

COUNTY PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 13, 1997, 1:00 PM

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Bacote, Commissioner (Arrived at 2:00 PM)
Johnnie Evans, Commissioner
H. Mac Tyson II, Commissioner

OTHERS: Ed Melvin, Commissioner
Kenny Pope, Environmental Health Specialist, Health Department
Archibald Ajmal, Health Department

STAFF: Cliff Strassenburg, County Manager
James Martin, Deputy County Manager
Pat Jones, Personnel Director
Neil Yarborough, County Attorney
Rhonda Davis, Deputy Clerk

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Discussion: Longevity Pay.

Deputy County Manager James Martin presented Longevity Pay Plan Option 1 and 2 to the Committee members. Option 1 proposed longevity beginning with three years of service up to ten years of service. Option 2 proposed longevity beginning with five years of service up to ten years of service. These proposals would not change the current longevity for employees with ten or more years of service. Options 1 and 2 vary the longevity percentage rate for the years of service.

Mr. Martin then presented the Pay Plan Supplemental Salary Year 1 Implementation A, B & C to the Committee members. These proposals would move employees up into their pay range based on their years of service. This would eliminate the large number of employees lumped at the minimum salary of their particular pay grade.

Mr. Strassenburg noted the new Classification System does not address longevity or the problem of the large number of employees lumped at the first step in their pay grade. The proposed pay plan makes sure all salaries are in the right range according to the market.

Commissioner Tyson asked questions about the Pay Plan Supplemental Salary proposal.

Mr. Martin advised this proposal considers cumulative years of service.

Mr. Strassenburg advised three quarters of the County's workforce is in step one of their pay grade. That equates to 1500 of the 2300 employees. The pay study was done to put all jobs at the right pay range. This Supplemental Salary proposal could be done on a one-time basis to scatter the employees currently at the first step of the pay grade. Employees would then move based on performance. The Board could decide to leave the plan as it is with increases based purely on longevity. The two proposals could be combined. The Board could combine the Supplemental Salary proposal and move employees through the pay grade based on longevity and give an increase based on above average performance. He noted departments are working to get certain classification errors corrected. Longevity is a one-time bonus at Christmas that does not add to the employees base pay.

Commissioner Tyson asked about the continuation of cost of living increases.

Mr. Strassenburg stated cost of living increases deal with buying power. A cost of living increase would increase the minimum and maximum salary for a position. The Board doesn't necessarily need to do a cost of living increase every year. There needs to be a mechanism for employees to get ahead of the game. Cost of living keeps them even. Performance increases give them the opportunity to get ahead. If we want to award superior employees there needs to be some sort of performance element in the pay plan.

Commissioner Evans stated a cost of living increase is for the essentials. We need to make sure the employees can move forward.

Mr. Martin then presented the State Comprehensive Compensation Program outline for the committee to review.

Mr. Strassenburg then presented a memorandum from Dr. Williams of the Health Department. The memorandum outlined concern from employees regarding the proposed pay plan. Each of the concerns have not even been addressed by the Committee yet.

Commissioner Tyson stated he does not have a problem with Dr. Williams' salary. He does not want to see what happened with the Department Heads happen again. His concern is with the 1500 employees at the first step in their pay grade. He wants to make adjustments where they are needed. Not where there isn't a problem.

Mr. Booth with the Health Department stated he wanted to attend the meeting today on his own time to learn something about the study because he did not know very much. When he was hired with the County he was told there was a merit plan, but he has never seen it. He has questions about what warrants the base pay.

Mr. Strassenburg stated the salary is arrived at by looking at the minimum education requirements, complexity of the job, mathematical, mechanical, logical reasoning, experience, training and many other factors. Health Department employees fall under state personnel guidelines and these employees did not fill out the questionnaires other county employees completed for the consultants. The state office of personnel uses the same system for job descriptions.

Commissioner Evans stated the three things the Personnel Committee wanted to accomplish with the pay plan was to make sure everyone was treated fairly, have a plan that was affordable and one that retained employees who have been with the county three to four years and are trained.

Mr. Booth stated his main issue with the pay plan was that it was more difficult to obtain certification as an Environmental Health Specialist and to maintain certification than it was for a nurse. Yet the nurse position salary minimum is three thousand more than the Environmental Health Specialist.

Commissioner Bacote arrived at the meeting.

Commissioner Evans noted Commissioner Bacote had a conflict with the 1:00 PM meeting time for this committee and would have the same conflict each month due to another commitment. He asked Commissioner Bacote if it would be beneficial to him if the meeting time was changed to 2:00 PM.

Commissioner Bacote advised a 2:00 PM meeting time for the Personnel Committee would make it easier for him to attend.

MOTION: Commissioner Tyson offered a motion to change the regular meeting time for the County Personnel Committee from 1:00 PM on the second Wednesday of each month to 2:00 PM on the second Wednesday.

SECOND: Commissioner Evans

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Commissioner Tyson stated he would like to do something with the County's longevity pay as soon as possible.

Ms. Jones noted over 50% of County employees leave the County before five years of service.

Commissioner Tyson stated the two main complaints he has heard from County employees is that the ones who have been with the County for a long time aren't going to get anything under the new pay plan and from employees who have been here about five years stating new employees are hired making the same as they are. He feels the implementation of longevity beginning with three years of service would give employees a "shot in the arm" right away.

Mr. Strassenburg stated a change in the longevity plan could be implemented this December. A good portion of the cost could come from department's lapsed salaries.

MOTION: Commissioner Tyson offered a motion to amend Section 10-64 subsection 3 of the Cumberland County concerning Longevity Pay and adjust the table as follows:

3 years	.75%
5 years	1.00%
7 years	1.25%
10 years	1.50%
15 years	2.25%
20 years	3.25%
25 years	4.50%

As part of the motion Commissioner Tyson recommended this amendment be forwarded to the full Board of Commissioners for approval.

SECOND: Commissioner Bacote

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Mr. Strassenburg noted the next step in the pay plan is the implementation.

Mr. Martin advised he has some information from Fort Bragg that will be presented at the next meeting.

Personnel Committee
August 13, 1997
Page 4

Commissioner Bacote asked Mr. Strassenburg if the new pay plan would be implemented in January as planned. He also asked if questions concerning job titles and descriptions with the new pay plan were being worked out.

Mr. Strassenburg advised it could be implemented if the Committee keeps moving forward.

Ms. Jones advised all the job titles and descriptions have been completed and forwarded to the consultants for review. Approximately 19% of the County's workforce sent in their job description for additional review and correction. Supervisors have supported what the employees have said needed correcting in their job description. Recommendations will be coming back from the consultants.

Meeting adjourned at 2:37 PM.