

**COUNTY PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2001, 8:00 AM
ROOM 564, COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

Present: Talmage S. Baggett, Chairman
John Henley, Commissioner
Billy R. King, Commissioner
J. Lee Warren, Jr., Commissioner

Others: James Martin, County Manager
Juanita Pilgrim, Deputy County Manager
Amy H. Cannon, Assistant County Manager
Doug Candlers, Staff Attorney
James Lawson, Human Resources Manager
Rhonda C. Raynor, Deputy Clerk to the Board
Press

Chairman Baggett called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION: Commissioner Warren offered the Invocation.

1. Election of Chairman.

MOTION: Commissioner King offered a motion to elect Commissioner Tal Baggett Chairman of the Personnel Committee for 2001.

SECOND: Commissioner Henley

VOTE: Commissioners King and Henley
Commissioner Baggett abstained.

2. Selection of Regular Meeting Date and Time.

It was the consensus of the committee that it would continue to meet on the second Thursday of each month at 9:30 AM.

3. Approval of Minutes of the November 9, 2000 meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner King offered a motion to approve the November 9, 2000 Personnel Committee meeting minutes.

SECOND: Chairman Baggett

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Chairman Baggett then noted that Commissioner Warren had asked that item 5 be discussed by the Personnel Committee. Due to a prior commitment, he has requested that the committee hear this item before the other items on the agenda.

It was the consensus of the committee to hear Item 5 before Item 4.

4. Discussion of Salaries for RIF'd County Employees Who are Re-hired.

Mr. Martin advised that staff has been operating with the goal and flexibility to attempt to do all that can be done financially and reasonably to put people back in suitable positions that are as close to their former salary as possible. Because of the budget situation, the higher level and higher paying positions were part of the reduction in force. Most of the people that remain are at or near the minimum salary for their position. Every effort is being made to give these employees an opportunity to be rehired where they meet the minimum qualifications for a position. If a RIF'd employee is considered for another position where the pay is less than what it was in their former position, it may be due to the fact that they were at the mid-point of their former salary range. The position they are being considered for would be budgeted at a certain rate. If the committee decides to hire all RIF'd employees at their former salary, budget changes will be required. The committee should also consider that other employees in that same position may not be making as much as the re-hired employee. There would be some equity issues in those situations. He believes the County's goal should be to hire any RIF'd employee at their previous salary where it is financially and feasibly possible. He noted some RIF'd employees have been re-hired at a reduced salary. He also noted re-hired employees could apply for other positions at higher pay levels. RIF'd employees are to receive preference with regard to interviews for vacant positions for up to three years.

Mr. Lawson noted RIF'd employees who were re-hired at less than their former salary are made aware of position vacancies for up to three years.

Commissioner Warren stated that he asked for this item to be discussed so that he could feel sure employees are receiving fair opportunities. He noted the County may want to look at the three-year period of time specified in the County Ordinance with regard to preference given to RIF'd employees. He feels that is an extremely long period of time.

No action is needed on this item. For discussion only.

4. Consideration of the FY 2001-2002 Position Classification and Pay Plan.

Mr. Lawson reviewed the Position Classification Pay Plan for the committee. He noted this plan incorporates all the changes made to the plan since its last adoption. The proposed plan also includes changes made by the State during the year.

Ms. Pilgrim explained the reclassifications for positions in the Day Reporting Center and Pretrial Release are a result of the proposed merger of the two agencies. She noted the Director of Pretrial Release would be over the two agencies. The new name of the agency will be Cumberland County Criminal Justice Systems Support Unit.

**MOTION: Commissioner King offered a motion to approve the FY 2001-2002
Position Classification and Pay Plan**
SECOND: Commissioner Henley
VOTE: UNANIMOUS

It was the consensus of the Committee to place this item on the Consent Agenda for the October 1, 2001 Commissioners meeting.

6. Update on the Closing of the State Regional Personnel Office.

It was noted that this update was only for information.

Ms. Pilgrim advised that as a result of the state budget problems, the State Regional Personnel Office was subject to be closed. Some of the employees of that office have already been terminated. She noted there is some question of the County's liability in maintaining records of the State Personnel Office. She noted the Health, Mental Health and Social Service offices are concerned about this situation. The SRPO does classifications of state positions, handles complaints made by employees over personnel issues and provides training services to the County. She advised Administration is concerned about maintaining those personnel records and performing those tasks done in the SRPO.

Mr. Lawson noted that the County does not have authority according to the statutes nor does it have the staff to do what may be handed to them by the closing of this office. He is not sure how they would have the authority to make decisions. Since July, the SRPO has processed over 200 classification requests from County agencies. They felt sure this work would be routed through the SPO, but they have heard that the County would have to do it. There will need to be changes in the statutes to give the County the necessary authority if it were to assume these duties. It is still uncertain how this situation will work out. It may take until the General Assembly finishes its session to know. If the County is forced to take on this work, it will cause major changes and issues for the County.

Commissioner King asked if the Committee could assist in this matter.

Mr. Lawson noted it would be beneficial for the County's Legislative Delegation to hear our concerns.

It was the consensus of the Committee that a letter be forwarded to the County's Legislative Delegation asking that they do what they can to keep the SRPO open and advise them of the potential adverse affects its closing would have on the County. The letter should come from the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Baggett also noted Commissioner Blackwell would be helpful in his position on the NCACC Board of Directors.

Commissioner Henley noted this would be another unfunded mandate. The State should not require the County to apply State personnel policies. The County should not be involved in the activities of that organization until there is clear direction from the State.

7. Other Committee Concerns.

Chairman Baggett noted the number of concerns he has had expressed by citizens about school crossing guards. He noted some citizens will address the Commissioners on September 17th and the Sheriff has asked the Board to consider appropriating additional funds to hire sixteen more crossing guards to be placed at fifteen schools.

Commissioner Henley stated he would like to have Phil Mullen with the Board of Education and the Sheriff at the meeting to answer questions. He would also like to have a legal opinion about the County providing crossing guards at private schools. He would like to have in writing the reasons we have provided them and a legal opinion about this matter.

Mr. Martin stated Mr. Mullen would be at the meeting on September 17th. He also noted the Sheriff has been asked to speak to the Board of Education and to contact school principals to get parent volunteers to serve as crossing guards. The Sheriff would train these volunteers.

Chairman Baggett stated that at some point he would like to discuss the possibility of making School Crossing Guards employees of the School System instead of the Sheriff's Office. Chairman Baggett noted the School System might be in a better position to oversee this group of employees.

Mr. Martin stated he feels they should pursue this matter with the Board of Education.

Meeting adjourned at 8:54 AM.