

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL & HIGHER EDUCATION

DATE: OCTOBER 31, 2019

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS GERAGHTY
FRASIER
MCDEVITT
LEGGETT
BRAYMER
SIMPSON
HYDE
LOEB
MERLINO
SOKOL

OTHERS PRESENT:

JACKIE FIGUEROA, COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR
PATRICIA NENNINGER, PERSONNEL OFFICER
RONALD CONOVER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
RYAN MOORE, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
MARY ELIZABETH KISSANE, COUNTY ATTORNEY
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR DIAMOND

SUPERVISORS BEATY
DRISCOLL
HOGAN
MAGOWAN
STROUGH
TAMMIE DELORENZO, ASSISTANT TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
KEVIN HAJOS, SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
MIKE SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER
RACHEL SEEBER, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY RESIDENT
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
SARAH MCLENITHAN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

Please note, the following contains a summarization of the October 31, 2019 meeting of the Personnel & Higher Education Committee; the meeting in its entirety can be viewed on the Warren County website using the following link: <http://www.warrencountyny.gov/gov/comm/Archive/2019/personnel/>

Supervisor Geraghty called the meeting of the Personnel & Higher Education Committee to order at 10:02 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Copies of the meeting Agenda were distributed to the Committee members and a copy of same is on file with the meeting minutes.

Mr. Geraghty commenced the agenda review with Item 2, which pertained to the review of report on tracking of vacancies filled, which he noted was provided for informational purposes. Mr. Geraghty apprised he would return to Agenda Item 1 when the County Administrator entered the meeting.

Proceeding with the Agenda review, Mr. Geraghty advised Agenda Items 3A-B pertained to the following referrals from the Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee, *Public Defender*.

- 3A) Request to amend the Table of Organization and Salary Schedule to create and fill the new position of Data Officer - Indigent Legal Services, *Annual Salary \$55,930*, effective January 1, 2020.

Motion was made by Mr. Simpson, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the November 15th Board Meeting.

- 3B) Request to extend the appointment of the Warren County Public Defender beyond the December 31, 2019 expiration until the Board of Supervisors makes a formal appointment at their Organization meeting in January of 2020.

Motion was made by Mr. Simpson, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the November 15th Board Meeting.

Mr. Geraghty stated Agenda Item 4 pertained to a referral from the Health, Human & Social Services Committee, *Social Services*, concerning a request to amend the Table of Organization and Salary Schedule to create and fill the new position of Principal Social Welfare Examiner #3, *Grade 15, Base Annual Salary \$42,141*, and to delete the position of Sr. Social Welfare Examiner effective January 1, 2020.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Loeb and carried unanimously to approve the request as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the November 15th Board Meeting.

Mr. Geraghty advised Agenda Item 5 involved a referral from the Support Services Committee, *County Clerk*, pertaining to a request to amend the Table of Organization and Salary Schedule to create and fill the new position of Sr. Motor Vehicle Examiner, *Grade 10, Base Annual Salary \$37,633*, and to delete the position of Motor Vehicle License Registration Clerk, *Grade 8, Base Annual Salary \$34,988*, effective November 18, 2019.

Motion was made by Mr. McDevitt, seconded by Mr. Loeb and carried unanimously to approve the request as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the November 15th Board Meeting.

Ryan Moore, *County Administrator*, entered the meeting at 10:04 a.m.

Returning to Agenda Item 1, Mr. Geraghty asked Mr. Moore to expound upon SUNY Adirondack's request to authorize a resolution supporting a permanent funding floor for the community college base State-aid formula for fiscal year 2020. Mr. Moore apprised this pertained to a request from Dr. Kristine Duffy, *President, SUNY Adirondack*, for the County to support community college advocacy efforts with the State to remedy the formula for base aid to community colleges. He said in this year's budget they were able to receive 98% of the funding they received the prior year or \$100 increase per FTE (*Full-Time Equivalent*) depending upon whichever was greater; however, he noted, they would like this increased to 100% of the funding they received the prior year and for the new formula to be made permanent. He remarked he felt this was a reasonable proposal that the County should support them on, as it was an advantage to the County and its residents to ensure SUNY Adirondack was as fiscally strong as it could be.

Mr. Leggett entered the meeting at 10:06 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb and seconded by Mr. McDevitt to approve SUNY Adirondack's request to authorize a resolution supporting a permanent funding floor for the community college base State-aid formula for fiscal year 2020.

Mr. Loeb apprised this reminded him of the Crandall Library's efforts to obtain a taxing district which they were successful in, informing he was sully supportive of SUNY Adirondack's request.

Mr. Geraghty called the question and the motion to approve SUNY Adirondack's request as outlined above was carried unanimously and the necessary resolution was authorized for the November 15th Board Meeting.

Agenda Items 6A-C concerned the following Requests/Items to be Discussed by the County Administrator:

- 6A) Discussion regarding restructuring of the Office of Emergency Services Department and job description of the Director position.

Mr. Moore stated he had included in the Agenda a proposed structure for the Emergency Services Department that he had worked on with Brain LaFlure, *Fire Coordinator/Director, Office of Emergency Services*, who planned on retiring during the first quarter of next year; he added the proposed structure had also been reviewed by the Civil Service and Human Resources Departments. He advised the proposal consisted of hiring a Director who would oversee the EMS Coordination, Disaster Planning and the Fire Coordination with each of these areas having their own individual to manage them. He informed the Fire Coordinator position which had very specific credentials in order to be qualified for the position and was currently combined with the Director position. He said in order to meet the qualifications an individual would have to have served a minimum of five years as a fire chief or a comparable position that lead fire companies. He stated the proposal involved starting with a part-time Fire Coordinator position until there was a better idea of what those duties were, adding this was similar to the way other Counties had structured the position. He mentioned the duties for the Amy Drexel, *Emergency Services Coordinator*, would remain the same and the Office Specialist would report directly to the Director/ Emergency Manager. In terms of the hierarchy of the Department, currently when Mr. LaFlure is away all of the supervision of the Department reverted to the Emergency Services Coordinator because this was the only full-time position within these three areas; however, he noted, under the new proposal whoever oversaw the type of incident that was occurring would be in charge of managing it when the Director/ Emergency Manager was absent. He said this meant matters relating to EMS would be handled by the EMS Coordinator, Planning issues would be managed by the Emergency Services Coordinator and if it related to a fire then the Fire Coordinator would oversee the incident response. He stated he was bringing this forward today to see if anyone would like to add any thoughts and/or suggestions because he would like to have an extended recruitment process to ensure they filled the positions with the most qualified candidates.

Mr. Leggett advised this matter was before the Committee for discussion and he asked whether further action would be required of the Committee at a later date and Mr. Moore replied affirmatively. Mr. Moore informed once the salaries for these positions were established it would go before the Committee for approval, along with requests for permission to fill them. He added the recruitment process would also involve the Committee in some form.

Ms. Hyde entered the meeting at 10:11 a.m.

A discussion ensued.

Mr. Geraghty asked whether any action was required of the Committee today and Mr. Moore replied in the negative, explaining he would work on finalizing the job descriptions following which they would be posted to allow the recruitment process to commence as soon as possible subsequently allowing Mr. LaFlure to retire. He added Mr. LaFlure he would be willing to stay in the position until they filled it to

ensure there was a successful transition; however, he said, he hoped they would be able to fill the position before then.

6B) Review and approval of the Non-Union Salary Grid.

6C) Review and approval of revised Employee Evaluation form.

Mr. Moore apprised upon the request of the Committee he had developed a Non-Union Salary Grid which was modeled after the one he had developed for the Attorneys that were employed by the County. He stated the position Grades went from 1 to 25, but there were no positions in Grade 25 nor were they in Grades 1 through 4. He mentioned the base level salary for each position increased by six percent as the Grade increased and employees would be eligible for these increments based upon how long they had been employed by the County. For example, he advised once employees completed their first year of employment they would be eligible to move out of their Grade to the first increment salary and so on with the percentage changing for each of those increments which was listed at the bottom the grid included in the Agenda. He mentioned this was similar to how CSEA (*Civil Service Employees Association*) employees pay increases were handled, but what was different was that these increments were not automatic and would be tied to merit based performance evaluations, just as the Attorney salaries were. He stated he had developed a new process for performance evaluations in a manner that would work with this grid system that was similar to the original model developed by Rachel Seeber, *former At-Large Supervisor, Town of Queensbury*, where there was a one through five rating in several different categories and the Department Head or the County Administrator, with the cooperation from the Board, could write comments. He continued, he had also retained the goal setting that they had at the beginning of the year for Department Heads. He referred to the charts with the blue headings on top included in the Agenda packet right before the actual grid which consisted of the Grade assignments that were made for each of the County's Non-Union positions. He said the process of developing these involved a canvas of other Counties to determine where similar positions were graded in other Counties because essentially all of the Counties were doing the same functions. He stated without having the this information, he had he distributed it to the Civil Service and Human Resources Departments and they pulled out all of the job descriptions they currently had for these positions and reviewed the job duties, as well as the minimum qualifications required for them and they ranked all of the positions. He continued, apprising they combined all of those efforts and leveled it out, adding he had reviewed the variations here in terms of what some of the Departments did and he was aware through his work with Department Heads everyday of who was handling what to develop Grades for the positions before they worked on determining salaries. He advised following this he had worked with Mr. Geraghty and the Budget Officer to ensure they felt this was appropriate and then he worked on determining the salaries. He stated he wanted to ensure the personalities were taken out of this so they could do an objective analysis of what all of these Departments did, what it took to be hired for one of these positions, and what type of background were required to determine the Grades. He said the Attorney positions were the highest Grade in the County because they required a degree in law, the Superintendent of Public Works was the next highest because the position required the individual be certified as a PE (*Professional Engineer*) and the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services was just below that because this was the standard practice of every County he reviewed.

In regard to the employee evaluations, Mr. Moore apprised he had written in some rules regarding how he would handle evaluations and be applied into the County Budget process to determine a salary, but he was open any changes and/or recommendations the Committee members wanted to make.

Mr. Geraghty stated since this related to County Personnel he would encourage anyone with questions to ask Mr. Moore directly. He stated a significant amount of work went into preparing this grid which the Committee had put on the back burner because they were busy dealing with other matters, but he felt this was appropriate.

Ms. Braymer stated she was appreciative of the objectivity because in prior years there had been no consistent method for applying salary increases; she added she was pleased they would be going back to executing the performance evaluations for not only Department Heads, but also for Non-Union County employees. She said since she had not had a sufficient time to review all of this information she was hoping no decision was required today.

Mr. Moore apprised what they had done with the Attorney Grid was to have the Personnel & Higher Education Committee approve it, but it did not go before the full Board because a portion of this related to ensuring the Budget Officer kept the ability to adapt to economic downturns intact. He explained they did not want to have something that was locked into place which did not allow the Budget Officer to make changes if the financial side did not work. He stated this was meant to be used in an advisory role for the Budget Officer as objective criteria that could be used to set salaries and furthermore for the full Board when those salaries were brought before them for approval. He informed they still wanted to make it within the Board's discretion to award whatever salary they felt was appropriate, but also provide some objective guidelines for that process.

Mr. Moore advised the one thing that would require the Committees approval was how he was proposing to handle employee evaluations, which was slightly different than how they were structured under the resolution the County was currently operating under. He said as he had indicated earlier they would be going back to something similar to the original employee evaluation form that was created and he would meet with Department Heads in the beginning of the year with their goal setting and again around budget time to complete the performance evaluation form. He reiterated this would require the Committee approval, but they could hold off on approving it today.

A discussion ensued following which the Committee decided to hold off on making a decision on the Non-Union Salary Grid. Mr. Geraghty reiterated that anyone with comments and/or suggestions regarding the grid should bring them directly to Mr. Moore.

Motion was made by Ms. Braymer, seconded by Mr. Simpson and carried unanimously to approve the revised Employee Evaluation form as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the November 15th Board Meeting.

Concluding the agenda review, Mr. Geraghty noted Agenda Item VI consisted of a listing of vacancies approved for filling by other Committees since the last Personnel & Higher Education Committee meeting, which included the following:

- District Attorney* - 3rd Assistant District Attorney, *Annual Salary* \$82,078, due to resignation.
- 4th Assistant District Attorney, *Annual Salary* \$69,275, due to promotion.
- 5th Assistant District Attorney, *Annual Salary* \$70,520, due to promotion.
- 6th Assistant District Attorney, *Annual Salary* \$65,258, due to promotion.
- 7th Assistant District Attorney, *Annual Salary* \$65,258, due to promotion.
- Public Works* - MEO (L) #3, *Grade 7, Base Annual Salary* \$33,600, due to resignation.
- MEO- Medium #8, *Grade 9, Base Annual Salary* \$36,214, due to resignation.
- Highway Manager #2, *Annual Salary* \$78,991, due to resignation.

Sheriff- *Communications Officer #11, Annual Salary \$41,740.24, due to retirement.*
Social Services - *Senior Account Clerk #4, Grade 7, Base Annual Salary \$33,600.*

Mr. Geraghty offered privilege of the floor to anyone present wishing to address the Committee on any matter, but there was no one wishing to speak.

There being no further business to come before the Personnel & Higher Education Committee, on motion made by Mr. Loeb and seconded by Mrs. Frasier, Mr. Geraghty adjourned the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah McLenithan, Deputy Clerk of the Board