Call to Order
The EAC Delegate meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Chair Lisa Arispe.

Comments from Terri Wallace, Human Resources Manager
- Terri Wallace is the Manager for the areas of Total Rewards, Organizational & Talent Development and Planning & Performance
- She had many suggestions to improve the workplace
  - Instead of looking at situations and trying to solve a problem, instead look at it as an enhancement of what is going well. Work on creating an encouraging workplace for all employees.
  - “Statistically speaking, turnover is the highest in the first three (3) years of employment. Why is that? We need to make sure that we are doing what we say. If we say that we are an accepting environment and encourage diversity, then we need to do that because a lot of times we don’t.” [Most of the time if employees do not feel accepted, it is because others are not aware of the impact for the new employee.]

Comments from James Valliere, Human Resources Business Partner
- The results of the Secondary Reviews, of the Compensation and Classification Study, were sent to those employees who submitted a request for review. [Results were sent March 6th via email.] Based on the results [of more than 500 secondary reviews, the decisions were such that] sixty-two (62) employees are eligible to appeal [further] to HR.
  - Based on a suggestion from the Personnel Board, on March 12th follow-up phone calls were made to fifty-three (53) employees who had not yet submitted a request [for appeal to ensure they got their notification and knew what they could do].
  - Those [appeal request hearings] requests are currently underway. HR is attempting to have the results back to the individual within 10 days of their hearing. [As of the EAC meeting, 27 had sent in appeal requests.]
  - Appealing employee is given the majority of the time to state their claim. HR is reviewing the position not the individual
  - If HR [Benefits] determines that there will be no change to the Evergreen decision, the employee may appeal to the Personnel Board

Guest Speaker – Barry Burton, County Administrator
- Merit Pay is important but it must be perceived as fair. It has to be well put together. Prior to jumping into a Merit Pay System it has to be done right and it must be consistent, [and we need to have a good performance management system in place. But it is a priority of mine to establish that and work with the EAC to do that.] [There is a meeting scheduled with the EAC Rep from the merit pay committee scheduled with Mr. Burton in April.]
- Secondary Reviews – Use the appeal process if you are eligible. If you are not eligible to appeal, in the future you can always request a review of your position. There will never be a time where all employees are satisfied with the outcome, however we do our best.
Back pay cannot be provided in the State of Florida except under very specific situations.

He does not feel that there is favoritism one way or the other between existing and new employees. We have to create an environment where employees want to stay, and this may result in them being more open to learning from those who have already been here.

Currently working with high schools and colleges to make students aware of government jobs; looking at getting interns from the schools.

Stated he cannot speak on hazard pay or first responder classifications. Has not had an opportunity to look at the positions.

Received a strong response to his live feed session. He will do more in the future and hopes to be able to answer questions in real-time.

He could not give a direct response regarding the use of Medical Marijuana by employees. Will have to look into the county’s policy. [When it comes to any substance abuse issue and the workplace, it is all about observed behavior. So if there are observable issues that make colleagues or leadership concerned and if it impacts your ability to work and do your job then that is a problem. There is a countywide drug-free workplace policy and it is still illegal at the federal level.]

Comments from EAC Chair, Lisa Arispe

- EAC Representatives will be reaching out to delegates regarding the Human Resources 2019 Goal Development Survey. The survey is intended to inform HR of our opinion on the importance level and urgency level of various items that were previously requested. We will be compiling the results so that we will have a representation of all Pinellas County Employees.
- Our Biannual meeting with the Appointing Authorities is scheduled for May 14, 2019.
- The Shoe Allowance for employees under the BCC will be increased to $150.00, from the current $125.00, effective October 1, 2019.

Open Discussion

- A Friend In Need (AFIN) – Concerns about the inability to donate time to an employee while they are waiting to receive long term disability. Also why can’t you donate to your direct supervisor or employees?
  - There are legal issues related to donating during the waiting period and as supplemental to leave, using as 1/3.
  - We can look at being able to donate to your directs, however that policy was put in place to prevent coercion and/or the perception of favoritism.
- Is HR going to look into Voluntary Benefits
  - Hopefully we can do an RFP to look in this area. Unfortunately we cannot just choose a company to use for Voluntary Benefits. We have to have interviews and allow for bids.
- HR Communication Survey has been sent out. Employees are being asked to let HR know how they would like to receive communication
  - Asked point of contact in field locations to hand employees paper versions of the survey
  - Survey ends April 5th

Adjourned
Meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.
Good Listening

“*The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them.*
~ Ralph G. Nichols

Considerable attention has been paid in the management literature to the importance of being a good listener. However, listening or “active listening” is actually something that is learned over time, and does not necessarily come naturally to people.

We all know that good communication skills are critical in every business environment. We also know that communication often breaks down. When there’s a breakdown, we usually think the solution is to speak more clearly. But often, the solution is better listening. Each of us has a habitual way of listening — a way of fitting what we hear into our preconceived notions. We are captives of our way of listening, often unaware that what we hear is not what others are saying. We need to listen beyond the words to the person’s underlying concerns. Fortunately, business listening skills can be learned and developed.

The process of listening is comprised of four different and distinct steps:

1. **Hearing** – Physical act of recognizing that someone is speaking to you and being able to understand what is being said.
2. **Interpretation** – Correctly (hopefully) interpreting the meaning of what is being said.
3. **Evaluation** – Determining the importance of what is being said and deciding what to do with the information.
4. **Responding** - Verbal or visual response from you that allows the speaker to determine whether you have gotten the message and what your reaction is.

An important ingredient to building a strong, motivated team is to promote the importance of listening among all members. It is not good enough for just you as the leader to be a good listener. You must work to build the listening talent among everyone to truly realize its benefits. Here are a few things you can reinforce with your staff to promote effective listening within the workplace:

- It is virtually impossible to talk and listen at the same time. Allow others to have an opportunity to speak and express their ideas before responding. Do not assume that you know what other people are about to say.
- Asking questions or requesting clarification from a co-worker who is speaking to you demonstrates that you are trying to understand what is being said. It will also help with the interpretation and evaluation processes.
- View the listening process as an opportunity for gathering additional information and learning something new, not just something that has to be done.
- Do not assume that the speaker knows that you are hearing, interpreting, and evaluating things correctly. Provide feedback and visual cues such as head nodding and good eye contact.
- Pay attention to non-verbal cues such as tone of voice and facial expression.

Human Resources offers several courses to hone your listening techniques (visit the Learning Catalog). By becoming a better listener, you can improve your ability to influence, persuade and negotiate. Good listening leads to stronger rapport among team members, fewer misunderstandings, and more effective problem solving, further solidifying your status as a strong manager and leader.

“If speaking is silver, then listening is gold.”
~ Turkish Proverb

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