



## Employees Advisory Council



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

Approved by the EAC

Employees' Advisory Council - Representatives Meeting Minutes -  
Wednesday, July 17th, 2013, County Annex, Room 429, 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

- 1) Call to order at 2:35pm
- 2) Minutes were approved with a motion from Elaine Billey and a second motion from Clare McGrane.

Guests: Keith Dekle – Personnel Board, Mark Woodard – Assistant County Administrator, Frank Fazio attending for Randy Rose

- 3) Comments from Peggy Rowe - Peggy stated that they are making slow but steady progress with the review of the Personnel Rules. In addition, there are 77 employees that are above the pay range maximum and will be given a 2.8% lump sum payout when others will be receiving their raises in the next fiscal year. Peggy also went on to mention about the “listening sessions” that she does at various locations throughout the county and that she has her staff make the random selections as to who attends these meetings to alleviate the pressure some employees are experiencing and feeling afraid to be seen speaking about office issues with Peggy. Some employees fear retaliation if they comment on concerns they have. Peggy also mentioned there has been a restructuring of the Health and Human Services Department including title changes.
- 4) Personnel Board - update – July 11<sup>th</sup> A question was brought up by PB member Keith Dekle as to the right of an employee to appeal a termination due to job elimination or layoff to the PB. August 1<sup>st</sup> meeting there are no appeals scheduled. At the October PB meeting there will be a workshop scheduled with County Attorney Jim Bennett to discuss the Personnel Act and the duties and functions of the PB. EAC members are encouraged to attend for a better understanding of how the PB functions.

Guest:

Mark Woodard - Assistant County Administrator was present and fielded questions that many of us had concerning the budget and the proposed raises for the coming year. There was a long discussion with Steve Yeatman and Mark Woodard concerning how the employees are struggling with the way the budget is being handled with increases.

Steve mentioned that he feels the upper echelon is not in touch with how the employees really feel.

Mark mentioned that we have a structural imbalance in the budget that needs monies previously spent to be replaced by increasing the tax millage rate this



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upcoming year for homeowners. Some of the budget increases include: employee raises, FRS increases, EMS 8%, and replenishing the Service Level Continuation Account. Property values are starting to go up and the revenue is slowly returning.

More discussion ensued concerning the budget and the news media uptake and their interpretation of things that are said. Peggy mentioned that we cannot control what the press releases in the papers nor how they write in their stories.

### 5) Committee Reports:

- Legislative – FRS issues – Charles Toney – Plans to meet with members of the Pinellas County Legislative Delegation when they are back in town from the session in Tallahassee.
- Personnel Rules – Hazel Lane – Continued meetings and discussions, EAC and PB will have draft of changes for review and comment prior to formal changes.

### 6) Old Business:

- Steve Yeatman requested to have a union representative attend an EAC meeting. Charles replied that an informational speaker would be acceptable but not for purposes of soliciting membership. We could possibly have a union speaker at a future EAC Rep meeting.
- Previous Delegate and joint Appointing Authority meeting minutes are being worked on and will be available in the near future for review.

### 6) New Business:

- July 25, 2013 from 8am-12pm at the Epi Center on Ulmerton Road the county will have a “reverse trade show” where vendors can approach various county division representatives and learn how to do business with them. It will be a first time show and should be exciting to not only view but participate in as well.
- EAC Representative elections coming up

Motion to adjourn by Tim with second by Elaine - Meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.  
EAC Representatives not in attendance at this meeting: Lisa Wombles, Mercedes Pearson, Randy Rose, Richard Carvale



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## Employee Advisory Council – Delegate Meeting Minutes - Thursday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 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.



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### Employees' Advisory Council - Representatives Meeting Minutes - Wednesday, August 21, 2013, County Annex, Room 429, 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

1) Call to order was at 2:35 p.m.

2) Approval of minutes.

Amendment to minutes - Steve Yeatman requested a change to the minutes to state he commented interest in having a guest speaker from the Union do a presentation to the council, and he inquired as to the status of previous EAC Delegate meeting minutes. Minutes to be amended as discussed – amended minutes approved

Welcome / Guests - Meagan Decker to Employee Relations as a Human Resources Coordinator, Ryan Brinson with Planning and Economic Development, Keith Dekle – EAC Personnel Board Appointee.

3) Comments from Peggy Rowe - At a recent Board meeting Bob LaSala indicated a 3% increase for employees is being worked into the budget and that our voices have been heard and acknowledged from the EAC's recommendation to increase it from the original 2.8% that was originally on the table. It will go into effect with the October 1, 2013 budget year and be reflected in our paychecks in the latter part of October's payroll. Also, the Personnel Rules Review Committee has been doing a lot great work and at the EAC's request is recommending two additional floating holidays for employees having 25 plus years of service. In addition to discussion about adding relatives for funeral leave, it was pointed out that the current rule allows for the Appointing Authority to grant a leave of absence with pay if the leave is deemed to be in the best interest of the classified service. Adding other family members, mainly spouses grandparents, is still being discussed. It is ultimately up to the appointing authority to approve the administrative leave. Peggy's plan is to present the new rules as a package that reflects the old rules verses the new rules so that employees and management can clearly see the changes in black and white format.

Steve Yeatman commented on the fact that we are human and will have sick days yet doesn't like the fact that it goes on the books as unscheduled leave time and that it is reflected in our reviews. He stated that the people that do it repeatedly are where the light should be shined on and not the occasional person who calls in. It should not be treated the same for the 56 hours straight because of the flu for example versus 5 Mondays in a row. Dave Blasewitz responded that we have moved away from that rule a long time ago and that it was just a guideline for management. Times have changed immensely and we try to make the employee and management feel better about the unscheduled leave because it does not hold the same weight as it once did.

There used to be the thought that if the employee wanted off and had the hours to do so that management was obligated to give them the time off.

Dave also answered this topic by stating that it is untrue and it is based on department needs as to whether it gets approved or not. Peggy stated that if we are facing any difficulties concerning this leave time or unscheduled leave topic in the workplace that she or someone from her staff would be happy to come out to the workplace to speak to employees and management about the leave time as well as unscheduled and how exactly it works for clarification purposes. At this time Jim Valliere also stated to please have the employee call Employee Relations department if they have leave time issues that need resolving.

- 4) Personnel Board – September 12<sup>th</sup> Personnel Board meeting – a termination appeal is scheduled and we are encouraging people to attend to view the proceedings as both sides (employee) as well as (management) will be represented by legal counsel.

- 5) Committee reports –

Legislative – Charles Toney – The FRS liability is better than expected for percentages as well as money currently in the coffers.

Personnel Rules – Recommended changes are being tracked. Hiring and pay to be worked on. Rule 28 – Inactive Service – currently under legal review. Other – as noted above for funeral and accrued leave.

Advocates – still in need of additional advocates.

- 6) Old Business – Human Resources is checking on possible Pinellas County Employee discount at R-Club childcare facilities. R-Club is a childcare provider for employees responding during emergency situations.

7) New Business –

We are currently looking into getting the elections committee together for our upcoming EAC elections in the fall.

We are looking for a guest speaker for our next EAC Delegate meeting.

Reminder of the Veterans Honor Flight that is scheduled to return to the St. Pete / Clearwater Airport at 8:30 p.m. on Tuesday September 17<sup>th</sup>.

Maria Keller asked the question as to having the interim evaluations changed from quarterly to perhaps another scheduled time to allow supervisors that have many employees enough time to gather information as well as create the interim review while still maintaining their daily work load. Personnel stated that the interims are open to be done on their own scheduled time and can be done at 3-4-6 month intervals whichever is deemed appropriate and approved by management team under their own appointing authority.

The meeting adjourned at 4pm. Motion by Tim, second by Elaine.