied by the county, it is restricted by state law. The 7cent gasoline tax can only be used for transportation – most used for operation and maintenance, some used for construction. Enterprise funds must stay within their specified department and expenditures are restricted. Departments also charge each other for their supporting services.

Mr. Woodard stated that “Our Employee’s are our Greatest Asset” and with the job market beginning to open up, there has been some loss of talented employees. The County wants to keep our talent and is actively exploring ideas to retain employees. Revenues from the gas tax and water use have both declined due to less use and more efficient vehicles. Within the Great Recession, reductions have been across the board. Sixty to seventy percent of the general fund is property taxes which are down. The good news is the county has set aside a service stabilization account of \$26 million. The county is looking for additional user fees, such as the parking fee for the beach parks, which was implemented October 1, 2011. This fee has allowed the parks to add some new employees.

The state has passed a Medicaid re-imbursement bill that will directly impact the county. It is basically a billing issue, but will increase the county’s contribution considerably. Possibly up to 25 million in the next two years, with amounts collected from the county to begin this July. The Association of Counties has filed suit.

Regarding the FRS 3% collection of retirement fees from employees. If there is a reversal in the courts, the monies will be coming back from the State of Florida, not Pinellas County. It was collected as pre-tax dollars, if it is re-imbursed, the monies will be taxable.

The last millage rate adjustment was 2007, when the millage was reduced ¾%, which was just before the State mandated an 8% reduction below the rollback rate. Mr. Woodard suggested that all read the budget forecast on the OMB website.



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Charles Toney stated that the EAC would like to see an increase in employees pay as a % instead of a one-time "bonus". Mr. Woodard said if there is some way we can find some money, they are looking at a one-time bonus situation. Mr. Toney restated the EAC's position on the percentage as opposed to a one-time bonus, but, if the choice was nothing or a one-time bonus, many employees would be thankful for anything.

The next budget outreach will be held at the City Hall in Safety Harbor at 5pm on May 10th, 2012.

4. Peggy Rowe discussed the recent flyer that was sent to employees regarding the incentive program and the online assessment. First, our Health care plan is self insured. There is no "Insurance Company" involved. The costs run approximately \$45 to \$50 million per year. To effect a change in the cost is by "being as healthy as we can". If you identify that "problem," early on, you get to live a whole lot longer and can walk on the beach with your grandkids. The goal is to lower the cost.

Next year, each employee that is covered by the health care plan, will need to do two things by August 31st. First, get a physical, including blood work, then fill out the short assessment on myuhc.com. If the employee chooses not to complete these two items, they will be paying \$500.00 more for their coverage next year. About 40% of current employees participated in completing these two requirements during 2011. More information, including a FAQ and Ask Peggy regarding the assessment will be forthcoming. Reminders and additional information will be sent to employees.

Charles Toney went around the table to make sure all Representatives had an opportunity to express any comments or ask any questions regarding this policy. Request to send any additional questions to Ask Peggy. Kathy Baker is the UHC Representative. Employees can review the health benefits on the Benefits section of the Human Resources website on the internet.

5. Personnel Board – A classified employee applied for an Exempt position and felt the Veterans preference was not used properly. The Board ruled the Appointing Authority can hire anyone they want for the (an Exempt) position. [\[HR note: However, hiring authorities follow the same procedures they would in hiring for a Classified position.\]](#) Peggy Rowe is charged with going over the Personnel Board Rules. A task force will be set up to assist. The Personnel Rules can be accessed from the Human Resources website. Please review the Personnel Rules and bring any questions and concerns to the next meeting.

6. Committee reports – FRS – The 3% reduction issue is moving to the Florida Supreme Court. Separately the State passed a reduction in its contribution to the investment retirement plan from 6.25% to 3.55%. The special risk class investment plan dropped from 18% state contribution to 12%. Senator Mike Fasano voted against this.

How can the EAC let employees know they are appreciated (Employee Appreciation Week)?

Motion to adjourn by: Mike Powell / 2nd by Ira Wolf – Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.