

COUNTY PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 10, 1997, 2:00 PM

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Bacote, Commissioner  
Johnnie Evans, Commissioner  
H. Mac Tyson II, Commissioner

OTHERS: Ed Melvin, Commissioner  
J. Lee Warren, Jr., Commissioner (arrived 2:45 PM)  
Doran Berry, Attorney  
Melissa Dudley  
Press

STAFF: Cliff Strassenburg, County Manager  
James Martin, Deputy County Manager  
Pat Jones, Personnel Director  
Ellen Fadden, Personnel Department  
Carlisle McCutcheon, Finance Director  
Neil Yarborough, County Attorney  
Marsha Fogle, Clerk  
Rhonda Davis, Deputy Clerk

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Discussion: Proposed Job Position Classification Plan, (Review Options A, B, & C)

James Martin reviewed Options A, B and C for the Committee members. He noted this item was brought forward from the last meeting, as Committee members needed time to review the information.

Commissioner Tyson asked if Management had a recommendation on the options.

Mr. Martin stated Management had not discussed a recommendation, but they could have one by the next meeting.

Cliff Strassenburg stated one of the options needs to be implemented in order to spread people out in their particular pay grades. Will have to be based on what the County can afford. He does not think a 1/2% difference in pay level would be significant.

Commissioner Bacote asked if the costs for the option chosen would be a cost in addition to what the Board has already budgeted for the Pay Plan.

Mr. Strassenburg advised the costs for implementation of one of the options would be in addition to what has already been budgeted for the Pay Plan.

Commissioner Bacote stated he could see the 1% differences in the pay levels as an option to consider. Where does management contemplate getting the money from?

Mr. Strassenburg stated staff has already frozen the use of lapsed salary funds in an attempt to have some of the money needed to implement one of the options.

Commissioner Evans stated he feels a 2% spread is unrealistic and a 1/2% spread is too

little. He would like the staff to come up with a recommendation somewhere in between one-half and two and also have a suggestion of where to get the funds to do it so the Committee could make a logical recommendation to the full Board of Commissioners.

It was the consensus of the Committee to ask Management to bring a recommendation to the Personnel Committee for an option to spread employees out through their particular pay grades and suggestions on where to get the money from. This information is to be presented at the next Personnel Committee meeting.

**2. Review of State Comprehensive Compensation Program.**

Mr. Martin stated this information was presented at the last committee meeting. He reviewed the career growth increase program the State uses. He noted Commissioner Evans asked that this plan be presented to the Board for informational purposes.

**3. Review of Federal Employees Longevity Program.**

Mr. Martin reviewed the information presented in the packet. The Federal system has automatic increases for employees. When a new employee comes on board, they get increases in the second, third and fourth year, based on certain criteria. Then the increases go to every two years and then every three years. It takes eighteen years for an employee to move through the plan, to obtain step ten which is the maximum pay. This is a system that shows progressive movement based on satisfactory performance and years of service.

Commissioner Bacote asked if the intent of the County's study was to do something similar to the Federal plan. It was his understanding that new employees would get a step after a year or two.

Mr. Martin stated the committee has been debating what type of system to recommend. The State system seems to have more of a performance criteria than the Federal plan. The Federal plan does a good job of moving the employees up through the pay scale.

Commissioner Evans stated he also asked for this information so the committee could have something to compare. He asked if representatives from DMG would be speaking to the Committee.

**5. Report from David M. Griffith & Associates on changes to the Proposed Job Position Classification Plan.**

Mr. Martin advised DMG has forwarded a letter updating the progress of their work. Currently, DMG representatives are meeting with Department Heads who have stated positions in their department were classified incorrectly. They will be trying to get a better understanding of the Department Heads' concerns about reclassifications. Representatives can come to the next meeting if the Committee members want to speak with them. After DMG representatives meet with the Department Heads, they will be going back to review the information and then come back with proposed changes. He feels this work will be completed at the time of the next committee meeting.

4. Review of the FY98 Position Classification Plan. (Referred by Board of Commissioners)

Mr. Martin reviewed the actions taken by the Board of Commissioners. The plan was approved with one addition on August 26th and then the Board rescinded their actions on September 2nd with the exception of the changes for State employees. He believes the issues to refer this item to the Personnel Committee are related to the position listed on Attachment C, Item 4 (Personal Property Division Manager).

Commissioner Bacote asked how reclassifications can be done when some employees have been told they could not receive a reclassification.

Pat Jones stated all reclassifications have been held in abeyance once the study started so all positions could be studied by DMG. Positions involving major reorganizations that needed to be implemented to fill jobs to complete goals were reclassified. Some special cases in the Sheriff's Office were reclassified. Most of the reclassifications were approved by the Board of Commissioners. Some reclassifications resulted from a classification that did not exist and would have to be created. Areas such as the Tax Administrator came from the Department Head and went straight to the Board of Commissioners. The approval was based on what was presented in the restructuring.

Commissioner Evans asked about the reclassifications in the Tax Administrator's office.

Ms. Jones stated the Board of Commissioners approved the changes on June 17, 1996. These positions have not been placed in the Position Classification Plan.

Mr. Martin explained the action the board was being asked to approve would enable the Personnel Department to prepare an updated Position Classification Plan to show the changes made during the previous year. Most of the changes presented with the FY98 Position Classification Plan were approved in the budget.

Commissioner Bacote asked when the County entered into the contract with DMG.

Mr. Martin advised the County entered into its contract with DMG in October. From that time, all reclassifications have been frozen.

Commissioner Bacote then asked should not all positions be frozen then.

Ms. Jones stated all position reclassifications were frozen with the exception of the Civic Center. Only in certain cases were reclassifications done.

Mr. Strassenburg noted most of the reclassifications by and large went down.

Commissioner Bacote stated that since the County has hired DMG to do the study, he does not feel the Board should deal with reclassifications at all without implementation of the new pay plan. Now some reclassifications are being presented and others have been refused.

Ms. Jones explained the reclassification of positions in the Parks and Recreation Department and the reason for it.

Commissioner Bacote stated that if the reclassification does not involve money, then it is fine with him to do it. However, he does not agree with reclassifications being done now that involve a higher salary. Mr. Bacote then asked if a salary increase was involved in the reclassification of the GIS Manager and the Mapping Supervisor in the Tax Administrator's office.

Ms. Jones stated there were salary increases involved, but the reclassifications were done before the DMG study and were approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Tyson stated most of them don't know what the details of the DMG study will bring. He asked if DMG will have their report by the next committee meeting.

Mr. Martin stated he could give him a qualified yes to the question.

Commissioner Tyson asked that the request be generated. The Board has been "adrift" on this matter since he has been on the Board. He asked Mr. Martin and Mr. Strassenburg to get the report and a recommendation together to present to the Committee. They were supposed to have this report by the first of the year.

Mr. Martin noted the preliminary report was presented the first of the year. The status they are currently in involves the review resulting from questions by Department Heads. Over 200 requests for review of positions classifications resulting from the new study were submitted by Department Heads. These are still being worked on to get resolution. Some of the reviews are still not resolved. A point will come that the Department Head will either agree or disagree with what DMG has come up with, but Management will have to go with the results.

Commissioner Tyson asked the other Committee members if they wanted to take action on item 4 at this time.

Commissioner Bacote stated he does not want to do anything with this item. He feels he needs better clarification on the matter. He is not in favor of piece milling these raises.

Commission Evans asked staff to tell him exactly how much of a salary increase was involved in the reclassification of the GIS Manager and the Map/GIS Manager.

Mr. Martin stated the GIS Manager received a \$5,057 increase and the Map/GIS Manager received a 5,331 increase. These amounts include the 3% cost of living received in July of this year, so the original increase would be slightly less. No change was recommended for the Personal Property Division Manager in the FY98 Position Classification Plan submitted by staff. The increase was added by the Board of Commissioners during their meeting.

Mr. Evans asked how much of an increase was recommended by the Board for the Personal Property Division Manager.

Ellen Fadden stated the salary would have changed from a Grade 28 with a salary of \$44,049 to a grade 31 Step 4 with a salary of \$58,529.

Commissioner Bacote asked how the grade was determined and what did the Tax Administrator recommend for this position.

Mr. Martin stated the Tax Administrator requested the change in his budget request for this year. Management did not recommend the change pending the personnel study.

Commissioner Bacote stated that if Management did not recommend the change he did not want to consider it. He cannot support any upgrades.

Ms. Jones stated Management does not normally entertain requests for reclassification during budget time.

Commissioner Warren arrived at the meeting.

Ms. Jones noted the Tax Administrator did not ask for a reclassification of the Personal Property Division Manager in his reorganization.

Mr. Martin stated the Tax Administrator did not ask for a reclassification for the Personal Property Division Manager when he presented his reorganization before the Board of Commissioners. He did ask for the reclassification with his budget. He again noted Management did not consistently recommend reclassifications as part of the budget process because of the study. This is the kind of thing they are still dealing with until the study is voted up or down.

Commissioner Evans noted the Committee needs to consider several things. He does not think there is a question about the request for the Personal Property Division Manager to be reclassified, but other County employees need to be reclassified also. He can think of five on the fifth floor alone, not to mention other departments. Who knows how many others are not classified correctly. Is it really proper to change one person and reclassify their position and leave out the other 2,400 employees. He feels they should wait until the study is complete. There was a misunderstanding between the Commissioners and what took place. Commissioner Shaw asked that this item be placed back on the Commissioners' agenda because she misunderstood what was taking place. He feels any reclassification should start with the Personnel Committee and staff and then it should be presented to the full Board of Commissioners. If that cannot be done, there is no need for a Personnel Committee.

Mr. Martin stated he feels there is still some confusion about the Position Classification Plan. It merely pulls all the changes from the previous year together.

Commissioner Evans stated he understands what the Position Classification Plan does. He has no problem with anything other than the one position that was changed.

Ms. Jones advised DMG has met with the Tax Administrator to discuss positions in his office. They need to review the position in question and come back with a recommendation and report to the Board of Commissioners. Once it is reviewed, it may

be different. To allow DMG and the Tax Administrator to review this position would seem to be the logical sequence of events. She stated DMG was advised of the change made by the Commissioners on August 26th. She is unsure as to whether or not DMG has been advised the action was rescinded. If DMG has not been advised the action was rescinded, she will make sure they are.

Neil Yarborough advised he met with DMG yesterday and they were aware of the action taken by the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Warren stated the Committee is probably discussing this matter because of actions he took. This problem surfaced a year ago. The Tax Administrator hired somebody to come into the office with a reasonably equal position to Mrs. Godwin. She was the number two person in the department and has worked with the County twenty-six years. It seemed unfair to a long term employee that you bring people in and they seem to be worth so much more than someone who has worked here for twenty-six years. When there was discussion about rectifying the situation, he was informed it would be handled during the budget. It wasn't handled and he thought it should be looked at. If there are other inequities with other employees, it needs to be corrected. We need to send the message to our employees that we care about longevity and that is what this is about.

Commissioner Evans stated he cannot dispute what Commissioner Warren has said. The problem is he knows of several other employees that need an adjustment. He is not concerned with the amount. That may be correct. The problem is how you pick one, two, three or twelve employees out and change their salaries.

Commissioner Warren stated if there are more situations like this, they need to be fixed.

Commissioner Evans stated the only way to fix it is to do it all at the same time.

Commissioner Warren stated we need to handle the situations when we know about them.

Commissioner Bacote stated he did not agree with Commissioner Warren. We cannot handle cases like this one at a time. We don't have to look very far to find other employees in the same situation. There is no way we could look at each problem individually and handle them on a case by case basis.

Commissioner Evans stated there was a lot to do. The process must be done through the DMG study. If the Board is not going to take the information DMG has prepared and work with it, they might as well pay them what they are owed and tell them to leave. The Board doesn't want this situation to get out of hand. He is willing to listen to staff recommendations. The Committee can let this decision lay on the table until they see the report.

Commissioner Bacote agreed with Commissioner Evans with regard to letting this issue lie until the information from DMG and a staff recommendation is received. He feels there is currently many inequities in the pay scale. He is not directing this comment to anyone, but sometimes the biggest pitfall is that an employee can stay too long.

He worked at FSU for thirty-five years and people were hired after him making more than he was. It has been common recently with vacant positions, that the County will have to fill the vacancy with someone who must be paid a higher salary than the person who left. We must look at the position. He feels they are putting the cart before the horse.

Commissioner Evans stated inequities in the pay scale was what prompted the study. The Board has a real problem with the County being a training ground. He feels the Board members are singing on the same sheet, but have different philosophies about how to handle the situation.

Commissioner Bacote stated he wants everything straightened out and for all of it to be as fair and impartial as possible so that each employee gets his or her just due. The best thing to do is to look at the study when it is completed.

Commissioner Warren asked when the report would be received.

Commissioner Evans stated it would be received by the next Personnel Committee meeting. Once received, all the information will need to be reviewed. He would like to see the Board of Commissioners have a work session so they could all sit down and ask questions and work on the plan so that it can be adopted by the first of the year.

6. Other Committee Concerns.

No other committee concerns were raised.

Meeting adjourned at 3:11 PM.