

MINUTES

Approved 8/8/07

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

JULY 11, 2007 3:00 P.M. OLD JAIL CONFERENCE ROOM

Present: J. Dennis, Chair; M. Sigler; D. Kiefer

Absent: G. Stevenson and L. McBean-Clairborne

Staff: C. Covert, Clerk of the Legislature; P. Younger, Deputy County Administrator; S. Estes, Deputy Personnel Commissioner; G. Brangman, Outreach Worker, Office for the Aging; J. Thomas, Personnel Department; C. DeMarco, Mental Health Department; M. Lynch, Public Information Officer; S. Moore, Deputy County Administrator; A. Fitzpatrick, Personnel Commissioner

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Chair's Report

Mr. Dennis did not have a report.

Personnel Department

SARA Grant Update

Ms. Thomas reported that she was in receipt of a letter from Senator Seward stating Tompkins County has been awarded a \$17,500 grant for records storage. The grant amount requested was \$25,000. The grant funds will allow a study to be done to determine the County's future records storage needs pursuant to State requirements over a ten-year period. A request was made to have an evaluation of the Old Library to bring it up to code versus building a new building. *Ms. Thomas will bring forward a resolution at the next meeting to accept this grant.*

In response to a question raised by Mr. Sigler concerning other options, Ms. Thomas said discussions to combine records management have been held with Cornell University and other municipalities and school districts. The location of County records is not an issue, the only requirement is that records are secure and safe. However, there are certain records for municipalities that are required to be stored within the municipality. She noted that this facility would hold inactive storage not active records.

Ms. Kiefer asked who would be doing the study. Ms. Thomas said a Request for Proposals was done in January and from the three responders, one would be chosen.

Committee Goals

At this time, the Committee reviewed and discussed the proposed Committee goals for 2007. Following a brief discussion and a few minor corrections and changes to dates in Goal No. 4, the Committee by unanimous consensus of those present approved the goals. However, Mr. Sigler stated he continues to remain concerned that the goals do not address the size of departments and the number of employees working in one department as opposed to another department and accounting for where the growth is going to be. He believes certain departments will need to grow.

Presentation of Leadership Tompkins Project

Video Presentation

Mr. Estes said as a member of Leadership Tompkins one of the processes is to create a community action project that can be sustainable. The team he participated in decided to develop a thirty-

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minute video segment to air on Public Access – Government Channel 15 serving to outline and highlight a few of the services available in the Tompkins community.

At this time the Committee watched 15 minutes of the video entitled Televised Services Directory. Below is an outline of Team members and professionals who worked on this project and the project objective and goal. This 30-minute video will be aired several times in the next couple of days.

Project Title: Televised Services Director

Team Members: Stephen Estes, Gladys Brangman, and Ray Dunnigan

Production and Video Professionals: Giorgio Piccoli – Producer
Matthew Chilelli – Videographer, Editor and Music
Josh Diorrio – Videographer
Vincent Versace – Videographer

Subject Area: Public Service – Broad dissemination of various Human Services Programs, Community Education, Information and Referral Services and Civil Service Employment Information through the use of public access television.

Project Objective/Goal:

The Televised Services Directory team proposes utilizing Public Access to televise information on a broad range of public service topics. The goal of this project is to provide a valuable ongoing service to the residents of Tompkins County that can be sustained with minimal effort. The team would like to utilize this resource to:

1. Promote the Leadership Tompkins program by mentioning current projects and presenting past successes.
2. Highlight aging and other human services available to the community.
3. Provide information on how to locate civil service employment opportunities within Tompkins County.
4. Provide information on Transportation services available through TCAT.
5. Provide information on how to contact and use Information and Referral services.
6. Provide information on Cornell Cooperative Extension services.

Ms. Brangman concluded the presentation by explaining the benefits and the value to the community. The team believes it may increase the number of people who watch Government Access programming and provide more awareness and attention to the services available throughout the Tompkins community including County Government. She said the momentum needs to be maintained and sustained. There is a commitment to continue discussions with Cooperative Extension and Information and Referral. The team hopes to receive support of the County Legislature and its existing partners by making contact and enlisting and leveraging other resources such as Ithaca College and TC3, both of which have TV production students.

Ms. Lynch spoke in support of this effort and said she would provide what resources she could. A brief discussion followed concerning additional resources and ways to obtain financial assistance and other areas of networking to expand this project.

Personnel Department

Resolution – Restructuring of the Internship Program and Creation of a Living Wage for Project Assistants

Ms. Fitzpatrick briefly provided an overview of the project assistant (internship) program. Currently, the position titles are within the Personnel Department and are being used by other

departments. Departments are required to provide the necessary funding of these positions. When a department fills one of these positions, the Personnel Department then adds the individual to its payroll. Ms. Fitzpatrick identified two issues: (1) processing payroll has become very cumbersome, and (2) the living wage has increased since the creation of the program.

In response to a question raised by Ms. Kiefer, Mr. Estes said a department can hire an intern for a maximum of 18 months and up to 40 hours per week. New York State agreed to make positions non-competitive only if they were time limited.

Discussion followed and Ms. Fitzpatrick said she brought this to the Department Heads attention last month and is currently working with departments to identify their need for project assistants. Restructuring this program will place the payroll issue with the department that is supervising the individual.

Ms. DeMarco asked if the Personnel Department would continue to have oversight with the creation of these positions being specific to projects. Ms. Fitzpatrick believes this is the first resolution of what will be presented as follow-up actions by Departments. The reason the creation of project assistants in other departments is not included in the resolution is to review ways to enhance and regain some of the upfront scrutiny. There is a need to address the hourly rate to reflect the living wage and work with departments about their real needs while at the same time still finding a way to have an upfront active role in how people are recruited and hired as project assistants. Ms. Kiefer said she would like to see language to that effect included in the resolution. Mr. Sigler said that he does not support the resolution at this time and said he shares Ms. Kiefer's concern. He would like the Personnel Department to have more control over hiring within the County not less.

Further discussion followed and Ms. Fitzpatrick agreed to revise the resolution to include additional language and bring it back next month.

Training Update

Ms. Fitzpatrick updated the Committee on the training programs being offered or that have been offered to County employees. Below is a list of trainings:

- Workplace Violence Prevention training – Sheriff's Department has provided two deputies who have done three sessions to a total of 73 employees. Overall feedback and evaluation has been exceptionally positive.
- Two Cultural Competency sessions have been held with Laura Branca and Kirby Edmonds.
- A training professional from the Governor's office on Persons with Disabilities was held.
- Additional Workplace Violence Prevention trainings will be held
- Various Computer training sessions are scheduled for July and August
- Bob Blenn of TC3 Biz has been contacted to schedule additional trainings this fall.

Mr. Dennis commented on employee morale and believes the County should begin developing an employee recognition program as was done 10-12 years ago.

Ms. Kiefer asked if the employee handbook was ready for committee review. Ms. Fitzpatrick said she hopes next month she will be able to present it.

Report and Update from Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee

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Ms. Lynch reported on the Diversity Communications Program and said it is moving forward. She has an intern working with her who will be assisting with the development of an informal needs assessment in departments.

Approval of Minutes

It was MOVED by Mr. Sigler, seconded by Ms. Kiefer, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2007, meeting as corrected.

In response to a question raised, Ms. Fitzpatrick said her department is in the process of exploring options to purchase a vehicle as requested through the rollover process.

Other Business

Mr. Dennis said he attended the Department Head meeting this morning and asked that they recruit two representatives from the group to be members of the Search Committee for County Administrator.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.