

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

June 30, 2015

A Personnel Committee meeting was held Thursday, June 30, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. in the County Administration Building, Quorum Court Meeting Room, 215 East Central, Bentonville, Arkansas.

Committee Members Present: Sandlin, Chiocco, J. Harrison, Leadabrand, Anglin, Shadlow

Others Present: JP Meyers, Circuit Judge Tom Smith, County Judge Bob Clinard, County Clerk Tena O'Brien, Prosecuting Attorney Nathan Smith, Circuit Clerk Brenda DeShields, and County Treasurer Deanna Ratcliffe, Public Defender Jay Saxton, Human Resources Director Barbara Ludwig, Director of Veterans' Services Ramona Crouse, 9-1-1 Administration Director of Operations Mary Kay Sullivan

Media: Tom Sissom

Public Comments

None

Longevity Pay

Human Resources Director Barbara Ludwig stated multiple discussions have taken place with the elected officials discussing various changes to the Personnel Policy, including rewriting some of the rating factors so they will be easier to understand and more applicable to Benton County.

She said that the elected officials are in favor of a proposal for longevity pay to address the problem of employees who have been here for a long time, but will never move forward along the salary ranges unless merit pay is awarded every year.

The proposal would add an amount to each employee's base pay according to years of service as follows: \$250 after the fifth year, \$500 after the tenth year, \$750 after the fifteenth year, and \$1,000 after twenty years. She said the most expensive year will be the first year, because it will cost approximately \$260,000 to bring all the employees into alignment, and each year after that the budgetary impact would be about \$55,000. She said to accomplish this, it will require the quorum court to get behind it, and make it a priority each year during the budget process to provide some consistency. JP Anglin asked if there had been any discussion regarding employees with more than 20 years of service. Barbara Ludwig stated that after 28 years, employees can retire at any age, so there is an incentive to stay after the 20-year mark, but perhaps they should consider something at the 25-year mark.

JP J. Harrison asked what the average time an employee stays with the county is. Barbara Ludwig stated that there are 22 employees who have been here 20 years or longer.

County Judge Bob Clinard, Prosecuting Attorney Nathan Smith, Circuit Clerk Brenda DeShields, and County Treasurer Deanna Ratcliffe spoke in favor of allowing longevity pay.

JP Chiocco made motion to forward the longevity pay schedule to the finance committee, including a provision for employees employed longer than 25 years, seconded by JP Anglin.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

Grievance Procedure:

Barbara Ludwig explained that the grievance process is to ensure that an employee’s constitutional rights have not been violated. She explained that the form which she has designed addresses the applicant’s claim of potential discrimination or unlawful termination and it also includes a name-clearing request form. She added that she is working with attorney Mike Rainwater.

Personnel Requests:

Department 0101, Fund 1000 – County Clerk (Additional Position)

County Clerk Tena O’Brien explained that she is requesting an additional position to be titled “Probate Supervisor”. She cited an increase in the number of cases being filed and maintained by the office, the addition of another Circuit Judge in 2008, the implementation of new, complex database software for the State of Arkansas, and increase in public and telephone calls. She stated that having only one full-time position in this office makes it difficult to staff when that one person is out sick or out on annual leave.

Department 0103, Fund 1800 – Treasurer (Variance in Pay Scale)

County Treasurer Deanna Ratcliffe explained that she is asking for a title change from “Administrative Assistant” to “Chief Deputy”. She stated that in most counties in the State the person who acts in the absence of the elected official has the title of “Chief Deputy” and that her employee requested the title change.

Deanna Ratcliffe also explained that she would like to request a variance in the salary range for her Chief Deputy which would move her to the 110% range in the pay scale. She explained that this employee has 20+ years’ experience with the county, is responsible for over \$280,000,000 in distribution to the different taxing entities, she must be familiar and keep current on legislative finance changes, and that she learned the new cash management database system implemented by the county. Deanna Ratcliffe explained that she could hire a new employee in at the 90% range of the pay scale and a new employee would be making only \$6,000 less than someone who has been here 20 years. She stated that she feels her employee deserves this increase and that it would have an impact of \$2,512 on the 2015 budget.

Department 0113, Fund 1000 – Accounting and HR (Variance in Pay Scale)

Comptroller Brenda Guenther explained that this request is for the Senior Accounting Specialist who is a 15-year employee that has taken on additional duties that were performed by the Accounting Manager. Brenda stated that she is not in a hurry at this time to fill the vacant Accounting Manager’s position.

Department 0400, Fund 1000 – Sheriff (Additional Positions)

No one from the Sheriff’s Department was present to give an explanation on the request for 4 additional positions.

After some brief discussion, JP Sandlin made motion to table until another personnel committee meeting is called because no one is present to give an explanation, seconded by JP Shadlow.

Motion passed by a unanimous show of hands vote.

Department 0417, Fund 3024 – Public Defender (Waiver in Salary Administration Plan)

Public Defender Jay Saxton’s request was for a variance in salaries for four Deputy Public Defender positions. He explained that the entry level for a Deputy Public Defender on the state pay plan is \$45,377; however the Arkansas Public Defender’s Commission has approved a Labor Market rate of pay at \$55,156, and that he would like to see his deputies more in line with the state pay. He stated that two of his deputies have been employed for 8 and 9 years and that one of the duties has been here for a year, and one almost a year.

JP Sandlin explained that the Public Defender is paid for by the state, but that the deputy public defenders are funded by the counties.

Department 0480, Fund 1000 – Juvenile Probation (Reorganization)

Circuit Judge Tom Smith’s request was for a reorganization in the Juvenile Probation Department. He explained that Petie Cobb has been with the county for 31 years and will be retiring in December. He stated that the employees are valuable and that when they leave, you lose so much experience. Chief Probation Officer Petie Cobb explained that this is the time to reorganize and that by deleting two probation officer positions and adding two “Team Lead” positions, this will relieve the supervisor from performing the duties of probation officer and allow time to perform the duties of a supervisor. Petie Cobb stated that the Alternative to Detention is a great pilot program, but it has created a lot of additional work.

Department 0502, Fund 1000 – Fire Services (Title Change)

Human Resource Director Barbara Ludwig stated that Marshal Watson has made a title only change in his department from “Fire Marshal” to “Director of Fire Services”. She explained that the fire services department works with several volunteer fire departments in the county and that the duties performed by this position are not those duties of a fire marshal.

JP J. Harrison made motion to forward this request to the next Committee of the Whole meeting, seconded by JP Anglin.

Motion passed by a unanimous show of hands vote.

Department 0800, Fund 1000 – Veteran Services (Additional position and Title Change)

Director of Veterans’ Services Ramona Crouse requested to add one “Staff Assistant” position and to change a job title from “Female Outreach Service Officer” to “Veterans’ Services Officer”.

She stated that most of their clients have no problem with speaking to a male officer and if they do, she is a female and can talk to them. She stated that they have seen an increase in the number of veterans

that they are assisting and that they are conducting more outreach services. She stated that she needs a staff assistant position that could help with the disruption of telephones and visitors when a client is in the office for a visit with an officer, and who can also perform some of the administrative duties that she herself is having to perform after working hours.

Department 0200 – Fund 2000 - Road Department (Reorganization)

Jared Peters stated that the Road Department is requesting to add one “Operator IV” (new position , Grade 12); add two Welder/Mechanic III’s, Delete one “Operator III; delete one “Welder/Mechanic II”; and delete one “Welder/Mechanic I”.

He explained that they need an experienced person in this position. He explained that when you are performing paving work, if an inexperienced person is operating the paving equipment, you risk the loss of time, money, and product. He explained that the welders have to provide their own tools and that a reorganization for the welders will allow for a career path.

Department 0520, Fund 3020 – 9-1-1 Administration (Reorganization)

JP Sandlin stated that this is a reorganization in this department and does not involve adding new positions.

9-1-1 Administration Director of Operations Mary Kay Sullivan explained that her request is to delete one “Senior Mapper/Researcher”, grade 11 position, delete two “Mapper/Researcher”, grade 10 positions; and add one “staff assistant” , grade 6 position; and two “9-1-1 GIS Analyst 1”, grade 13 positions.

JP J. Harrison made motion to forward the title only changes to the next Committee of the Whole, seconded by JP Anglin.

Motion carried by unanimous show of hands vote.

JP Chiocco made motion to forward the longevity pay request to the next Finance Committee meeting, seconded by JP Anglin.

Motion carried by a unanimous show of hands vote.

JP Harrison made motion that the requests for new personnel for the County Clerk and the Veteran Services Department be forwarded to the Finance Committee, seconded by JP Chiocco.

Motion carried by unanimous show of hands vote.

JP Leadabrand made a motion to forward the reorganization and wage variance requests to the Finance Committee, seconded by JP J. Harrison.

JP Anglin stated that she does not like mid-year requests and that this should be considered at budget time.

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.