The Unified Personnel Board (UPB) met in regular session at 6:32 P.M. on this date in the County Commission Assembly Room, Fifth Floor, Pinellas County Courthouse, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida, with the following members present: Ron Walker, Vice-Chair; Kenneth Peluso; Paul Rogers; and Joan M. Vecchioli.

Not Present: Ricardo Davis, Chair; Jeffrey Kronschnabl; and William A. Schulz II.

Also Present: Terri Wallace, Human Resources Manager; Carl E. Brody, Senior Assistant County Attorney; Jenny Masinovsky, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk; and other interested individuals.

AGENDA

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

I. Citizens to be Heard

EAC

II. Employees’ Advisory Council Representative

Personnel Board

III. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Request Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Personnel Board Meeting held July 11, 2019

Personnel Board

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. Request Approval to Return Exempt Employee Mary Flockerzi to the Classified Service

2. Discuss Proposed Changes to the Appeal Procedures (County Attorney)

Human Resources

V. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. Action Taken Under Authority Delegated by the Personnel Board

2. Other Informational Items

Human Resources

VI. HR HIGHLIGHTS

1. Contracts/Budget Administration

All documents provided to the Clerk’s Office have been made a part of the record.
CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Walker called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M.; whereupon, he led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

No one appeared in response to the Vice-Chair’s call for citizens wishing to be heard.

EMPLOYEES’ ADVISORY COUNCIL (EAC) REPRESENTATIVE

EAC Representative Charles Toney provided the following update regarding the July 25 EAC Delegate meeting:

- Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller, highlighted the important role of the EAC in bringing forth concerns of the employees and communicating with the Appointing Authorities.

- Canaan McCaslin, Special Assistant to the County Administrator, presented information on the Lunch Pals mentoring program and workshop.

- Robert Allen, HCP Associates, discussed the importance of the upcoming bi-annual Employee Voice Survey measuring employee satisfaction, which will be conducted by HCP Associates and run for two weeks, starting on August 12.

Mr. Toney indicated that at the July UPB meeting, EAC Chair Lisa Arispe informed the members that he and she had been accused of violating the County’s anti-bullying policy; and that following an investigation completed by a Human Resources (HR) representative from the Tax Collector’s Office, Mr. Burke and County Administrator Barry Burton delivered a written opinion on the matter, stating that no conclusive evidence of a violation was found and no further action is necessary; whereupon, Mr. Toney offered to provide copies of the same to the members.

During discussion of the County’s anti-bullying policy scope, purpose, and background, and responding to queries by Ms. Vecchioli and Mr. Toney, Attorney Brody indicated that the policy is broad and includes forums such as the EAC; and that personal information pertaining to anti-bullying matters is not exempt from public records. Mr. Toney noted that while the nature of
concerns brought to the EAC may often trigger heated or uncomfortable discussions, opinions of all are welcome and no one is singled-out; that there is no opportunity for retaliation; and that the aforementioned incident was finalized.

Noting that she was opposed to instituting the policy, Ms. Vecchioli expressed concern that it may deter participation on the EAC and similar activities, reiterating that the policy language should be reviewed to ensure the Board’s intent, and Attorney Brody and Mr. Toney agreed. Vice-Chair Walker opined that heated discussions should be expected and protected at meetings of informal legislative bodies such as the EAC.

Ms. Wallace discussed the importance of preserving the policy, noting that 95 percent of performance problems, including those in the County, are based on behavioral and interpersonal issues; that it is necessary to clarify behavioral expectations and educate the organization on the type of conduct that is and is not allowed under the anti-bullying policy; and that while it may be abused like any law, having it in place provides a healthier working environment. Mr. Toney pointed out that the EAC originally requested the policy implementation based on employees’ concerns; whereupon, he remarked that he and Ms. Arispe feel targeted by the HR Department, given that two unfounded accusations, the latest being the bullying accusation, in which HR was involved have been brought against them in seven months; that it is causing stress and disruption of work; and that the trust between the EAC and HR has deteriorated.

Mr. Toney related that a Merit Pay Committee formed by the EAC, with the participation of the HR Department and the Appointing Authorities, conducted extensive research on merit pay; and that the Committee presented its recommendation to adopt a merit pay system previously used by the County at the joint meeting with the Appointing Authorities on May 14; whereupon, he questioned why HR representatives brought forth new information about other merit pay options at that time that had not been mentioned during the 10-month course of the Committee’s work.

Mr. Toney related that the EAC has completed and voted to approve the revisions to its bylaws, indicating that an article relating to the HR Director’s annual evaluation timeframe was added. He noted that the bylaws currently require Personnel Board approval for any revisions, and asked if the Board wishes to limit that to statutorily required approval of the matters relating to EAC member composition only, and discussion ensued. Ms. Vecchioli pointed out that while the revised bylaws are included in the agenda packet, the item is informational, and requested to see the statute prior to voting on the revisions, and Mr. Toney agreed to provide it.
CONSENT AGENDA – APPROVED

Upon motion by Mr. Rogers, seconded by Ms. Vecchioli and carried unanimously, the minutes of the regular meeting held July 11, 2019 were approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Request to Return to Classified Service – Approved

Ms. Wallace introduced the item and addressed queries by the members; whereupon, Ms. Vecchioli moved, seconded by Mr. Peluso and carried unanimously, that the request by exempt employee Mary Flockerzi to be demoted to the classified position of an HR Analyst be approved.

Proposed Changes to Appeal Procedures

Attorney Brody referred to the draft procedures included in the agenda packet and reviewed the options proposed to clarify language inconsistencies identified at last month’s hearing of classification appeals, and discussion ensued.

Ms. Vecchioli explained that under Option 1, the Board would review the evidence presented and considered during the informal hearing process before the HR Director that precedes an appeal hearing; and that Option 2 would allow the Board to review additional evidence submitted thereafter, noting that under both options, the Board would decide whether the appellant, by the preponderance of the evidence, has shown that the action taken by the Director should be changed. Responding to query by Mr. Peluso, Attorney Brody stated that currently the Board may exercise both options.

Mr. Peluso moved, seconded by Ms. Vecchioli, that Option 1 be adopted by the Board for its classification appeal procedures, and discussion ensued regarding opportunities to provide new evidence after the deadline, adherence to the process, circumstances of the last classification appeal, and the preponderance of the evidence standard, and Human Resources Officer Jack Loring and Attorney Brody provided input.

Upon call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Action Taken Under Authority Delegated by the Personnel Board

The document titled Action Taken Under Authority Delegated by the Unified Personnel Board has been made a part of the record.

Classification and Compensation Study Update

Mr. Loring reported that the recommended changes to exempt positions are being implemented based on Phase II of the study by Evergreen Solutions; that 547 employees will be notified by email tomorrow regarding preliminary recommendations concerning job classifications and pay grades; and that final results are expected in September, following an optional secondary review by Evergreen.

Noting that the Board has the authority to establish and change exempt classifications, Mr. Loring indicated that a classification crosswalk will be brought to the Board for consideration next month; and that the proposed new fiscal year adjustments to minimums and maximums for the classified plan will also be included on the next meeting’s agenda.

In response to queries by Ms. Vecchioli and Mr. Peluso, Mr. Loring and Ms. Wallace related that Evergreen recommended looking into merit pay options; and that HR Director Holly Schoenherr expressed opposition to merit pay, but offered support to any Appointing Authorities opting to utilize it; whereupon, at their request, HR has developed and will be evaluating a merit pay plan, including establishing tighter controls around performance management, noting that if approved, it would be implemented in October of 2020.

Other Informational Items

The minutes of the EAC Representative meeting of June 19, 2019 were received for filing.

HR HIGHLIGHTS

Contracts/Budget Administration

Contract Administration Coordinator Danielle Holland referred to a PowerPoint presentation titled Human Resources Contract Administration and Budget Overview and discussed the purpose and goals of the Contract Administration initiative, including streamlining of contract processes to
ensure alignment with the HR strategic plan and monitoring vendor performance to promote customer service; whereupon, she discussed her responsibilities in ensuring the HR Department’s budgetary soundness.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Vice-Chair Walker adjourned the meeting at 7:33 P.M.

Chair