



Employees Advisory Council



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

Approved by the EAC

Employee Advisory Council – Delegate Meeting Minutes - Thursday, July 25th, 2013 - 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

1) Call to order at and pledge 8:05 a.m.

2) Guest speaker- Bob LaSala

We are looking for ways to be more efficient, economic and effective in business by merging departments and functions as well as streamlining operations. This is the new normal because we are not going back to the 2003-2004 times nor are we going back to the 2009-2010 years either. There should be mutual respect and reasonable compensation for the jobs being done in the county. Pinellas County needs to maintain competitiveness in compensation and benefits to attract and retain employees in the Tampa Bay area.

HR's commitment is to put the right people in the right seats on the bus with selective recruitment for positions. We are trying to hire employees for a long term commitment. This being said, also determining the proper compensation. HR will be re-thinking and re-evaluating the evaluation process and judging performance expectations so look for some changes there also. The idea of a 360 degree evaluation process which will include the employee, supervisor and management team is being given some serious consideration.

Bob went on to say that we should embrace the changes coming to our new environment. We are trying to make a good working environment where you are happy to work at is a key goal.

Bob mentioned changes to his department with the elimination of two Assistant Administrator positions and being able to use the money saved in other areas such as bringing back three Code Enforcement positions.

- EAC Chairman Charles Toney asked about salary increases in the future. Bob's answer was to look for a growth in compensation of about 4% is the forecast which would include salary, wages, benefits and that it was based on a modest growth.

- Parks Division Delegate asked Bob if they could have more efficient equipment to use and can't seem to get anywhere when asking for it. Bob mentioned that he would look into that answer for them.

- EAC Representative Mercedes Pearson asked if she could get some clarification for the increase in property taxes that are on the table. Bob said that there are three components to this and that he expects the ¼ mil rate increase to go through, but that the Board thinks the other increases would be too large an amount for this budget year as we are just coming out of a recession.

- EAC Representative Steve Yeatman asked if there was some type of long range plan for salary increases for our employees or are we going to visit this situation yearly? Bob answered with a savvy answer of "loan me your crystal ball of what's going to happen to the economy then I can give you an answer and a plan for you. Until then, I can't give you a guarantee. Our commitment is to continue to remain competitive in the Tampa Bay market place to be able to keep talent and attract talent that we need. They should be fairly compensated based on performance. Beyond that would be a suicide note if I wrote a long term plan," he said.

- Bob also spoke about the High Performance Organization and their efforts to create one here in Pinellas County Government. Someone asked him how he felt it was being implemented. Bob's

response entailed that it “doesn’t happen overnight.” “Change is slow so don’t expect changes as fast as we would like them to be. It is a long term shift in expectations.”

- Someone else questioned Bob on why do we keep changing vendors because it costs us more to re-train people etc... Bob’s answer was, “If I were king I would do away with state statues and antiquated procurement policies and practices because it goes back to the early 1900’s.” He went on to mention that if he could change the rules he would because it was bureaucratic and costs us more money but his hands are tied and he can’t change things.

- Charles Toney asked another question concerning the HPO training and the ability to retain these employees. Bob’s answer included that we were going to stay within some limitations and boundaries of what we ask of them. They are looking for new opportunities and growth and if this is not available they will move on referring to the new younger talent.

- Charles Toney also asked a question of Peggy Rowe concerning what efforts can we do as the EAC to help you in this? Peggy mentioned to get involved in the focus groups, reach out to our fellow UPS employees and encourage them to accept the new normal as Bob had mentioned previously.

- Additional question from the floor included: Can you list where the job is located when you post a new position? Peggy Rowe answered with H.R. is going to change that and it will be indicated from now on in the recruitment flyers so it is becoming more efficient. Peggy said in the near future, individuals will apply for each job separately and the 2 year registers will be going away. They are trying to streamline the process so the more qualified candidates will make it to the lists. Look for these changes in the early fall from H.R. In addition, we will all know what vacancies and the exact location as well as what is required of you for that position. You will be able to apply directly to the new postings. Peggy also stated concerning upcoming raises that employees above the maximum salaries for their positions will receive the full 2.8% of the maximum as a lump sum payment which will not be added to the base pay. This currently affects about 79 employees.

3) Dave Blasewitz from Employee Benefits answered a question from the floor of delegates about weight management and is it covered by our United Healthcare insurance? He said that it was indeed covered for health incentive payments if you go through the approved ones like Weight Watchers for example. Coverage through the health plan is limited, for instance bariatric surgery at selected hospitals. Questions were asked concerning: hearing aids, alternate dental contributions, and shingles vaccines. Obesity is now considered a disease and has a code for insurance billing purposes and this may be part of the question about coverage. In this case obesity is the diagnosis, but the treatment may or may not be a covered service. R-Club is being utilized for childcare during mandatory emergency working situations and apparently the school system employees get a discount with the R-Club child care system – Dave will check on discount for Pinellas County employees.

4) EAC Representative elections are starting again this September and EAC Groups I, II, VI, VIII, Clerk-North (currently vacant), Property Appraiser, and Supervisor of Elections seats are up for 2-year elections.

5) The meeting adjourned at 10:00am.