

May 2, 2005

JESAP/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

A Joint JESAP/Personnel Committee was held Tuesday, May 2, 2005 at 4:30 p.m., in the QC Meeting Room, Third Floor, County Administration Building, 215 East Central, Bentonville

Finance Committee Members Present: Allen, Harrison, Sheridan, Stephenson, Tharp, Wolf

JESAP Committee Members Present: County Judge Gary Black, Assistant County Administrator Travis Harp, County Clerk Mary Lou Slinkard, Treasurer Deanna Ratcliffe, Circuit Clerk Brenda DeShields, Lieutenant Mark Undiano, Judge David Clinger

Others Present: Blair Johanson, Human Resources Manager Barbara Ludwig

Media: Serena Wilkins – Daily Record
Joe Askins – Morning News

Blair Johanson called the JESAP meeting to order.

Public Comments: None

1. Old Business

A. JESAP Salary Administration Policy

Human Resources Manager Barbara Ludwig used a Power Point presentation to list several key issues that will be addressed by proposed changes to the JESAP Policy language. She pointed out that these changes would cover 95% of the variances requested in the last year. Some of the concerns include: 1) Existing employees are not given the same consideration as new hires from outside the county; 2) When an employee is given additional duties and is moved to a higher grade, there is no allowance for higher compensation; 3) Elected Officials do not have the flexibility to lower salaries when employees move to jobs with lower grades; 4) Current grading is based on the content of the job description rather than application of the job evaluation; and 5) There are no incentives to encourage an exemplary employee during their first year of employment.

JP Stephenson asked for clarification of item number 4. Barbara Ludwig explained that currently, an elected official writes a job description, then sends it in to be graded. She stated that it would be more effective for the elected official to answer a survey about the duties of the job, then have Human Resources perform an on-site study and job shadowing and write the job description. The elected official would review and approve the job description. She stated that currently, jobs are graded based on how well the elected official writes a description, not on the job itself. JP Stephenson asked how much longer the process would be extended if it were done this way. Barbara Ludwig replied that they will request that job regrades and new position requests occur only twice a year, and that the process should take

approximately one month. County Clerk Mary Lou Slinkard expressed concern that the decision would be made by someone other than the elected official. JP Wolf asked if they would be justifying the job description. Blair Johanson stated that it would simply involve monitoring the actual duties to make sure they matched the job description, because now, the jobs are graded on the description only. Assistant Administrator Travis Harp stated that there is a tendency to write job descriptions around the person in the job, and they should be based on what the job is valued at. Barbara Ludwig stated that the Elected Official would still have final approval of the job description, but this would be a way of standardizing both the process and the writing.

The committee discussed other issues such as larger departments being able to provide 7% increases while smaller departments could not, and the lack of policy concerning variance guidelines. The committee then went through a side by side comparison of the old language and the proposed changes.

County Clerk Mary Lou Slinkard stated that Ordinance No. O-2001-12, which is the Salary Administration Policy, has just been submitted for codification, and it might be easier to make the changes in the language after that process is complete. She explained that the ordinance will be divided into sections, and the affected sections could then be amended. Other issues were discussed, such as employees moving to lower grade jobs, clearing up the definition of “transfer”, rewarding an exceptional employee during their first year of employment, and having the Quorum Court set the limit each year on the percentage that may be awarded for merit increases. Barbara Ludwig stated that they plan to limit regrades to once every two years, and will ask that all performance evaluations be turned in by September, to aid in budgeting. JP Stephenson stated that when the codification is complete, the ordinance amending the language should be drafted and then reviewed by County Attorney Ed Gartin so that it can move forward as soon as possible. Barbara Ludwig stated that if there were any changes that a committee member could not support, she needed to know before the ordinance is drafted.

JP Tharp made motion that the changes to Ordinance No. O-2001-12 be approved as recommended, seconded by JP Wolf. JP Sheridan stated that he wanted it on record that after the codification is received, the changes will be reworded into an ordinance and then brought back to the Personnel Committee. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Judge Clinger left the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

2. New Business

A. Grading New Position (Office Manager) for County Clerk’s Office

County Clerk Mary Lou Slinkard stated that she was requesting a new position of Deputy Clerk – Office Manager to operate the new County Clerk’s Office in Siloam Springs. She said that she had tried to write the job description to fit in with other jobs for an office that is located away from the courthouse and administration building. She said that one person would have to handle every aspect of the County Clerk’s duties, and that eventually more staff would be needed. There was discussion concerning whether the job description should include “training and supervision of others” when only one person will be working in the office. Blair Johanson explained that a person with that skill set needed to be hired because additional staff will eventually be added. County Clerk Mary Lou Slinkard pointed out that this position was really a second administrative assistant, and that person needed the same

capabilities as the present administrative assistant. JP Stephenson stated that in his conservative estimation, the office has the potential of serving between 35,000 to 40,000 people.

Blair Johanson stated that the position of Office Manager was given 695 points, which put it at a grade 10. County Clerk Mary Lou Slinkard questioned the 4 points given factor 2A, and asked Blair Johanson to explain the difference between awarding it four or five points. Blair Johanson stated that in order for that factor to receive 5 points it would have to be in an office with a large number of employees, and that would not be fair to the current administrative assistant who is responsible for a large number of people. He added that the overall score of 6 for Factor 2 was pushing the upper limits for a one-person operation. He said that with additional employees the job might be rated higher. JP Allen stated that he would hate to see that factor prevent the hiring of a person who is able to make a smooth transition from a one-person office into a larger office. JP Sheridan stated that it would not be fair to give this position the same grade as a position that supervises a large group of people, although he could see the point of trying to get the best person as possible hired. Barbara Ludwig stated that the salary range for a Grade 10 was \$25,969 to \$38,950. JP Sheridan asked what the maximum hire-in rate was. Barbara Ludwig answered that it was \$29,215, and Blair Johanson stated that was an appropriate range for a one-person office based on the market study. Travis Harp made motion to accept the position at a Grade 10, seconded by JP Stephenson. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

JP Wolf made motion that the Personnel Committee approve the requested position at a Grade 10, and forward it to the Finance Committee, seconded by JP Sheridan. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

3. Other Business

After motion and second the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.