

COUNTY PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 11, 1996, 2:00 PM

PRESENT: Lee Warren, Chairman
Johnnie Evans, Commissioner (arrived at 2:30 PM)
John C. Keefe, Commissioner

STAFF: James Martin, Deputy County Manager
Doug Canders, Staff Attorney
Pat Jones, Personnel Director
Carlisle McCutcheon, Finance Director
Tom Miriello, Mental Health Director
Rhonda Davis, Deputy Clerk

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Review of Cost Proposals for Classification and Pay Study.

Deputy County Manager James Martin advised the County sent out 18 Requests For Proposals (RFPs) and received four responses. Municipal Advisors, Incorporated and David M. Griffith & Associates, Ltd. have presented the most reasonable cost. He advised he and Pat Jones have reviewed the proposals.

Commissioner Warren asked if the County has employed David M. Griffith & Associates, Ltd. in the past.

Mr. Martin advised the County has employed David M. Griffith & Associates, Ltd. in the past and is currently employing them. He advised they were originally going to have Phase I of the project done which is the Classification and Pay Study, but then decided to add Phase II into the RFP's. Phase II would be a study of Performance Based Pay. Based on DMG's proposals, Phase I & II would be done in conjunction with one another. Staff is recommending that David M. Griffith & Associates, Ltd. be hired and that the additional funds to do Phase II of the project be appropriated. He noted it may be a year or two before the Phase II is completed, however, if the company is hired to do both, their cost proposal can be tied down now.

MOTION: Commissioner Keefe offered a motion to recommend to the full Board of Commissioners approval of the Staff recommendation to hire David M. Griffith & Associates, Ltd. to perform a Classification and Pay Study and a Performance Based Pay Study and to appropriate the necessary funds.
SECOND: Commissioner Warren
VOTE: UNANIMOUS

2. Consideration of Proposals to Allow Transfer of Annual Leave.

Mr. Martin noted staff had initially decided not to recommend this program. The Finance Director then provided additional information on the subject. The procedure was then reviewed and modified by Doug Canders in the County Attorney's office to make the process as simple as possible. Staff now recommends approval of the concept of shared leave and it's recommendation to the full Board of Commissioners. The policy would still have to be developed.

Commissioner Warren asked who would create the policy and procedures?

Mr. Martin advised the Legal Department would work out the policy and procedures with the County Manager.

Commissioner Warren asked if the policy and procedures should be developed before the full Board of Commissioners are asked to approve it.

Mr. Canders stated staff would need to get approval of the concept from the Board of Commissioners. The County Manager could do the policies and procedures. If the Commissioners approve the concept and not all the procedures, then the flexibility is there to update and change the policy as needed.

Commissioner Keefe asked Mr. Canders to give him an example of how this policy would work.

Mr. Canders noted the policy would be driven by the Americans with Disabilities Act. If an employee who has been working for the County at least six months, gets ill and exhausts all of their leave, another employee could donate a portion of their annual leave to that employee. A form could be prepared that the employee would complete indicating the amount of annual leave they wish to donate and simply submit it to the Finance Department.

Commissioner Keefe expressed his concern with employees donating their time to someone who's salary is greater than theirs. He sees that as a problem with this plan.

Staff noted Commissioner Keefe's concern would be addressed when the procedures are developed.

MOTION: Commissioner Keefe offered a motion to approve allowing employees to transfer annual leave to non-probationary employees who are on leave without pay status because of an illness and in accordance with the standards established by the County Manager in the Voluntary Shared Annual Leave Policy and to recommend the policy to the full Board of Commissioners.

SECOND: Commissioner Warren

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

3. Discussion of Personnel Ordinance and Employee Policies and Procedures.

Mr. Canders stated the County's Personnel Ordinance has been developed bit by bit over a period of time. Over the years, a lot has been put into the ordinance that was not needed. This has resulted in ordinances currently on the book that for practical purposes are useless. The ordinances should state the purpose and not define all of the procedures or "nuts and bolts" of a policy. The County's salary and leave provisions must be outlined in the code. He advised the entire Code needs to be reviewed and revised based on recent court actions. There is a real need to re-think and reshape the County's Personnel Code particularly in the area of discrimination.

The Board of Commissioners should set the standards and then the County Manager should develop the procedures and policies to allow flexibility to change them as needed.

Mr. Canders noted the review should be done in cooperation with the independently run departments such as the Sheriff's Office, the Register of Deeds, Board of Elections and Tax Administration. These departments need to give their input so that they understand the adopted policies and procedures in order to have something that is workable for everyone and easier for the Personnel Department to work with.

Mr. Martin noted Department Heads and Management will look at the code and see what needs to be developed and bring recommendations back to the Personnel Committee for review and submission to the Board of Commissioners for approval.

Pat Jones asked if staff should get full board approval to begin the review.

It was the consensus of the committee that full board approval to begin the review was not necessary.

MOTION: Commissioner Keefe offered a motion to allow management to conduct a review of all the Personnel Ordinances and employee policies and procedures.

SECOND: Commissioner Warren

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Warren suggested that all the backup information provided with the agenda be incorporated into the minutes of this meeting so that other Commissioners will have the opportunity to review all of the information on the matters discussed and therefore, have a better understanding of the decisions made by the committee.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

4. Discussion of Mental Health Center Request to Increase Annual Leave for Physicians.

Commissioner Evans arrived at the meeting.

Tom Miriello, Mental Health Director advised his department has had a vacancy for a child/adolescent psychiatrist for over a year now. The position has been offered to four board certified physicians and all have turned down the offer due to the amount of Annual Leave days they would receive. These types of physicians are in high demand and generally accept positions with better benefit packages. He has discussed this problem with the County Manager. Dr. Williams of the Health Department is also experiencing the same difficulty in hiring physicians. The County can draw in psychiatrists that are not board certified, however this causes a problem in that these physicians are often needed to serve adult as well as child patients. If they are not board certified they cannot do this. Two out of the four psychiatrists Mental Health interviewed accepted positions at Cumberland Hospital. Cumberland Hospital offers 30 PDO's (Paid Days Off) per year.

Mr. Martin asked if the PDO's include holidays.

Mr. Miriello indicated the PDO's include holidays and can be used for annual or sick leave. There is no distinction.

Mr. Canders stated the County may have a problem with giving more leave to certain County employees. They would be extending a benefit that differentiated between employees. He feels they may be able to work out something in this class of positions.

Mr. Miriello noted Mental Health has hired national research firms to search out these physicians. When they are sent, they won't accept the positions because of the annual leave. This situation will continue to create problems, as they have a large number of children that need to be seen. This also creates problems with the Court System as they are continuously sending children to them to be treated.

Commissioner Keefe stated since Cumberland Hospital is owned by Cape Fear Valley Medical Center, the Mental Health Department and the Hospital could come together and get the doctors at the Hospital to help Mental Health during this time.

Mr. Miriello noted he has solicited help from every available local source. Cape Fear Valley Hospital did not have an available physician they could use.

Commissioner Keefe stated he feels if Mental Health and the Hospital work together it would help alleviate some of the problem.

Mr. Canders noted it is not uncommon for companies to use a PDO system.

Mr. Warren noted that if the decision was made to use PDO's it would need to be county-wide.

Commissioner Evans asked when an evaluation of the County's benefits package was going to be done.

Pat Jones stated as soon as the contract is awarded for the Classification and Pay study, her department is to begin work on an employee benefits package.

Commissioner Evans noted the benefits could be looked at as part of the study.

Mr. Miriello stated he does have someone who has been interviewed for the vacancy he has for the child/adolescent psychiatrist and believes that person will be on board soon. However, as soon as he has another vacancy, this problem will come up again.

Commissioner Warren asked if the incorporation of a study of the County's benefits package would skew the proposals already received for the Classification and Pay Study and the Performance Based Pay Study.

Mr. Martin noted a study of the County's benefits package was not included in the RFP package. He feels Ms. Jones and her staff can do the benefits package study as it is a simpler process and can be done in-house. He noted this study can be done with authorization from the Personnel Committee and then the package can be presented to the full board of Commissioners for approval. Ms. Jones will do a study of area counties and mental health authorities and bring the information back to the Personnel Committee with a recommendation.

MOTION: Commissioner Evans offered a motion to direct staff to investigate physicians benefits package and bring a recommendation back to the Personnel Committee.
SECOND: Commissioner Keefe
VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Commissioner Warren asked how soon the work on the benefits package could be completed.

Ms. Jones noted the Recruitment and Benefits package information could be ready for submission to the Personnel Committee in 60 days.

Commissioner Warren noted another Personnel Committee meeting will not be scheduled for October unless another item comes up that will require discussion.

5. Other Committee Concerns.

No other committee concerns were raised.

Meeting adjourned at 2:48 PM.