

THESE MINUTES ARE IN DRAFT FORMAT AND REQUIRE APPROVAL BY THE COUNTY BOARD.

PERSONNEL / EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE
MINUTES
JANUARY 10, 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Husom, Daleiden, S. Johnson

OTHERS PRESENT: L. Kelly, M. Miller, Partlow, Tagarro, Schwartz, Chur, Mattice

I. HHS Workplace Expectations & Professional Standards

Social Services Manager Michelle Miller distributed a document entitled "Workplace Professional Standards" for the Health and Human Services Department (attached). This item was tabled from the 12-13-17 Personnel / Employee Relations Committee. Miller said Health and Human Services Director Jami Goodrum Schwartz drafted a new plan.

Schwartz said they are in the process of streamlining and organizing the administrative memos that have accumulated over the past decades to remove those that are no longer relevant. Schwartz said the memos are primarily procedural in nature. They come into play when roles and responsibilities intersect between Units, such as Fiscal and Social Services. A few memos target all Health and Human Services (HHS) staff, but most deal with issues within a specific Unit.

Husom asked whether these memos are needed if they are already reflected in County policy. Schwartz said these are clarifications regarding how County policy is implemented in the HHS Department. HHS Business Manager Christine Partlow gave an example using the motor pool policy. She said the HHS policy is more prescriptive than the County one, but falls within those parameters and allows them to better manage their Department budget.

Human Resources Director Shawn Johnson said this is a good opportunity to determine what policies the County Board considers important to evaluate and review. The County Personnel Policy has language that says the County Coordinator must review any policies and procedures, and the Administration Department should receive copies. Any issues or concerns should go to the County Board of Commissioners for review. Husom said the process should go through Administration.

Schwartz asked whether items specific to procedures within HHS units need to be approved. Husom said they do not. County Coordinator Lee Kelly said Schwartz is referring more to procedural issues versus County policy. Sometimes it is hard to say when that line is crossed. Husom said the Board should have copies of each Department's policies that are not in the Personnel Policy manual. Schwartz said HHS policies and procedures are on SharePoint.

Kelly said typically Personnel Policy changes must be reviewed and adopted by the County Board. Husom said she did not think procedures had to be approved, as policies are separate from procedures. Kelly said when a Department uses procedural items to rate an employee's

performance, it is difficult to know which set of rules apply. Husom said there are union issues to consider as well.

Schwartz said HHS has developed core competencies and performance expectations based on job descriptions, and posted them in administrative memos to be transparent to employees.

Johnson said the labor attorney explained that the County is in compliance as long as Personnel Policies are consistently referenced when addressing discipline issues and union contracts. He said there are many areas in the Personnel Policy that can be used as descriptors to show expectations and the reason why disciplinary action is being taken.

Daleiden said to clarify the points recommended by the labor attorney, and then proceed. Schwartz said they will be rolling out the document to staff. Employees do not have to sign it.

Recommendation: Authorize use of the Health and Human Services Workplace Professional Standards document for onboarding without requiring employee signatures.

II. Request to Hire MH SWIII/MHP Above 12%

Miller said the request is to hire a Mental Health Social Worker III in the Social Services Unit above the 12 percent minimum wage scale. This position has been very challenging to fill for years. Part of this is due to the degree requirements, postgraduate work, and supervision experience needed. Candidates who are generally eligible are already therapists in the community and earning far above the wage range offered by the County. It took more than a year to fill a similar position in the Mental and Chemical Health Unit. Currently, the Intake and Assessments Unit has had a Mental Health Social Worker III position vacant for six months. This is an open, continuous posting until it is filled.

Miller said more than five rounds of interviews have been conducted with ten candidates in the last six months. The time invested by the County has been costly, with no one hired. Candidates are often not licensed or not qualified. Several candidates showed interest in this position until they are told the wage range. Every candidate has stated a minimally acceptable wage range that is significantly higher than 12 percent above the minimum. The current candidate has gone through two interviews. She has the necessary degrees and experience with both adults and children. She works two part-time jobs. One employer offered her \$74,000 full-time per year. Miller said the request is to hire her at \$35.65 per hour, or 26.5 percent above the minimum 2018 pay scale. Miller distributed a document regarding this request (see attached).

Husom asked whether there are any problems with leapfrogging. Discussion ensued regarding how much Mental Health Social Worker III staff at the County earn. Daleiden said to verify that no leapfrogging will occur, and then proceed with hiring this candidate since she sounds well qualified, as the position has been open for six months. HHS should talk with Johnson if there are any concerns or questions.

Recommendation: Approve request to hire a Mental Health Social Worker III at \$35.65 per hour, or 26.5 percent above the minimum 2018 pay scale.

III. Extension Office Staffing

Regional Director Sarah Chur said she supervises two office staff (1.5 FTE) in the Extension Office who are Wright County employees. The rest of the Extension staff are University of Minnesota employees. With the move to the Public Works Building, Extension office staff are able to assist Director of Parks and Recreation Marc Mattice. The Director of Extension does not office on-site. Chur said there are benefits to on-site supervision. She is transitioning to work with different counties beginning this year. The new University of Minnesota Extension Regional Director will be Lori Ann Vicich, who starts 1-29-18.

Chur said she and Mattice thought this would be a good time to consider shifting the reporting relationships of Extension staff who are County employees to an on-site supervisor. Vicich's main office will be in St. Cloud. She will be supervising five counties, including Wright. Chur said she typically solicited observations from staff and Mattice when doing performance reviews. Vicich will work with the Extension Committee and the budget. The direct supervision piece is what Chur seeks to change.

Husom asked how the logistics would work, since Mattice is not always in the office. Mattice said that is his concern as well. There are times during the Fair when Extension staff are gone for a week and a half. Parks staff also spends a lot of time out in the field. Responsibility for the Public Works front office has never been identified. The Board has not given any particular direction in that regard. In his opinion, when the Extension staff is present, they serve as the front office people.

Vicich's main office will be in St. Cloud. Chur said when Extension staff aren't there, Mattice and Parks and Recreation Operations Manager Brad Harrington will answer the door.

Mattice said this is not so much a supervision issue, but rather a building issue. There are two front Departments. He asked whether they should lock the inside door when both Parks and Extension are out, and change the doorbell to also ring in the Surveyor's Office. Daleiden and Husom said "Yes". Mattice said they could put a sign on the door telling people that Parks and Extension staff are out, and to ring the doorbell or leave a voicemail message using a phone posted outside. Daleiden said to let Surveyor staff know when Parks and Extension employees are gone. It wouldn't pay to hire someone else, as the situation doesn't arise that often.

Husom asked whether Mattice thought the front and inside doors should be locked when Parks and Extension aren't there, but Surveyor staff is on-site. Mattice said the public could come in the vestibule to ring the bell and get out of the weather.

Mattice said the building is his main concern. He is fine with supervising the office staff, signing timesheets, and doing performance appraisals. He said perhaps the office staff could also take minutes at Park Commission meetings. Johnson said it is best to have a Wright County employee supervise County staff. Mattice volunteered to be a backup signature for claims when Vicich is out.

Husom said it sounds like the supervision piece is not a concern. Daleiden said the doorbells should ring together and back to the Surveyor's office. Mattice said he would review the

changes with the County Surveyor to make sure he is agreeable. Chur said Mattice and Vicich will work together on performance issues.

Recommendations:

- 1) Approve logistics needed to make the doorbell ring from outside the Public Works Building to the Surveyor Department, as well as at the front desk;**
- 2) Approve changes requiring Extension staff to report to the Director of Parks and Recreation.**

IV. H1B Visa Sponsorship

Information Technology (IT) Director Adam Tagarro said he is seeking clarification regarding the County's position regarding H1B Visa Sponsorships for international employees. He does not have an employee needing this kind of visa at present. Hennepin County has language in their recruitment statements that say a candidate does not qualify for employment if they require sponsorship. Tagarro said they are seeing a lot of international applicants. He has not allocated funds for visa expenses in his Department budget. It is an expensive, time-consuming, and complex process.

Johnson said the County's labor attorney indicated that a statement such as the one Hennepin County uses in their job descriptions and position postings is acceptable. It states:

Candidates must have the right to work in the U.S. that is not based solely on the possession of a student visa or a visa sponsored by an employer.

Johnson said the above language is included in Hennepin County job postings. The labor attorney said the County has the right to include such language in job postings if the County Board so directs.

Kelly asked whether Johnson is saying that the County will not hire anyone with a visa. Johnson said this is strictly related to student visas that are sponsored by an employer, such as the H1B Visa. The wording would be included in job postings and position descriptions.

Recommendation:

Approve addition of the following language to all job descriptions and postings:
Candidates must have the right to work in the U.S. that is not based solely on the possession of a student visa or a visa sponsored by an employer.

Wright County Health & Human Services

1004 Commercial Drive
Buffalo, MN 55313
December 12, 2017

Implementation Plan

Introduce the HHS Workplace Professional Standards document to all HHS staff to recognize that respectful communication and collaboration are imperative in maintaining effective working relationships in our Agency.

Add to Orientation Checklist

At time of hire, Supervisors will review the HHS Workplace Professional Standards with the new employee. The Supervisor will update the Orientation Checklist with the date the task was completed and provide an electronic copy of the checklist to the Administrative Specialist.

Share with Staff

In January and February of 2018, Supervisors will meet with their teams and review the *Workplace Professional Standards* document with their staff. All staff including supervisors, managers and Agency director will review and discuss the contents of the document, eliciting feedback for any future changes. Supervisors will inform the Administrative Specialist when their entire team members have reviewed the document.

Future Steps

Annually in January, Supervisors will review the document with staff. The Administrative Specialist will maintain the document in SharePoint and update as appropriate.

Request Approval to Hire MH SWIII/MHP above 12%

To be eligible for hire as a MHP within our agency requires the candidate be at least two years post graduate degree and have completed their licensing board required supervision. They must also carry a clinical license as a LICSW, LMFT, or LPCC. The nationwide pool of candidates is shallow as these credentials take years to obtain and demand is high. Those that are eligible are generally working in a therapeutic role and earning well beyond the wage range of this position. Hiring qualified candidates has been an ongoing challenge for our agency. The Mental & Chemical Health (M&CH) Unit had an open MHP position for over a year before they were able to hire and the current position in the Intake & Assessment (I&A) Unit has been vacant for over six months.

The I&A and M&CH Unit supervisors have conducted at least five rounds of interviews with over ten candidates during the past six months. The time commitment this process has taken adds up to well over 40 hours of supervisory time (reviewing applications, setting up interviews, conducting interviews, etc.) The candidates interviewed have been underqualified, and/or not license eligible for the position, and not the right fit. Several candidates who showed interest ultimately declined interviews once gaining a better understanding of the hiring range parameters. Every candidate has stated that a minimum acceptable wage would be significantly higher than the 12% above the starting window allowed. Most seek a wage higher than the top end of the position entirely.

The current candidate has told us her minimum required salary is \$74K. Her employer has offered her this wage to begin in January of 2018.

Attributes of this candidate:

- Wright County resident (Familiar with local resources)
- Two Masters degrees (Marriage and Family Therapy and Psychology and Leadership)
 - Position relies heavily upon building relationships with community constituents
 - Leadership skills necessary to aid in this development
- Candidate's primary focus and experience is with adults
 - All past candidates primarily worked with children
- Experience with billing sources crucial to the capture of funding
- Experience on advisory boards
- Experience working with jail inmates
- Extensive experience collaborating with community partners
- Case management experience
- Experienced in building engagement with difficult and resistant clients
- Knowledge of psychopharmacology
- Experienced in crisis intervention
- Eligible and experienced in conducting diagnostic and psychosocial assessments
- Experienced in making therapeutic recommendations towards appropriate levels of client care

The current applicant is an excellent fit for the position and we are requesting approval to hire her at **\$35.65/hour (range being \$28.18-\$39.46). This is 26.5% above the bottom of the scale.**