



Employees' Advisory Council – Delegate Meeting Minutes

Extension Services, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo, FL

Thursday, March 24, 2016, 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Call to Order

The EAC Delegate meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m. by Chair, Lisa Wombles, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Comments from Dave Blasewitz, Director of Human Resources (Interim)

- Human Resources Director Search - Pinellas County's Personnel Board conducted its final interview with the 3 top candidates on March 23rd. Upon close review of their notes/ observations, the Personnel Board will deliberate on April 7th. They will vote on their #1 choice and the new HR Director will be announced.
- Employee Survey - Dave directed our attention to the [March issue of The Pen](#), which highlights the results of the 2015 Biennial Employee Survey conducted in the Unified Personnel System in November 2015. The key issues were more concise than those addressed in the last survey completed two years ago. Many questions were the same. Two new questions were introduced to assist in measuring additional aspects of performance management. 63% report that they "have received recognition or praise for doing good work in the last seven days." 73% agree with the statement, "In the last six months, someone at work has talked with me about my progress." Dave encourages all to read the survey results and is pleased to report that 85% of Pinellas County employees are satisfied with their jobs and 89% think Pinellas County is a good employer. It is interesting to note that 72% of employees rate that "The EAC does a good job supporting my interest and/or concerns to upper management and the Personnel Board." This is 9% higher than the 2013 rating.
- Employee Appreciation Picnic is fast approaching – Wednesday, April 27th at Sand Key Park from 8am-4pm. Della Klug will be sending out the invitation with detailed information regarding sign-up for various events and volunteer assistance with check-in/set-up and clean-up.
- Questions from the floor:
 - Question:* If an employee is hurt on the job and they go to a walk-in clinic after the end of work shift, can that time be used towards time off?
 - Answer:* Dave will check with Risk Management.
 - Question:* How can an employee advance in their career when all the job posting applications require a minimum education degree to even be considered for the job? Many seasoned veterans of 15-20 plus years are still classified at an entry level "beginner" technician and cannot advance to the higher paid "senior" level position. It is the person with the degree who gets hired, despite not possessing any experience in that field. This is viewed as unfair by many Pinellas County employees.
 - Answer:* Dave reports this is a recurring issue. HR reviews the applicants' responses to supplemental questions, scores the applicants and delivers the list of qualified applicants to the supervisor or hiring manager for that department. Some positions/departments offer a Career Ladder, but not all. It is important to understand that having a Career Ladder offers the opportunity for automatic promotion, but it is not guaranteed. HR tries to make things fair during the hiring process, but ultimately, the hiring parameters are a subjective decision by that department.

- Question:* When changing an employee group classification from classified to exempt, does it change their classification?

Answer: Generally, it is a reorganization. It depends on the positions and the criteria required to becoming exempt. There may not be a salary increase for a reorganization. If the group is re-classified, that would fall under HR and their rules.
- Question:* When a family member covered by employee's insurance dies during a pay period, it is not pro-rated. Why?

Answer: Dave reports that we are self-funded and therefore, we determine the rates. We cover our employees to the end of the pay period. Most companies cover to the end of the month.
- Question:* Promoting from within the County is encouraged by our County Administrator Mark Woodard. Is there a report on how many employees are hired from within the County or from the outside?

Answer: Yes. There is a report in Oracle which can provide information on positions filled. Dave will check on whether detail exists to identify this.
- Question:* Outside request for employees' salaries or information? Is this provided?

Answer: We get public record requests all the time. The reason many times is not disclosed, nor can the County ask. There is a movement happening now not to compensate legal fees when a case is solved. This may or may not be part of the increase in requests.
- Question:* If an employee is filling a position as an "interim" can he/she apply for the position?

Answer: Yes, they can apply, if interested for the full-time permanent position. They are not automatically considered.
- Question:* Are we going to re-visit classifications?

Answer: Yes, HR is constantly looking at positions and their classifications. We have accomplished a lot within the past five years, and want to keep Pinellas County in line with pay levels at other organizations we compete with for talent. We want to remain competitive in order to attract new talent and to maintain our current employee workforce.
- Question:* If an employee is given a directive to appear over and over again in front of the Human Rights Board, why is this so?

Answer: Dave states that any allegation concerning an employee has to be looked at to determine if it has validity. This is how we can give a voice to the employee in question.
- Question:* Emails sent out to Standard for FMLA receive no response. No action is taken. Why?

Answer: Standard is showing improvement. Any letters received for deadlines should include the mailing time. Many doctors do not want to put an "end date" on the employee's FMLA request form. However, Standard states that an "end date" is needed. An FMLA request should not be denied if it does not possess an "end date." Someone asked the question earlier, if it would be cheaper for the County to employ an in-house person(s) to handle FMLA requests rather than paying an outside company? Standard has the resources (manpower) which we lack. The cost per employee is pennies to the dollar. Not sure of the exact amount the County pays per employee for Standard's service.
- Statement from Dave:* Complaints about Express Scripts have diminished. Pinellas County's pharmacy administrator and the medical administrators are up for review and a new plan/contract will be determined on January 1, 2017. The County is in the process of entertaining contract bids from all interested pharmacy and medical administrators.

Guest Speaker - Amy Hertog, United Healthcare Nurse Liaison

- Amy comes to Pinellas County with 20 years of nursing experience in the private sector. Amy's special interest is in diabetes management. She provides coaching/support for individuals or groups and can do educational presentations.
- Amy shared a PowerPoint presentation, [Navigating the Course for a Healthier You](#). She encourages employees to access the myUHC website to track claims and payments, access the myHealthcare Cost Estimator, and Rally. She also advises to check out the Health4Me application on your smartphone. This application allows the employee to have their ID cards either e-mailed or faxed, and to locate local health providers, hospitals, and quick-care facilities. This app is great when travelling. It is a definite time saver.
- Amy can help in finding a specialist or a doctor if needed. However, she cannot assist employees with their medical insurance claims or provide medical treatment, which includes giving flu shots. For assistance, you can reach Amy at 464-5579.

Guest Speaker - Crystal Lockwood, Pinellas County Health and Wellness Manager

- Crystal moved from the Fort Lauderdale area in mid-February to start her job.
- She wants to take Pinellas County to the next level when it comes to our health and wellness. Some of her goals are to develop more wellness programs, grant opportunities, and on-site health screenings.
- There is a new portal to complete our health survey, [Rally](#). This program gives us coins which can be used to enter sweepstakes. Rally does ask for your social security number to identify your participation. Rest assured that Rally is within our privacy firewall and is a protected site so it's safe to enter personal information.

Comments from Lisa Wombles, Chair

- Lisa Wombles announces that there are now eight Employee Advocates. If anyone is interested in becoming an advocate, go to www.pinellascounty.org/hr/advocate. Once your application is accepted and you have been trained, the advocate's time to assist an employee will not exceed 3 hours per week of worktime.
- The time is approaching to begin collecting for the Christmas Wish Foundation, which provides assistance to local families. The EAC representatives are encouraged to begin collecting soon within their respective departments for this worthy cause. If each employee could just give \$1.00, a total of \$3,000 could be collected and donated on behalf of the employees of Pinellas County. Perhaps the collection could be titled *Christmas in July?* Employees might be more likely to donate during the summer months when they are not bombarded with requests from other organizations.
- The Personnel Board will meet on April 7th to select the next Director for Human Resources.

Adjourned

Chair Lisa Wombles adjourned the meeting at 10:20am.

Lisa Wombles*	Richard Carvale*	Peg Poole	Donna Beim*	Linda Cahill*
Rich Castle	Hazel Lane*	Doris McHugh*	Mercedes Pearson	Randy Rose*
Mario Ruggia	Ashley Skubal*	Charles Toney	Lisa Wright*	Steve Yeatman

*EAC Representatives in attendance at this meeting.