

**COUNTY PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1998, 2:00 PM**

Present: Johnnie Evans, Chairman
Tom Bacote, Commissioner
H. Mac Tyson II, Commissioner

Staff: James Martin, Deputy County Manager
Juanita Pilgrim, Assistant County Manager
Grainger Barrett, Senior Staff Attorney
Amy Cannon, Finance Director
Howard Smith, Information Services Director
James Lawson, Interim Personnel Director
Rhonda R. Davis, Deputy Clerk to the Board

Chairman Evans duly called the meeting to order.

1. Approval of Minutes of the September 9, 1998 meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Bacote offered a motion to approve the September 9, 1998 minutes of the Personnel Committee.

SECOND: Commissioner Tyson

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

2. Consideration of Proposed Recruitment and Retention Plan for Mainframe Computer Personnel.

BACKGROUND: At the October 5, 1998 Board of Commissioners meeting, Howard Smith, Information Services Director, reported to the Board that he had lost thirty percent of the county's programming staff in the past month. Management is proposing to increase the recruitment salary to the mid-point and to increase the salary of certain current employees above the mid-point based on years of service per the attached Schedule "E". The information is attached hereto and made a part of these minutes.

RECOMMENDATION/PROPOSED ACTION: Consider recommending approval of the attached plan to the Board of County Commissioners.

Mr. Martin explained that only those employees involved with the mainframe will be affected by these salary adjustments. He believes this plan will help the County address the recruitment issue and help the county keep existing key people.

Commissioner Bacote expressed his concern about the Year 2000 operations.

Howard Smith advised the Committee that his department was working on Saturdays to help make up for the shortage of staff. This, however, can only go on for so long before these employees become frustrated and begin looking for other employment themselves. He feels the County is in pretty good shape and on schedule with the major programs that will be affected with the Y2K change. He cannot guarantee there will be no computer problems, but he doesn't think there will be. The Tax Administrator and Finance Director are testing their packages now. This includes the payroll program. They have from now until February '99 before they will need to use the system for Y2K. If his department loses one more programmer, they will be in a critical situation.

Mr. Smith stated he has other people in his office that he feels could be replaced and are not essential personnel. The employees listed in the proposal are critical personnel. There is a great deal of competition for computer programmers right now. According to the information he is receiving, the competition for programmers won't ease until the year 2003.

Commissioner Tyson asked Mr. Smith about the software the Tax Administrator is discussing obtaining.

Mr. Martin stated the software the Tax Administrator wants to get does not have anything to do with the Y2K.

Mr. Smith stated the software the Tax Administrator wants to get will help him with the next revaluation.

Commissioner Tyson asked Mr. Martin if management recommends the committee approve this plan.

Mr. Martin advised management was recommending approval of the plan.

Mr. Smith stated he has advertised for one of the vacant programmer positions twice and has only received nine applicants. Five of those nine applicants were forwarded to his office. He felt only one of those applicants was a good candidate, but that person was already making more than the County's starting salary.

MOTION: Commissioner Bacote offered a motion to accept the recommendation of management and recommend approval to the Board of Commissioners of the Proposed Recruitment and Retention Plan for Mainframe Computer Personnel. He also stated this item was to be included on the October 19, 1998 Commissioners meeting agenda for consideration.

SECOND: Commissioner Tyson
VOTE: UNANIMOUS

3. Report on Performance Appraisal Implementation Schedule.

Mr. Martin reviewed the Performance Appraisal Implementation Schedule to the Committee. He noted there was a follow-up meeting with Department Heads to review the entire process. Between now and November 30th, Department Heads are to have their employee appraisals completed and submit the "Weighted Rating" to Finance. Mr. Martin then reviewed the remainder of the schedule.

Mr. Martin stated the Board of Commissioners need to decide who will do the appraisals for the Sheriff and Register of Deeds. The Commissioners may decide to do these appraisals themselves.

He noted the information was being provided at the request of Commissioner Bacote. If the Committee wants to give input or make suggestions, they should do so. He noted Management had planned to do a "dry" or initial trial run of the performance appraisals with no money or increases awarded. He knows there will be a lot of questions. They want to ultimately do varying amounts of increases or merit pay based on the rating an employee receives.

Commissioner Tyson stated he feels the committee should think about giving employees a portion of a merit based on their score instead of the total 2%.

Mr. Martin stated he feels that because there has not been an initial run of these appraisals he believes it should be administered for the first time and if the employee makes a certain score or rating they all should be given the same percentage of increase. He knows this proposal is not the ideal way to do a performance appraisal for employees. In the future, however, the salary increases will be awarded on a range according to the rating the employee receives.

Mr. Martin stated if the employee does not meet minimum expectations on the performance appraisal, and receives at least a 3.00 rating, he does not feel that employee should get any type of increase.

Mr. Martin stated this proposal to give everyone a 2% increase as long as they achieve a certain rating is due to the fact management is not sure they have done all they needed to do from a legal standpoint to let all employees know what will be expected of them in order to get a high rating.

Grainger Barrett, Senior Staff Attorney stated that until the appraisals are done for the first time, employees won't know what expectations their supervisor has. Also, management won't know how the range in the ratings will "shake out" from a funds expectation standpoint.

James Lawson, Interim Personnel Director stated many employees have never had an evaluation of their job performance done because merit increases have not been given for many years.

Juanita Pilgrim, Assistant County Manager stated she feels there may also be a problem with the time issue in having the appraisals completed. She asked if there had been any thought of giving bonuses to employees in December and then have Department Heads do the appraisals in January.

Mr. Barrett stated they need to have a first data run to minimize the legal risk to the County.

Mr. Martin again stated County employees are not familiar with what is on the performance appraisal form.

Commissioner Evans asked who would be completing the appraisals. The Department Head or an employee's immediate supervisor.

Mr. Martin advised supervisors will complete the appraisal and review it with their supervisor before it is reviewed with the employee.

Ms. Pilgrim stated there has been some discussion about who would evaluate the Department Heads over the human services agencies. She asked if the Boards that have the authority to hire and fire the Health, Mental Health, Social Services and Library Directors are to do the appraisals or is she to do them.

Mr. Barrett stated one of the major benefits of the performance appraisals will be improved productivity.

Commissioner Bacote stated he likes what has been presented by management. He feels giving a 2% increase across the board to employees achieving the minimum rating and giving employees, supervisors and department heads a chance to review the process is the best route to take.

Commissioner Evans stated he has concerns with fairness and giving the same percentage increase to the employee receiving a rating of 3 and the one rating a 4 or 5.

Personnel Committee

October 14, 1998

Page 5

Mr. Barrett stated he hopes that a score of three will be considered a good average employee, not mediocre. From a legal point of view, a rating of 3 is not a negative rating.

Commissioner Bacote stated he has never been a fan of the merit pay plan, but feels they must have a way to rate the performance of employees. He would suggest that staff follow through with the recommended schedule.

Commissioner Tyson stated he cannot agree to a blanket 2% for every employee. He feels the percentages should be adjusted according to the rating received.

Mr. Martin stated the County is constrained by the amount of money budgeted. Once the trial runs are done, the computer system has a formula applied with a program that will calculate a salary adjustment based on the different rating ranges. He feels problems will develop from employees who will say they did not know what they were going to be evaluated on and now are being penalized for it.

Commissioner Bacote stated he feels at this point, it would be best to follow the staff's recommendation.

Commissioner Tyson stated he would like to see a range of percentages for the salary increases based on the rating received.

Mr. Barrett stated they must also ask themselves if they are ready to analyze whether the 5 an employee received is really a 5 on the first run and how to deal with it. This trial run will give staff and management a chance to look at the flaws that could not be anticipated.

Commissioner Tyson stated if we award an employee a 2% increase when they score a 3 on the appraisal and then the next year they receive a 1.5% increase for the same score there will be a problem with claims of discrimination later on.

Commissioner Bacote feels employees are under the impression that they are going to receive a 2% increase during the first of 1999. If they don't get that increase, he feels there will be many disgruntled employees. He feels they should go with the plan recommended by management and make sure employees understand the situation will be different next year.

Mr. Martin stated he feels employees are under the impression that if they get a basically good performance rating they will receive a 2% increase in salary. The first thing he is concerned about is the process losing its integrity with employees. If an employee scores

a certain rating on the review, they will receive a 2% increase. Management feels this will help eliminate the possibility of employees appealing the fact that they were penalized for not doing something they did not know they were supposed to be doing. He feels a substantial majority of employees will score a 3 or higher.

Commissioner Tyson stated if every employee has a shot at receiving a 2% increase, then he feel the integrity of the Board has been preserved. He feels there should be a sliding scale based on the rating received.

MOTION: Commissioner Tyson offered a motion that the Personnel Committee approve the Performance Appraisal Implementation Schedule as presented by management and that the following salary adjustments be awarded according to the rating achieved on the appraisal:

A rating of 3 to 3.99 = 1% increase in salary.
A rating of 4 to 4.99 = 1.5% increase in salary.
A rating of 5 = 2% increase in salary.

This action is to be referred to the full Board of Commissioners for approval.

SECOND: Commissioner Evans

VOTE: Favor: Commissioners Evans and Tyson
Oppose: Commissioner Bacote

The Committee instructed management to present the other two options considered to the Board of Commissioners at the time this motion is presented. The other two options are as follows:

1. Award each employee achieving a rating of 3 or higher on their performance appraisal a 2% increase in salary.
2. Give a 2% increase in salary to all employees in January '99. Have each department complete a Performance Appraisal for all employees as a first time trial run to familiarize supervisors, employees and department heads with the process. No increases will be given as a result of the appraisal.

Commissioner Evans stated he wanted staff's memorandum to the Board of Commissioners to indicate that each committee member was agreeable to having all three options presented to the full Board for consideration.

Mr. Barrett noted these options are for the first run of the appraisals only.

Commissioner Evans stated management needs to make clear there were legal concerns guiding their proposal.

Mr. Martin advised there is a weighting average form that the rater can assign things that get a greater rating than others. This is to be used when the appraisals are done.

Mr. Barrett stated the Department Head and Supervisor will do the weighting scales for each department.

4. Consideration of Recessing Meeting or Scheduling of a Special Committee Meeting to Receive a Report on the Proposed Human Resources Organization.

MOTION: Commissioner Bacote offered a motion to recess this committee meeting until Wednesday, October 28, 1998 at 2:00 PM in order to receive a report on the proposed Human Resources Organization.

SECOND: Commissioner Tyson

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

5. Other Committee Concerns.

No other committee concerns were raised.

Meeting adjourned at 3:34 PM.