



RIVERSIDE COUNTY/SEIU LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, May 11, 2006
SEIU Office
4336 Market Street
Riverside, CA 92501-3518

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: (*Chair)

*John Mooney, Human Resources
Carol Keating, Human Resources

Debbie Cortez, SEIU
Marward Sullivan-Taylor, SEIU
Nancy Allende, SEIU
William Berkley, SEIU
Therese Vetrino, SEIU
Vi Le, SEIU
Tanya Arnaiz, SEIU
Stephen Butler, SEIU

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Ron Komers, Human Resources
Barbara Olivier, Human Resources

Eric Russell, SEIU
Linda Love, SEIUs

IN ATTENDANCE:

Jeanne Groen, Human Resources
Berninia Bradley, Human Resources
Doris Lackey, Human Resources
Michelle Alves, Human Resources
Tiffany Mendez, Human Resources
Sheri Studebaker, DPSS
Allan Anderson, Human Resources
Robin Downs, Human Resources
Milca Montanez, Human Resources
Tom Prescott, Human Resources
Marilyn Barker, Human Resources

Jeanne Pettet, Human Resources
Kris Sloman, Human Resources
Christal Foster, Human Resources
Ryan Schulte, Human Resources
Terrie Stevens, Human Resources
Gail Smith, Human Resources
Berninia Bradley, Human Resources
Sarah Franco, Human Resources
Kathy Byrd, Human Resources
Steve Sopher, DPSS

I. INTRODUCTIONS

Guests and members introduced themselves.

II. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

John Mooney requested to add agenda items to today's meeting: Christal Foster is here to discuss the "resuscitation" of the Floater Program. Kris Sloman would like to discuss recruitment statistics for social workers in Child Protective Services (CPS).

III. REVIEW OF MINUTES – April 13, 2006

The minutes of April 13, 2006 were reviewed and approved.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Workforce Development

Debbie Cortez said it was her understanding that after viewing the presentation by SEIU Local 660 at the last meeting Ron Komers indicated he would submit a Form 11 to the Board of Supervisors, and the hospital is also proposing something. Debbie asked whether these are two separate items, or an umbrella item within an item? Both actions involve training.

John Mooney explained that Human Resources went before the Board with a proposal for an Educational Training Support Program. This is a countywide policy that gives departments new ways to recruit and retain people. It allows for a broader usage of the 20/20 work study program as a recruitment tool. Other components of the Educational Training Support Program include an educational loan repayment program. Under this program the County would pay student loan payments so long as the individual continues to be employed by the County. If an individual terminates employment they must assume that cost on their own.

Upon inquiry, John explained that the maximum amount for tax-free purposes is \$5,250/year. Human Resources recommended a centralized program because departments have always had the ability to offer educational reimbursement to employees, and this is not being taken away. What we are doing is giving departments the ability to continue to manage their own internal education programs for training that relates to the person's current job, or maybe within a certain series in which they are employed. Under these circumstances tuition reimbursement is tax-free.

Training which assists an employee going into a new profession in a completely different area from their current position does have tax implications, so by routing all training opportunities through the centralized program we can ensure the appropriate taxation is applied consistently.

Specific Human Resources staff will be designated as career counselors who will work with employees or candidates who are interested in the program. Initial counseling will include aptitude testing and interest-based testing in order to evaluate the career paths for which they are best suited. We want to place employees in career tracks that have the greatest probability of completion.

There may be instances where employees wishing to enroll in the program may be declined. Departments must first determine whether they wish to invest in the program as a recruitment and retention tool. Some of the features of the program may not be available to current employees, such as those designed

primarily as recruitment tools. As Human Resources just recently obtained Board approval, specific policies and forms relating to the educational assistance program have not yet been prepared, but Human Resources is in the process of developing them.

Debbie Cortez asked for a copy of the proposal submitted to the Board. John Mooney said he would provide this to Debbie. Also, Barbara Olivier prepared a presentation on the educational assistance program, and we could share this with SEIU at the next committee meeting.

Debbie Cortez asked how SEIU might work together with Human Resources to make the program successful. John Mooney replied that Human Resources wishes to partner with SEIU to see if they are interested in utilizing SEIU's Training Fund for the educational assistance program. Specific issues would need to be worked out, such as under what circumstances SEIU's funds would be used, because certain training could result in employees working in a bargaining group other than SEIU. Debbie Cortez said the program serves to help employees advance their working career, and she doesn't see a problem with training out of a bargaining unit. Debbie added that the training fund is intended to enhance members' education and their efforts to advance their careers for greater monetary compensation.

Debbie Cortez asked how SEIU might collaborate with Human Resources. Would the approach be that of a partnership in which both parties have buy-in and the union could promote the plan to employees, or is it more of a situation where candidates are selected at the sole discretion of or at the prerogative of Human Resources? John Mooney replied that Human Resources is open to discussion and working together to roll out the program. One component, for example, is the floater program which Christal Foster will describe further today. There are some questions that need to be worked out with SEIU before we move forward with that piece. Although Human Resources has Board approval for the educational assistance program, our initial efforts may be testing grounds in a sense. John said he envisions additional discussions at future meetings of this committee and possibly establishment of subcommittees at some point. Debbie Cortez said she appreciates this information. We want this plan to succeed for the benefit of the County and members as a whole. Debbie agreed that it would be beneficial to have discussions and to work together to help the program work most effectively.

John Mooney said the other presentation Debbie referred to earlier was brought to the Board of Supervisors by RCRMC, who prepared a quarterly update report as a workshop. There were no decisions made in the presentation to the Board, but a part of that presentation included a 20/20 work/study program in conjunction with Riverside Community College (RCC) that is focused on transitioning Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVN's) to Registered Nurses (RN's). The college has funding to permit 50 individuals per semester to enter their program. Of that group, 20 would be designated for County employees. The collaboration with RCC is designed to address the lack of slots in the nursing program. There are many applicants for nursing programs, but there is limited capacity.

John explained that RCC has some space at March Air Force Base which will be set up as a satellite facility in partnership with RCRMC to provide clinical training.

Students in this program will work 20 hours per week as County employees and will be paid 40 hours per week, and attend school for 20 hours per week.

Other components in RCRMC's workshop were more far-reaching and conceptual. There are discussions to obtain support to build an educational center at the hospital that would have mannequins that simulate patients with various medical diseases and conditions to give students clinical practice and exposure to real-life situations. John said Human Resources is also working with RCRMC and EDA to obtain grant funding to support various activities involving nursing education. One of the components of both the educational support program and RCRMC's proposal is reaching out to colleges and even high schools to channel individuals to the health care field at an early age. Even working as an office assistant in the hospital would give individuals some exposure to the medical environment.

Debbie Cortez asked whether any respiratory therapist or CNA positions have been discussed. John Mooney replied that the hospital is primarily focused on RN and RN to BSN programs. The board policy that was approved would allow for these types of things. Because the program is subject to available funding, most likely the program would be used for difficult-to-recruit positions. However, the definition of "difficult to recruit" is very broad. It does not necessarily have to be a position that Human Resources typically views as difficult to recruit. Justification under the Board-approved policy could be met based upon having advertised to attempt to fill positions, or it could be based upon recruiting efforts in specific geographic areas. Christal Foster described some of the other parts of the educational support program, including the educational loan repayment plan, the retraining program that would work with the Return-to-Work group, and the floater program.

County departments will work with Human Resources to identify positions that they wish to fill that would benefit from the tools included in the educational support program, and which components the department wishes to use. All County departments have been notified that they can contact Christal Foster to discuss options that would work best for them.

John Mooney said the process has not been set out yet, but Human Resources would certainly meet and confer with SEIU about issues as they come up. Debbie Cortez said the union receives questions from members about work/study plans, and it would be good for the union to be involved early. Debbie added that the union could place information on its website about the program. John Mooney said that, although there is not currently a plan to execute, the 20/20 program is on a fast track.

Marward Sullivan-Taylor said the work/study program is moving forward quickly, although we have not had time to dialogue about it. John Mooney explained that at this point the work/study program is RCC's program, and the County is attempting to designate a certain number of slots for County employees. Some of the decision-making that has occurred so far has been done by RCC, and Human Resources has not necessarily been involved. John said Katherine Eaves has had contact with RCC about the program. Marward Sullivan-Taylor said we discussed some time ago using the model developed by SEIU Local 660 and the process for implementation, but from that point we have not had dialogue. This subject was brought up two years ago. Marward asked if the County is planning on using funding or ideas from RCC's proposal. John

Mooney said the Board policy gives the hospital the approval and authority to participate in that part of the program, and they need to channel enrollment and implementation through Human Resources so that we can assess tax liability issues. The Board also provided seed money of \$300,000 for the program. If an employee is unable to complete a training program in which they have enrolled, the employee will have return rights to their former position. Bill Berkley reiterated that SEIU is eager to be involved in the process as early as possible.

Christal Foster discussed the floater program. The program is being revived and we are considering placing 16 individuals in a program where they can move to a different job. Individuals can contact Christal Foster, who will conduct some assessments and review open requisitions to see which positions might be feasible. The plan is to give individuals six months' experience in a new position. If it is an entry level position the person will be transitioned into that job. If it is not an entry level position, the person would have to compete with others for the position, but they will have gained skills for the position.

Tom Prescott said the program is designed to allow six months (and in some cases an additional six months) trying out a new job. Two problems come to mind immediately: First, the employee is working in a different classification, and we currently have a restriction in the MOU that says an employee can only work outside their classification for 480 hours. If a candidate wishes to participate in the floater program, they individually do not have the right to contract out of the MOU. Employees who have expressed an interest in the floater program have been requested to first consult with their union to explain the circumstances and obtain the union's approval. The second issue is union dues. According to the plan, the employee is technically paid and considered to be doing the job they were originally hired to do (not the floater position). The employee is temporarily in a new position, and in some cases this may cross union boundaries. Tom said we would need a tripartite agreement regarding union dues.

A question was raised regarding performance evaluations as they relate to the floater program. Tom Prescott explained that employees must meet certain criteria before entering the floater program: One requirement is that the person cannot have a background of poor performance. Both jobs are quite different in most cases, and the employee will be evaluated every 60 days in the new position in terms of performance. The home position is held open for employees for six months and cannot be filled. Tiffany Mendez said that in order to maintain the bargaining group and their salary and benefits, a temporary floater job classification was created for each bargaining unit. Employees would report to Human Resources during the time they participate in the floater program. If an employee's annual performance evaluation is due while they are participating in the floater program, Human Resources would contact the supervisor in the new department and request that they prepare a performance appraisal.

There was discussion about union representation in the event an employee in the floater program is disciplined. It was agreed that this discussion should take place with both unions at the same time.

2. Hospital Training Program

John Mooney said RCRMC conducted an educational workshop for the Board. Ideas were presented, but no formal proposals were submitted. The Board seemed amenable to the items they were proposing. Katherine Eaves has been

tasked with gathering data and preparing formal proposals. Upon inquiry by Debbie Cortez, John explained that the framework for the LVN to RN 20/20 program is in place, and we can probably go forward with this aspect of the program. John said he assumed there would be internal meetings, including the RCRMC Labor-Management Committee, to determine who would be accepted into the 20 spots reserved for the County for nursing education. John said it is his understanding that the hospital would look first to existing County employees, and if there aren't enough interested County employees, they will consider people who already have their LVN license and are on the waiting list with RCC. Upon inquiry by Marward Sullivan-Taylor, John Mooney explained that if per diem employees are interested in participating in the 20/20 program, they would have to give up their per diem status and become regular County employees in order to be considered. John Mooney said the hospital's focus seems to be on existing County employees for the 20/20 work/study program. Marward Sullivan-Taylor noted that registry employees may also be interested in the program. There was further discussion about candidate selection criteria. Marward Sullivan-Taylor said there may be issues around prerequisites to enter the program. In the past the hospital has accepted work experience to satisfy prerequisite requirements. Berninia Bradley said she would discuss the selection process with Katherine Eaves and report back at the next meeting.

(Lunch)

3. **Discussion of Possible Audio Recording at Administrative Interviews**

Debbie Cortez said recently some administrative interviews had been recorded, and this is a change from the past. Debbie inquired about the purpose of recording these interviews. Robin Downs said there have been instances where employee wish to record an Administrative Interview (AI), and when that occurs the County also prepares a recording. The County views tape recordings as a factual reference in place of taking copious notes during the interview. It takes a considerable amount of time to type notes from an interview. The Employee Relations Division has been considering the most efficient method of preparing notes from interviews. Robin Downs said she tried using a digital recorder along with Dragon voice-recognition software for transcription purposes, but this was not successful. Debbie Cortez noted that a verbatim transcription does not give the reader an idea of the interviewee's physical expressions or emotional tone during an interview.

4. **Update on Social Worker Recruiting and Retention**

Kris Sloman said she presented statistical information at a recent DPSS Labor-Management Committee meeting regarding recruiting efforts for Children's Social Service Workers I's and II's and Children's Social Service Workers III's, IV's and V's. The highlight of the presentation was that, for Children's Social Service Workers I's and II's, the County's vacancy rate is 20.32. The vacancy rate for Social Service Workers I's and II's is 5.06, and for III's, IV's and V's the vacancy rate is 7.88. The countywide vacancy rate is 20.32.

The other component of the presentation related to advertising and recruiting events that DPSS has participated in, as well as plans for future events. Kris said DPSS advertises in all of the social worker publications that are available, and attends recruiting events. On March 19 DPSS recruiters attended a large recruiting event called National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Lobby Days. Additional recruiting events included Latinos for Hire Job Fair, UCR Career Night, and the NASW Conference in April. An upcoming event is the

Social Worker Career Field Day at Cal State San Bernardino on May 12. Kris Sloman explained that a member of DPSS and one of Kris's staff members attended the above-mentioned recruiting events.

Kris also shared information about Social Workers III's, IV's and V's monthly hiring statistics from January 2005 to December 2005. There were a total of 80 hires during this time period. The statistics illustrated that DPSS hires social workers year round; there is no single month in which most of the hiring takes place.

Bill Berkley referred to the vacancy rates cited earlier today, and asked for the number of positions that had been approved by the County for each of the classifications, and when that took place. Bill explained that he is asking this because case loads have gone through the roof for social workers due to the extraordinary growth in Riverside County. If these standards are based on what was real in 2000, the information is askew. Steve Sopher, Regional Manager for DPSS, said this is a matter that the Child Welfare Directors Association has now taken up. They recognize that case loads are overwhelming, and they are developing a strategy to propose to the Legislature regarding permanent funding commitments, using Senate Bill 2030 study as the basis. Steve added that the state had frozen payments for social worker services in 2000 so that even if case loads increase, the County is not necessarily being paid commensurate amounts by the state. Bill Berkley said this is like an unfunded mandate for the program. Adequate funding is not available for hiring additional social workers in order to keep pace with the demand for services. When the department is unable to meet certain deadlines, the result is a financial sanction against the County.

Comment [HR1]: Info needed from Sopher

Kris Sloman gave the number of active, filled and vacant positions that made up the vacancy rate of 7.88. Active positions (budgeted for full-time): 419; 386 were filled, and 33 were vacant. For the Children's Social Service Workers I's and II's the active positions were 79, filled are 75, and vacant 4. Kris said she did not have a request to fill the four vacant positions at the time the report was generated, and the department does not have a plan to fill these positions at this time. Kris added that Children's Social Service Workers III's, IV's and V's are on continuous recruitment, and the I's and II's are not.

Upon inquiry by Debbie Cortez, Steve Sopher estimated the County has approximately 8,000 total case loads. Last year the department received approximately 54,000 phone calls, and of that 70% resulted in referrals where social workers made contact with families. Jeanne Pettet, Deputy Director for DPSS, added that the numbers of case loads are continuously being reviewed and redistributed as necessary. Right now DPSS is involved in a parity project that redistributes work loads according to ZIP codes. The average number of case loads is 50 to 60, which is similar to case loads for adjacent counties.

Bill Berkley inquired about the number of Emergency Response workers handling phone calls. Jennie Pettet replied there are six regions with two to three units. Steve Sopher suggested that staff compile specific statistics and report back at the next meeting, in response to Bill's question. Bill Berkley said he has heard reports from social workers, and he would like to have actual numbers to see what the case loads look like. There is a retention problem related to social workers. Bill said he would appreciate additional information.

IV. **ADJOURNMENT**

The SEIU Labor-Management Committee will meet again on Thursday, July 13, 2006, at 11:00 a.m. at the SEIU office located at 4336 Market Street, Riverside, California.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Barker

TOPIC

RESPONSIBILITY

Additional information about selection criteria for 20/20
Work/study program at RCRMC

Berninia Bradley

Presentation on Educational Assistance Program

Barbara Olivier

Additional social worker statistics

*Kris Sloman
Steve Sopher*