



Manistee County Courthouse
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CLERK

Jill M. Nowak
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CONTROLLER/ADMINISTRATOR

Lisa Sagala
(231) 398-3504

Board of Commissioners

CHAIRPERSON
Jeffrey Dontz

VICE-CHAIRPERSON
Karen Goodman

Margaret Batzer
Eric Gustad
Pauline Jaquish
Nikki Koons
Richard Schmidt

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING

Friday, February 4, 2022
9:00 a.m.

Manistee County Courthouse & Government Center
Board of Commissioners Meeting Room

Minutes

Members Present: Jeff Dontz, Eric Gustad and Karen Goodman, Chairperson

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Lisa Sagala, County Administrator/Controller; Julie Griffis, HR Generalist; Susan Zielinski, Finance Officer; Heather Vasquez, Equalization Director; Mike Szokola, Planning Director, Sheriff Brian Gutowski; Undersheriff Jason Torrey; Pat Heins, Circuit Court Administrator, Connie Krusniak, Friend of the Court; and Jill M. Nowak, Manistee County Clerk.

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

NOTE – Items requiring Board Action are indicated in BOLD

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

NOTTLEY STUDY

Lisa Sagala, County Administrator/Controller, noted that the Nottley Study was presented to the Department Heads and Elected Officials previously, and then Mr. Nottley presented the Study to the County Board at the January 2022 County Board Meeting. The Department Heads and Elected Officials were asked to bring their questions or concerns to today's Personnel Meeting.

Pat Heins, Circuit Court Administrator, asked about merit increases vs steps and the impact it would have. If there are no funds, then there are no increases because now we don't have steps either? Ms. Sagala explained we have always had step increases every three (3) years. The County is moving toward performance-based increases. It will entail a regular increase like cost of living and a performance increase. If the employee doesn't

make the level of a performance increase, there can be a six (6) month review after expectations are met. This type of merit-based system will push the Department Head to look at performance, which is much more fair than getting an increase just because you have been here for a period of time but have a minimal performance. If there is a minimum, median and maximum range, this gives the Department Head when hiring a new employee, the authority to hire that person in at a higher pay within the policy because of their skills, education or experience. Ms. Sagala explained that in keeping the ranges with the cost of living will be beneficial or we would go backwards. There had been no feedback from the Unions. The changes fall on the Department Heads where they will have to think long and hard directly to compensation changes and how an employee performs. Ms. Heins indicated that the Courts do job performance evaluations, and it is useful but stressful for all, but thanked the Commissioners for moving forward from the current pay grade system. Ms. Sagala noted that if you are continually communicating with the employees there should be no surprises. If there is a surprise, then the Department Head needs to give more feedback. Ms. Sagala stated her office can do training for performance reviews. There is a Draft Policy that is being worked on to explain this information, Pat Heins would like a copy. Implementation goal is October 1, 2022 with the new Fiscal Year and to eliminate steps as of that date. If implementation is not ready, then there could still be an across-the-board increase and if the performance portion is not ready, then it would be phased in. It just depends on if everything is in place.

Sheriff Brian Gutowski thanked the Commissioners for their work on the Nottley Study. The Sheriff asked about the cost of initial implementation of the study, what is that based on? Ms. Sagala stated the entire implementation is approximately \$87,616 without fringes, but the County's cost would be about \$50,000, without fringes and would include employees who are currently not at the minimum, to bring them to the minimum. The balance of the cost pertains to the library. Sheriff Gutowski stated that he has a 15-year employee, who is a high performer and should be near the top of the range, but is at the minimum of the range, how does he address this? Ms. Sagala noted that we have to get out of the mindset that because someone is here 15 years this is what their pay should be. If an employee is in a range, nothing can be done until the employee is evaluated as there is no movement until the review. The employee was put in the market range and the supervisor would evaluate and move the employee in the range. The Supervisor now has more flexibility, and the employee can get through the range faster if they are an exceptional employee or slower if they are just clocking in and clocking out. It is important to keep in mind that the point of this process is not to hurt anyone, nor are we trying to decrease their wages, but it's just a change to a different system, this is a good thing to move forward. An evaluation is a time for coaching and helping the employee as well as review of job performance, express appreciation and discuss wages including the entire benefit package.

Commissioner Gustad explains when the market equity evaluation is done, the long-term plan is for the greater good, but the initial transition might not be real positive. If we put ourselves in the Sheriff's situation, it is understandable when you have a new employee at the minimum of the range and then a 15-year employee at or near that same minimum, it is not positive and is a challenge. Commissioner Goodman explains that this process is two (2) steps. The Department Heads should be considering this new process and

moving it into a two (2) year process. Ms. Sagala estimates by March or April, we should be moving on to the next step.

Mike Szokola, County Planner, addressed some of the same concerns that Sheriff Gutowski had. Is education, professional degrees or certificates considered into placement? This is controlled by the budget and what if the budget doesn't allow for it? Although Mr. Szokola appreciated this huge undertaking, the movement in the range is still restricted. It was noted that more certifications doesn't necessarily mean more money, maybe there are other ways to show support. It is important to reward employees for education and skill sets and to continue education. It is important to remember we are all on the same team and not just one aspect of the organization. For budgeting purposes, it could be a percentage of a budgeted amount within the department and an amount across the board. The budget process will be different this year. Department Heads will be informed on that process. Mr. Szokola asked if it is to be negotiated in the budget with inflationary increases and performance based. Can other options such as days off be used to offset wages. Although the County is open to suggestions and ideas, Ms. Sagala did not think incentives such as extra days off is a good idea as it could get out of hand. One also has to remember key components like benefits, post-employment benefits are important too. Putting the total compensation package in writing to be presented at the performance review, is beneficial as it tells the whole story.

Jill Nowak, County Clerk, had some of the same concerns on merit increases and across the board increases in the ranges and how the budgeting of all this works. How are we to budget funds within our budgets when we don't know how much we will need because that amount will depend on the ratings in the performance evaluations? Ms. Nowak was also concerned that four (4) of the five (5) employees in her office decreased a pay grade. It was noted that no wages are supposed to decrease. Even though the employees fell within the lower pay grade range, the range is higher at the higher pay grade. In essence, that is a decrease in pay. Ms. Nowak noticed that points in the factor of education requirements were decreased as well as some other point factors. In 2015, the job descriptions were changed to include additional education requirements and the pay grades were increased for two (2) of the positions, and now they are lower again. It was mentioned that the County should reward employees for education, but it depends on what the degree is in and if it needed for the position. If Mr. Nottley updated the job descriptions, Ms. Nowak would like to review them. Ms. Nowak asked what the process was for these point factors to be reviewed. Ms. Nowak will meet with Ms. Griffis and Ms. Sagala.

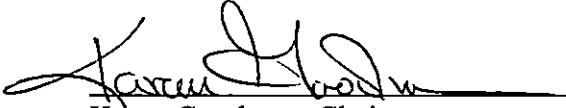
Ms. Griffis reiterated that what we had here today was welcomed dialog. These are all valid concerns, and this is the normal process to go through. We just have to trust the process as we are all here for the betterment of the team.

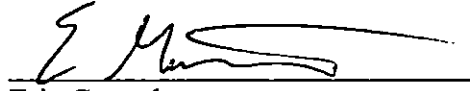
OTHER ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS


Ms. Sagala brought to the Committees attention that the contract of Jared Henry is expiring. The current contract is signed by the Benzie County Administrator and the Manistee County Administrator. Ms. Sagala suggested she could negotiate the new three

(3) year contract with Mr. Henry and would bring anything out of the ordinary to the Board, if necessary.

The meeting was adjourned at the Call of the Chair at 10:34 a.m.


Karen Goodman, Chairperson


Eric Gustad


Jeff Dontz