

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL

DATE: OCTOBER 24, 2012

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS CONOVER
KENNY
SOKOL
MERLINO
TAYLOR
STRAINER
DICKINSON
GIRARD
MASON

OTHERS PRESENT:

DANIEL G. STEC, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS BENTLEY
THOMAS
VANSELOW
WOOD
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
AMANDA ALLEN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

Mr. Conover called the meeting of the Personnel Committee to order at 9:00 a.m.

Paul Dusek, County Administrator, noted that the Personnel Committee had met during the prior week to discuss collective bargaining negotiation matters, following which the Committee had formally stated their position on the situation. He continued that during the prior meeting, he had recommended that the Committee reconvene once again to further discuss the status of the collective bargaining negotiations as they were facing severe time constraints in relation to the 2013 County Budget, which was to be presented to the Budget Committee on the following day and in its tentative format to the Board of Supervisors at a Special Board Meeting scheduled for November 2nd. Mr. Dusek reminded the Committee members that although they had previously thought they had developed an acceptable Union contract, the proposal had subsequently been voted down by the Union members, leaving them with no labor contract in place. He advised that the collective bargaining negotiations, specifically the lack of Union contracts, had a considerable impact on the County Budget and, therefore, he recommended that they take whatever steps were necessary to reach out to the Union representatives in an effort to resolve the matter. At that point, Mr. Dusek suggested that the Committee enter into an executive session to continue discussions on collective bargaining negotiations.

Motion was made by Mr. Taylor, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to enter into an executive session, pursuant to Section 105(e) of the Public Officer's Law.

Executive session was held from 9:05 a.m. to 10:46 a.m.

Upon reconvening, Mr. Conover advised that no action had been taken during the executive session.

Mr. Dusek apprised of the position being adopted by Warren County with respect to the lack of a labor contract for members of the CSEA Union, based on the discussions held during the executive session. He said that there were tough fiscal times ahead for Warren County, causing the Budget Team to have a very difficult time establishing the 2013 County Budget; however, Mr. Dusek apprised, a tentative Budget had been established, achieving the objectives set forth, while recognizing that funding had not been provided to all of the areas requiring it. He stated that over the next few years, future budgets would be very conservative, with all being based upon hopes that the state of the economy would stabilize and grow, which could not be assured. As they considered collective bargaining negotiations, Mr. Dusek said they did so with the backdrop of the financial uncertainty relating to the local economy, along with the feeling of responsibility that each member of the Board of Supervisors felt towards their

constituents and their responsibility not to make irrational moves in terms of finances. He continued that although the Board of Supervisors would like to recognize the tremendous efforts being made by the County's employees by giving salary increases, they realized this option was not possible due to current and future budgetary constraints and their responsibility to weigh the salary associated with each position against the salaries paid for similar private sector positions. Mr. Dusek stated that the Board of Supervisors respected the County's employees and he noted that every year, when the Budget Officer presented his budget proposal, he recognized that the County had a workforce second to none, comprised of employees who were extremely conscientious and did the best job possible on behalf of Warren County.

Mr. Dusek stated that the County was in a very precarious situation for the future as they did not have a labor contract in place for the CSEA employees, or any other Union employees, for that matter, and could not predict wages or health care costs for 2013 and beyond. He said that while Warren County remained committed to bargaining in good faith with the Unions to try and work this situation out, it was his understanding that the County would have to implement a hiring freeze until a Union contract was formalized, and they would also ask all Department Heads to evaluate their workforces and prepare for positions that could be abolished or eliminated, either by attrition or a layoff of current employees. He emphasized that this process was being undertaken only because the Board of Supervisors felt a responsibility to manage the County in a fiscally prudent and intelligent manner to protect the best interests of the County taxpayer. Mr. Dusek concluded that if the County was unable to secure a labor contract, alternate means had to be employed in order to protect and preserve the County finances.

Mr. Kenny stated that Mr. Dusek had accurately outlined the Committee's desires, noting that the amount of money available to fund County functions could not be expanded and every option had to be explored to determine how to function efficiently within the constraints identified. Mr. Conover said he hoped the Union leaders would comply with the request to continue negotiations as quickly as possible to settle upon a labor contract in the best interest of both County employees and taxpayers.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to implement a hiring freeze until a labor contract for CSEA Union employees was formalized and to request that all Department Heads review and evaluate their staffing in preparation for position abolishments, either through attrition or layoff, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the November 16th Board meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Personnel Committee, on motion made by Mr. Kenny and seconded by Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Conover adjourned the meeting at 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Allen, Deputy Clerk of the Board