



Employees' Advisory Council



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

Employees' Advisory Council – Delegate Meeting Minutes

Extension Services, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo, FL

Thursday, July 28, 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.

Comments from Holly Schoenherr, Director of Human Resources

Holly discussed her background and commitment to serve the EAC and all employees. She will be meeting with each Appointing Authority, Commissioner, Personnel Board member and Human Resources staff member. There is a Two-Minute Tuesday link on the HR website to view the video: [Meet Holly Schoenherr](#).

Open Discussion

Gene Pressoir talked about the [Leading the Way Conference](#) being held on September 6, 2016 at the EpiCenter in Clearwater. There is capacity for 100 employees to sign up.

Lisa Wombles discussed the upcoming EAC elections and which divisions are open for election. The elections will be conducted electronically.

Dave Blasewitz was asked about letters being mailed by Express Scripts. He would like employees to forward the letters to Benefits so they can address the verbiage used in the letters. Dave briefly discussed how a surcharge of 50% can be charged for maintenance drugs if they are not ordered in 90-day quantities. Any person with questions about Express Scripts or prescriptions should contact Benefits.

The Benefits staff is looking into the MetLife contract for dental insurance to determine if adequate providers are available to our employees.

It is too early to know if the increase in the premiums for the health insurance will be passed on to the employees. The budget is still in the approval phase.

The Standard is making the changes Pinellas County has requested regarding Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) administration. Human Resources and representatives from The Standard meet every two weeks.

A question was asked if the salary caps for job classifications are being looked at. Dave responded that that topic is always being reviewed, and occasionally the maximum of pay grades is adjusted as necessary. A question was raised about the County using an independent contractor to assist with pay and classification. Dave clarified that the external consultant would offer suggestions and guidance which would supplement what the HR staff currently provides in regards to pay and classification practices.

Florida Retirement System (FRS) – Charles Toney said there has not been much movement since last year. He mentioned that a local legislator is not supportive of the FRS. If anyone is interested in getting involved with the FRS, contact Charles directly via email: ctoney@pinellascounty.org.

Guest Speaker – Director of Utilities

Randi Kim was introduced by Charles Toney who provided the audience with her background. Randi talked about her focus on doing things together with other departments as they relate to the Utilities areas of responsibility. She is working on career ladders and succession planning for the employees within Utilities. Safety is another area of concern for her employees.

A question was asked about watering restrictions. Randi explained how that process is organized. Water restrictions for citizens using drinking water are regulated by the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Reclaimed water restrictions are governed by County Ordinance.

Guest Speaker – Christmas Wish Tampa

Patricia Crawford from the radio station Q105 talked about the history and reasoning behind the Christmas Wish Fund / Tampa. Patricia and her husband Mason Dixon have been operating this non-profit corporation since 2002. It is completely volunteer based, and no salaries are paid. The donated funds are used to help families that are in the Tampa Bay area who have fallen on hard times. Relatives, friends or those in need are welcome to send letters that explain the situation. All letters are read and evaluated for validity. Donations are made in denominations from \$50 - \$500 or in gift cards. More information about the fund can be found at [Mason Dixon's Christmas Wish Fund](#) and on Facebook.

Adjourned

Lisa Wombles*	Richard Carvale*	Peg Poole*	Linda Cahill	Rich Castle*
Donna Beim*	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.



Employees' Advisory Council



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Employees' Advisory Council – Representative Meeting Minutes

County Office Annex, Room 429, Clearwater, FL
Wednesday, July 20, 2016, 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Call to Order

The EAC Representative meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. by Chair Lisa Wombles.

Approval of Minutes

Charles Toney motioned to approve the EAC Representative Minutes for June 15, 2016. The motion was seconded by Richard Carvale. The minutes were approved as written.

Introductions

Each Representative introduced themselves to the new Director of Human Resources, Holly Schoenherr.

Comments from Holly Schoenherr, Director of Human Resources

Holly discussed her background and reasons for wanting to lead Pinellas County Human Resources. She will be meeting individually with each Appointing Authority, Commissioner, Personnel Board member and Human Resources staff member. She wants to create a vision for the County and to learn how to best serve the employees. Holly's leadership philosophy is to have a strong commitment to a healthy, diverse, and high performing workforce. Through meetings and conversation she will develop a strategy on areas which need improvements. [[To learn more about Holly, view the Two-Minute Tuesday video - Meet Holly Schoenherr.](#)] Lisa commented on how the EAC is involved with a lot of meetings and was included in the hiring process of the Human Resources Director.

Personnel Board

The Board met on July 7, 2016. Keith Dekle mentioned that he does not like for any of the Board meetings to be cancelled because the duties delegated to the Human Resources Director by the Board should be discussed.

New Business

Lisa asked the members for topics for the Appointing Authority meeting on October. Suggestions included: possibility for employees to purchase leave time and budgeting for merit increases.

The Anti-Harassment Policy is being reviewed by Human Rights. There was a discussion about bullying and harassment. It was suggested to allow employees to bypass the chain of command because of friendships between some County employees. Mercedes will provide an update at the August EAC Representative meeting.

Lisa said the speaker for the Delegate meeting will be from the Christmas Wish Foundation.

Elections – Rich Castle made a motion to approve the [2016 EAC Election Procedures](#) as written. Charles Toney seconded the nomination. Vote passed unanimously. The EAC election process will begin in the fall. A letter will be sent to the Appointing Authorities in September regarding this process. EAC Representative areas up for election include: BCC Group III, Group IV, Group V, Group VII, Clerk-South, Other Appointing Authorities and Tax Collector.

The Pinellas Planning Council and Metropolitan Planning Organization have been renamed as Forward Pinellas. [Visit www.forwardpinellas.org]

Mercedes Pearson suggested the EAC submit an article to *The Pen* explaining what the EAC does.

Peg Poole asked how remote locations can be considered for Wellness Center equipment. Dave Blasewitz said the protocol is for the host facility to contact Crystal Lockwood with the request. There are several variables to be considered before equipment can be used in different buildings. A list of the current satellite fitness sites is on the [Wellness Center web page](#).

Meagan Decker provided handouts about the [Leading the Way Conference](#) being held this fall. Information will be sent via email on July 21.

Adjourned

Peg Poole made a motion to adjourn at 4:30. Lisa Wright seconded.

Lisa Wombles*	Richard Carvale*	Peg Poole*	Linda Cahill*	Rich Castle*
Donna Beim*	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.



Employees' Advisory Council



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APPROVED BY THE EAC

Employees' Advisory Council – Representative Meeting Minutes

County Office Annex, Room 429, Clearwater, FL
Wednesday, August 17, 2016, 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Call to Order

The EAC Representative meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. by Chair, Lisa Wombles.

Approval of Minutes

Charles Toney motioned to approve the EAC Representative Minutes for July 20, 2016. The motion was seconded by Richard Carvale. The minutes were approved as written.

Donna Beim motioned to approve the EAC Delegate Minutes for July 28, 2016. The motion was seconded by Richard Castle. The minutes were approved as written.

Comments from Holly Schoenherr, Director of Human Resources

Holly discussed how she has been meeting with many people to gain an understanding of their perspective on Pinellas County. She mentioned an [article in The Pen](#) which explains how she plans to be thoughtful and well informed about making any changes. They have to be strategically planned. For a limited time, an email account has been set up for all employees who would like to share any thoughts or bring new ideas and different perspectives to the issues we face in Pinellas County. The email address is: ShareWithHolly@PinellasCounty.org. The email address will be closed on September 9, 2016.

Human Resources Topics

Randy Rose suggested to have information shared by the Wellness Manager for time sensitive offerings be distributed to all employees, not only the Wellness Champions. There have been times when departments throughout the County have missed the opportunity to take advantage of programs due to lack of timely communication. Sue Keim will discuss this issue with Crystal Capone (previously Lockwood) and pursue a better method of communication. If anyone is interested in being a Wellness Champion for their department, contact Crystal at wellness@pinellascounty.org.

Old Business

FMLA – Dave Blasewitz addressed the communications he has received from employees having problems with The Standard and the slowness in responses from the Benefits department staff. Sue Keim gave an overview of the meetings with The Standard. In April, Human Resources and representatives from The Standard met to discuss the expectations of the Pinellas County employees. Timeliness of responses to claims submitted and better overall communication is a priority. The Standard is adjusting the emails being sent to supervisors which will clarify the information required for processing claims. HR is working with the supervisors and managers to educate them on the processes they need to follow for their employees. An FMLA call-in line is being implemented for managers to use for any questions they may have. Employees can request email communication from The Standard. Contact HR – Benefits with concerns regarding health insurance, FMLA and disability claims. When an employee contacts HR – Benefits by phone (464-4570) or email (employee.benefits@pinellascounty.org) they can expect a response from a team member usually within 24 hours. Many times additional follow-up is needed for the questions being asked;

however, an employee will be contacted to communicate that their questions have been received and are being worked on.

Service Awards – The Appointing Authorities support allowing temporary service to count towards service awards time and Rewards Program points. HR is working on the procedures now. If an employee has had a break in service between the temp time and hiring full time, the temporary time will not be considered for service awards.

Taleo – Some parts of the system for completing applications and supplemental questionnaires are being looked at. Some of the areas include a communication to be sent to the applicant acknowledging the application has been received and if you do not meet the minimum requirements for the position. If assistance is needed with Taleo, contact Jim Owens or Bertha Battle.

Christmas Wish Foundation – Donations for the local Tampa Bay Christmas Wish Fund are being accepted year round. EAC members will be collecting donations from their respective areas or donations can be made online. Contact any EAC member for more information.

Merit Awards – Holly Schoenherr, HR Director will be meeting with the Appointing Authorities in a few months to discuss.

New Business

FRS / Deferred Compensation – Dave responded to an earlier question with regard to deferred comp about lump sum deposits. He explained that a lump sum of money can be deposited into deferred comp. The employee's contributions may need to be adjusted.

Open Discussion

The suggestion of implementing an extra window for leave exchange for the employees who cannot take time off due to low staffing and will lose the money upon retirement will be discussed at the Appointing Authorities meeting in October.

Fitness - The YMCA is offering low-impact classes for a minimal fee to County employees if enough people enroll. The sessions will be held in the Wellness Center, 324 S. Ft Harrison Ave., Clearwater. Contact wellness@pinellascounty.org for more information.

Adjourned

Lisa Wombles*	Richard Carvale*	Peg Poole*	Linda Cahill*	Rich Castle*
Donna Beim*	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.

How to Deal with Ambiguity

“That must be wonderful; I have no idea what it means.”

~ Albert Camus

What do you do when asked to take action without a clearly defined goal or desired outcome? Are you able to deliver without having the full picture? Are you comfortable handling the risk or uncertainty? Do you feel a need for more clarity?

Many people find themselves struggling when faced with an ambiguous situation. Yet the amount of ambiguous situations and their level of ambiguity seem to increase with each passing year. Further, as one rises in an organization, ambiguous situations tend to become more and more frequent. Dealing with ambiguity is rapidly becoming one of the most essential leadership competencies, particularly in complex and rapidly changing environments.

Successful leaders deal with ambiguity by remaining calm and focused. They can comfortably shift gears. And they also help others navigate through the fog.

To tackle the challenges presented by ambiguous situations, we can first strive to make things clearer:

- Ask probing questions to seek a better understanding of the problem. Ask until you are satisfied you have a clearer picture of the causes and impacts.
- Get organized by writing what you know as well as your assumptions. Then categorize them into manageable and related segments that can be evaluated and acted upon in small steps.
- Remain flexible and revise your conclusions and solutions as more information becomes available. Ambiguous situations are hard to pin down. Do not be afraid to change direction even if that means losing work that has been done.

In spite of our very best efforts, many complex situations, by their very nature, remain ambiguous. Our next strategy, then, is to learn how to cope with the unavoidable level of uncertainty:

- Free yourself from the notion that you must come up with the perfect solution. Waiting to have all the information at hand before acting can sometimes lead to dire consequences or missed opportunities.
- Let go of the need to control events that fall outside of your control. Acknowledge that other factors influence success and feel confident you have increased your *likelihood* of success by taking appropriate actions and doing your best.
- Recognize that the presence of ambiguity is accompanied by some inherent risks. There will inevitably be times when you make a mistake because you did not have enough information. View those mistakes as learning opportunities that will increase your future chances for success.

Most of us can make good decisions when provided with sufficient information. What makes some more successful than others is the ability to make good decisions with insufficient amounts of information. That ability often comes from experience gained by a willingness to take measured risks.

One of the keys to career progression is learning not only to succeed personally in ambiguous situations, but to also help your team succeed. Use these tips to increase your level of comfort and your ability to deal with these difficult situations. Even more important, help teach others to do the same by sharing what you have learned.

Staying Calm Under Pressure Says a Lot About a Leader

The ability to manage your emotions and remain calm under pressure has a direct link to your performance. Research tells us that 90% of top performers are skilled at managing their emotions in times of stress in order to remain calm and in control.

The tricky thing about the anxiety that comes with stress is that it's an absolutely necessary emotion. In fact, performance peaks under the heightened activation that comes with moderate levels of stress. As long as the stress isn't prolonged, it is harmless.

Top performers have well-honed coping strategies that they employ under stressful circumstances. This lowers their stress levels regardless of what's happening in their environment, ensuring that the stress they experience is intermittent and not prolonged.

While we have all run across numerous effective strategies that successful people employ when faced with stress, what follows are five of the best strategies. Some of these strategies may seem obvious, but the real challenge lies in recognizing when you need to use them and having the means to actually do so in spite of your stress.

Appreciate what you have – Taking the time to contemplate what you're grateful for isn't merely the "right" thing to do, it also improves your mood because it reduces the stress hormone cortisol.

Avoid asking "What if?" – "What if?" statements throw fuel on the fire of stress and worry. Things can go in a million different directions, and the more time you spend worrying about the possibilities, the less time you'll spend focusing on taking action that will calm you down and keep your stress under control.

Stay positive – Positive thoughts help make stress intermittent by focusing your attention onto something that is completely stress-free. You have to

give your wandering brain a little help by consciously selecting something positive to think about. Any positive thought will do to refocus your attention. When things are going well, and your mood is good, this is relatively easy. When things are going poorly, and your mind is flooded with negative thoughts, this can be a challenge. In these moments, think about your day and identify one positive thing that happened, no matter how small. If you can't think of something from the current day, reflect on the previous day or even the previous week. Or perhaps you're looking forward to an exciting event that you can focus your attention on. The point here is that you must have something positive that you're ready to shift your attention to when your thoughts turn negative.

Squash negative self-talk – A big step in managing stress involves stopping negative self-talk in its tracks. The more you ruminate on negative thoughts, the more power you give them. Most of our negative thoughts are just that – thoughts, not facts.

Reframe your perspective – Stress and worry are fueled by our own skewed perception of events. It is easy to think that unrealistic deadlines, unforgiving bosses, and out of control traffic are the reasons we're so stressed all the time. You can't control many circumstances, but you can control how you respond to them. So before you spend too much time dwelling on something, take a minute to put the situation in perspective. If you aren't sure when you need to do this, try looking for clues that your anxiety may not be proportional to the stressor. If you're thinking in broad, sweeping statements such as, "Everything is going wrong" or "Nothing will work out", then you need to reframe the situation.

And remember, anyone can stay calm when things are going well. The person who doesn't lose their cool is the one who is remembered in a positive way, as the leader people want to follow.

Learning Opportunity

October 2016

Pinellas County
Human Resources
Helping U Succeed
www.pinellascounty.org/hr/training

Quarterly Training Calendar

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Oct 3 8:00am Freestyle Cruising (Extension's Magnolia Room)	4 8:30am Supervisory & Management Competencies Series - Fall Series (Studio B)	5 8:30am The Changing Environment & Future Trends in Leadership Development (Studio B) 1:00pm Budget 101 (Studio B) 3:00pm Office Recycling & Records Mgt: What You need to Know	6 8:30am Five Dysfunctions of a Team (Studio B)	7
10 8:30am Setting Sail (Annex 429)	11 8:30am Managing Workplace Stress (Sheriff's Office) 8:30am Supervisory & Management Competencies Series - Fall Series 3:00pm Records Management: Why It Matters (Annex 429)	12 8:30am Career Development Forum - 5 of 5 (Studio B)	13 8:30am Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Studio B)	14
17 8:30am Muster Drill - New Employee Orientation Class 2 (Extension)	18 8:30am Supervisory & Management Competencies Series - Fall Series (Studio B)	19	20 8:30am Workplace Diversity (Studio B) 8:30am Records Management 2.0 (Swisher 211)	21
24 8:30am Setting Sail (Annex 429)	25 1:00pm What To Do When Conflict Happens (Studio B)	26 8:30am Five Questions Every Leader Must Ask (Studio B)	27 8:30am Grants 101 (Utilities 4th floor) 8:30am Time Management (Annex 429)	28
31	Nov 1	2	3	4

Request enrollment for classes in OPUS. Users without OPUS access may register through their training coordinator. Class dates and times are subject to change. Not all classes are open to non-County Consortium members. Contact Training & Development at 464-3796 or email training@pinellascounty.org.

Learning Opportunity

November 2016

Pinellas County
Human Resources
Helping U Succeed
www.pinellascounty.org/hr/training

Quarterly Training Calendar

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Oct 31	Nov 1 8:30am Dealing with Difficult People (Annex 429) 8:30am Effective Listening (Studio B)	2 8:30am Effective Leadership (Utilities 4th floor) 1:00pm Give 'Em the Pickle (Studio B)	3	4
7	8 Election Day	9	10	11 Veteran's Day Holiday
14 8:30am Setting Sail (Annex 429)	15	16 8:30am Introduction to Supervision for Non-Supervisors (Studio B)	17 8:30am Managing Electronic Records 1.0 (Swisher 211)	18
21 8:30am Muster Drill - New Employee Orientation Class 2 (Extension)	22	23	24 Thanksgiving	25 Thanksgiving
28 8:30am Setting Sail (Annex 429)	29	30	Dec 1	2

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Learning Opportunity

December 2016

Pinellas County
Human Resources
Helping U Succeed
www.pinellascounty.org/hr/training

Quarterly Training Calendar

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Nov 28	29	30	Dec 1	2
5	6	7 8:30am Team Building (Utilities) 1:00pm Budget 101 (Studio B)	8	9
12 8:30am Setting Sail (Annex 429)	13	14	15	16
19 8:30am Muster Drill - New Employee Orientation Class 2 (Extension)	20	21	22	23
26 Holiday	27 8:30am Setting Sail (Annex 429)	28	29	30

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