

COUNTY PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING  
JUNE 2, 1994, 2:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Tom Bacote  
          Johnnie Evans  
          Cliff Strassenburg, County Manager  
          Danny Higgins, Deputy County Attorney  
          Doug Candors, Trial Attorney  
          Pat Jones, Personnel Director  
          Rhonda R. Davis, Deputy Clerk  
          Press

ABSENT: Juanita Gonzalez

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Continuation of Discussion of Alternate Plans for Recognizing and Compensating County Employees.

Pat Jones offered a clarification to the minutes of May 11th. The clarification was noted by the Deputy Clerk.

Ms. Jones advised that the salary plan was reviewed during the last meeting and how the plan was structured. The major difference now is that the only way to go through the plan and progress to the next step is through a merit step. No merits have been issued in four years. This is the primary reason employees are lumped in the same step. The Option 1 proposal has a hiring rate, a minimum salary and a maximum salary. The steps have been eliminated in this option.

Questions were asked concerning moving from one step to the next.

Ms. Jones explained the only way to move from one step to the next was to receive a merit pay increase or to have the position reclassified.

Commissioner Bacote asked if a Department Head had the authority to move an employee from one step to the next.

Ms. Jones advised Department Heads do not have the authority to move an employee from one step to the next in their particular pay grade.

Commissioner Evans asked questions concerning the longevity pay.

Ms. Jones explained that longevity is received by an employee after ten consecutive years of service. The amount of the lump sum payment is based on the prior year's salary and the total number of years of service.

Ms. Jones explained when the current pay plan was developed it involved steps, but now this plan is not useful because no merits have been given. Merits are determined by the board of Commissioners and when funds are allocated, the Department Head determines who receives the merits.

Ms. Jones also explained she feels a combination of needs of employees, not one particular thing, contributes to our turnover rate.

Commissioner Evans, upon reviewing Option 1 stated he would like to continue to give employees with fifteen or more years of service a little something more than the employees with fewer years of service. He feels with the Option 1 proposal, the newer employees receive more than the ones who have served the county for a longer period of time. He suggested they may want to consider dropping the percentage rate of salary increase for the new employees and increasing the rate with a possible maximum of 5% for the employees with eleven or more years of service.

Doug Canders explained that the Department of Social Services now has workers who serve as interviewers and work leaders. The work leaders work the case load and train the new personnel. Because of the large amount of turnover, the work leaders aren't doing anything but training the new people. They cannot work on their case load. The county is costing itself a lot of money.

Ms. Jones advised the county only has a small number of employees over the eleven years of service mark.

Cliff Strassenburg stated it would not cost much to increase the percentage of salary increase with the employees with fifteen or more years of service. The percentage of increase could be cut off at the 20 years of service mark.

Pat Jones stated they may have to change the numbers and percentages based on a yearly review. Longevity pay may not be the most feasible thing to do without violating other procedures.

Commissioner Bacote stated the county must retain the new employees once they are trained in order to get some of the investment back.

Pate Jones advised the committee that it costs approximately five thousand dollars to get a vacant position filled. It costs the county approximately eight thousand to get a position filled if you include the cost of training, orientation, etc. In the recommended plan, they tried to make a small progression in the recognition.

The employees with less than one year and up to two years of service need to have some incentive to stay with the county. A survey was done a few years ago with the employees and the information gathered in this survey was taken into consideration. Many employees feel ten years is too long to wait for compensation.

Commissioner Bacote asked how much it would cost to implement Option 1 on July 1st this year.

Pat Jones stated it would not take long for Data Processing to work out a projected cost. She noted this plan will displace the cost of living increases and the longevity program. The costs for Option 1 should not exceed prior year expenses for the other programs. The costs should not be more than 1.8 million to implement Option 1.

Commissioner Bacote stated he feels a 3.8% increase is a comfortable pay raise.

Cliff Strassenburg stated the board and management needs to cost this proposal out and see what the Commissioners want to do. He has proposed something by way of a pay raise and a way to move some of the county's employees out of the first step. A new proposal should be carefully considered for the next fiscal year. He noted the board will also need to consider some of the human services positions that have proven difficult to fill.

Commissioner Bacote stated special consideration may need to be given to certain positions in the human services area.

Mr. Strassenburg stated the board may need to consider a benefits package for some of these positions. Other counties have taken this approach.

Commissioner Bacote questioned a mechanism whereby the Department Head could request that a person be moved from one step in a pay grade to another.

Ms. Jones advised she has recommended a pay for performance plan that could be considered as well.

Mr. Strassenburg noted it would be a big job to set standards for a pay for performance plan.

Ms. Jones noted in a pay for performance plan, usually the plan is valued by outside consultants.

Mr. Strassenburg advised a pay for performance plan has better standards to evaluate an employee than a merit plan does.

Commissioner Evans stated he has no problem with Option 1 with a few percentage adjustments for employees with fifteen to twenty years of service.

Ms. Jones advised the Commissioners could adjust the range of the percentages from year to year if they wished.

Mr. Strassenburg stated management can refine the plan and get cost estimates. He would like to see something implemented in July of 1995.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Evans offered a motion to take Option 1 in concept and directed management to cost this plan out and bring back to the committee for further consideration.

**SECOND:** Commissioner Bacote

**VOTE:** UNANIMOUS

Commissioners Bacote and Evans advised staff to cancel the June 8, 1994 regularly scheduled Personnel Committee meeting due to budget workshops and to give management time to compile information requested on Option 1.

Meeting adjourned at 3:25 PM.