

COUNTY PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 20, 1996, 2:00 PM

PRESENT: Johnnie Evans, Commissioner
Lee Warren, Commissioner

STAFF: James Martin, Deputy County Manager
Doug Canders, Staff Attorney
Pat Jones, Personnel Director
Rhonda Davis, Deputy Clerk
Ellen Fadden, Personnel Department

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Discussion of Health Insurance for Board of Education members.

Commissioner Evans stated he is of the understanding the majority of school board members have other health insurance benefits. Mary Emily Royal has contacted him concerning this matter. He feels the School Board Members should be covered under the School System's insurance. He would have no problem with letting them have the same insurance the County has.

Doug Canders advised they would need to review the Federal Employer Retirement Security Act. The County can have a group plan that covers Cumberland County employees. They cannot have a plan that covers a certain group and excludes another group. That may be a problem if Board of Education members are covered under the County's insurance and all school employees are not. He will review the Federal Employer Retirement Security Act as well as the statutes and report back to the committee.

MOTION: Commissioner Evans offered a motion to instruct the County Legal staff to review the Federal Employer Retirement Security Act and also confer with the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners concerning the offering of health insurance to Board of Education members and report back to the committee.

SECOND: Commissioner Warren

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Commissioner Warren advised there is no School Board in the State that has health insurance. He is not sure Cumberland County needs to be the first.

2. Determination of Status of Proposed Pay Plan Option 1.

James Martin stated he is aware there has been some discussion to suspend consideration of a new pay plan and give consideration to bringing in a consultant to review the County's pay plan and give a recommendation after being given the objectives the County is interested in addressing. He noted he and the County Manager have discussed this matter. Some of the Commissioners are concerned about the proposed pay plan as well. If a consultant is hired, the Board will need to come up with definitive statements to ask them to address.

Commissioner Warren asked the parameters of the issues to be addressed.

Mr. Martin noted the initial issue was to do something with the current longevity system due to the Fair Labor Standards issue. He noted many employees seem to like the current longevity system. The Board may want to consider reducing the years of service at which an employee can begin receiving longevity pay.

Commissioner Evans stated one of the initial concerns expressed when the Personnel Committee first began looking into a new pay plan was the amount of employees leaving County employment after working only a few years. He also noted there are great concerns particularly with Sheriff's Department employees that the proposed pay plan could hurt long term employees.

Mr. Martin noted the new pay plan increases the amount of money the Board would have no control over. He stated the board may want to make modifications to the current longevity plan with the years of service as early as this budget year.

Pat Jones stated the proposed plan was never to be a permanent plan. It was to be implemented and used for a few years then the County would go to a performance based plan.

Commissioner Warren stated he has a problem with selling a new pay plan to employees and then taking it away after a few years.

Mr. Martin noted that even though a large majority of County employees are at the first step in their pay grade, some are at the high end and are receiving longevity, due to their years of service. With the proposed pay plan, their longevity would stop and they would likely stop receiving pay increases once they reach the top of their pay scale.

Mr. Canders stated the Consultants could be asked what the costs would be if the County does not implement a new pay plan and what it is costing the County by continuing the way we are going at this time.

Commissioner Evans asked Mr. Martin if he knew of any firms that could do this work for the County.

Mr. Martin advised he was aware of some firms that do this kind of work and approximately what they charge depending on what is to be done. Mr. Strassenburg received a letter from a firm that advised they could do a review of a single position market study to determine if the minimum pay range is sufficient for a minimal fee.

Commissioner Evans noted it may be good to have an outside company come in to do this study.

Commissioner Warren noted they would have to work closely with the County Personnel Department. He asked if the Personnel Committee would need to set the parameters for the consultant.

Mr. Martin asked Ms. Jones to come up with a statement for the consultants and bring it to the committee for review. He noted the consultants would do a review of the job

descriptions and determine how they should be classified. They would then arrange the job positions in a classification and give a proposed pay plan. He asked Ellen Fadden if she felt comfortable that the County's job classifications were where they should be at this point or if they needed review.

Ms. Fadden stated she does not feel comfortable saying every classification is where it should be at this time.

Ms. Jones noted there are approximately 600 classes that would need to be reviewed.

Commissioner Evans stated he felt the consultants should address the following issues: longevity, classification, job descriptions, competitiveness and benefits.

Mr. Martin noted the consultants would not have to review every job, only the ones that had not been reviewed within the last three years.

Ms. Fadden noted several large counties like to have all their job positions reviewed and updated every three years. It does take considerable resources to do these reviews. Most of these counties have more than one person working full time on position reviews. Most consulting firms use a guiding committee in the entity they are working in. The committee would be made up of management, employees and personnel staff members.

MOTION: Commissioner Evans offered a motion to direct management to investigate and bring back immediate recommendations, some parameters and estimated cost figures to hire a consultant to do a classification and pay plan study.
SECOND: Commissioner Warren
VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Ms. Jones noted it will be important to maintain what the consultants recommend.

3. Other Committee Concerns

No other committee concerns were raised.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 PM.