



RIVERSIDE COUNTY/LIUNA, LOCAL 777 LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, November 8, 2006, 11:00 a.m.
LIUNA Offices
4000 10th Street
Riverside, CA 92501

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT (*Chair)

*Ron Komers, Human Resources
Barbara Olivier, Human Resources
John Mooney, Human Resources

Fred Lowe, LIUNA
Sandra Brown, LIUNA
Sala Ponnech, LIUNA
Kathie Delgado, LIUNA
Tom Carnes, LIUNA
Luana Ball, LIUNA
Maria Ochoa-Flynn, LIUNA

ABSENCES

Linda Jefferson, LIUNA
Jack Mosqueda, LIUNA

Linda Gonse, LIUNA
Stephen Switzer, LIUNA

IN ATTENDANCE

Kris Sloman, Human Resources
Sherie Studebaker, DPSS
Milca Montanez, Human Resources
Fernando Vizcarra, RCRMC
Tiffany Mendez, Human Resources
Shawn Atin, Human Resources
Shari Daniels, Human Resources
Lenora Reyes, Human Resources
Michelle Wohl, Human Resources
Tom Prescott, Human Resources
Patty Querzola, Sheriff's Department
Jennifer Griffin, Human Resources

David Stone, Flood Control
Daniel Spicer, Human Resources
Robin Downs, Human Resources
Sylvia Deporto, Human Resources
Roger Uminski, Community Health Agency
Shondi Lee, Human Resources
Andi Huey, Human Resources
Sarah Franco, Human Resources
Dave Williams, M.D., Human Resources
Berninia Bradley, Human Resources
Lisa Pina, Human Resources
Marilyn Barker, Human Resources

I. INTRODUCTIONS

Members and guests introduced themselves.

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES

The minutes of the January 11, 2006 meeting were reviewed and approved.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Arbitrator Panel

Sarah Franco reported that the County's arbitrator panel currently consists of 11 arbitrators, and a recent review of the list showed that only five arbitrators are actually being used. Employee Relations staff would like to have a larger group of arbitrators from which to choose, and Sarah said she wants to do some research in order to add additional names to the list for the union's consideration. Fred Lowe agreed that LIUNA is interested in discussing this, and Sarah can work with Stephen Switzer on this subject.

B. Educational Support Program

Ron Komers said we are very excited about the Educational Support Program because of its value to the County in recruiting and retention, and because of its value to County employees. Ron said he is eager for Riverside County to have a stronger educational program. Ron introduced Shondi Lee, who will be the Educational Support Program Coordinator.

Shondi Lee explained that the Educational Support Program was approved by the Board of Supervisors in April 2006. The program mission is to encourage the existing workforce to pursue careers and education relevant to Riverside County's manpower needs now and in the future, and particularly for recruitment and retention for difficult-to-recruit (DTR) positions. We especially want to encourage existing County employees to pursue careers in areas that are traditionally difficult to fill and/or retain. The program will maximize use of funding through partnerships with local universities and colleges, and there are plans to pursue grants.

Ron Komers stated a recent budget report discussed at a Board of Supervisors meeting involved County positions for which there are more than 30% vacancies. Following this meeting Supervisor Wilson encouraged Ron to ensure that there are special recruiting programs and special incentives for desert employees where it is difficult to find professionals to fill certain positions. There is a lot of competition from local businesses in terms of finding and hiring professionals. We can define "difficult to recruit" in general as well as in terms of location, and Supervisor Wilson asked that employees working in desert areas be given special consideration through the Educational Support Program (ESP).

Shondi Lee said the ESP is open to regular, full-time and regular-part-time employees who have successfully completed their probationary period or who have been hired in DTR or difficult to retain positions. It is also open to temporary and per diem employees working as certified nursing assistants or in a nursing classification.

Program options include tuition and textbook reimbursement, 20/20 Work-School which allows employees to have a part-time work schedule while they are full-time students and receive a full-time salary.

Another program feature is textbook and tuition reimbursement to an annual maximum of \$5,250 (tax-free except for funds paid outside of the Section 127 Tax Code). This applies to employees who pursue degrees in positions that are not designated as difficult-to-recruit, or degrees that are not relevant to their current position. The maximum amount payable is equal to UCR's credit-per-hour rate.

One of the most exciting options of the program is the Educational Loan Repayment. This is a recruiting and retention incentive for DTR positions. Eligibility includes completion of a nursing bachelor's or master's degree, and the employee must currently work in a DTR position.

Fred Lowe inquired about the DTR designation, and Ron Komers clarified that there are two DTR lists: One is a DTR list for extra steps that employees may have, and there is a separate DTR list for this program. The list for the ESP Program is one for which Ron Komers approves the DTR status. The DTR title can be applied to positions that are not designated as difficult to recruit within a labor contract.

Kathie Delgado discussed a training program that is currently in place in Indio designed to train our own Sheriff Dispatchers, and Kathie asked if the ESP program could be integrated into the existing program. Ron Komers said the 20/20 Program is not restricted to the ESP program, and a department could create a similar 20/20 Program to achieve retention goals. One of the major areas in which the 20/20 Program is relevant for LIUNA members is for Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA's) who wish to become Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVN's).

Shondi Lee described the application process for the ESP Program. Employees can read about the ESP Program and obtain an application via WorkforceExchange.net. Upon receipt of an application, Shondi Lee will arrange for employees to take an assessment (career interest inventory). Employees would then have a career counseling meeting with Shondi Lee to review the assessment results and develop a career development plan. Shondi Lee explained that her background includes work as a college career counselor, and the assessment program she chose is one that measures interest, aptitude and ability. The results help employees decide on areas of study in which they are most compatible and therefore more likely to succeed.

Upon inquiry by Kathie Delgado, Shondi said she also has experience as a vocational rehabilitation counselor, and she would be able to work with injured or accommodated employees who are unable to perform their normal work duties due to an injury or illness. Shondi could recommend aptitude testing in order to guide them toward areas where they are likely to be successful.

Shondi Lee said she would hold informational sessions for interested employees, and she would also be presenting the program to department heads. Also, Kimberly Bracy was recently hired into the Educational Support Program, and

she will serve as a career resource coordinator who will partner with local colleges and universities. Kimberly will also be meeting with department staff to introduce the program. Ron Komers said he is interested in receiving suggestions about how to communicate the existence of this new program.

Shondi Lee reviewed participant requirements. Fred Lowe asked under what circumstances the 20/20 program might be used. Shondi said under the 20/20 program participants must be full-time students, taking a minimum of 12 units. Barbara Olivier said there are two existing uses now for the 20/20 program, which would be the LVN to RN program and it has been used to recruit and retain social workers. The 20/20 program has been used in the past for limited situations, and we are now expanding the program. Ron Komers noted that the 20/20 program is not part of the Educational Support Program at this time. Barbara Olivier said this is a program where Human Resources will work with departments to find solutions to meet department needs and at the same time permit employees to pursue educational goals.

Fred Lowe suggested a subcommittee be formed to identify difficult-to-recruit locations and classifications. Ron Komers agreed that creating a subcommittee would be a good idea. It would help to identify employees who wish to better themselves by attaining a degree. It may be challenging to educate supervisors about the need to recognize that some employees want to grow in their working lives and at the same time maintain department objectives. This will be accomplished through one-on-one conversations. Conversely, the program would not be successful if we force supervisors to comply. Work comes first, but flexibility needs to be inherent.

Sala Ponnoch inquired whether the ESP would address language training in order to grow its own bilingual employees. Barbara Olivier responded that the Center for Government Excellence offers a course entitled "Spanish Survival Skills." More information is available on the Human Resources website in the Center for Government Excellence section (formerly known as Career Development).

Ron Komers said he would like to have a presentation on the Center for Government Excellence at a future meeting. There is a new name and a new focus for the former Career Development Department. The focus is away from individual development to improving the quality of government service through the development of individuals. Ron said Human Resources is excited about the benefits to employees as well as the benefit to the County through this program.

Shondi Lee then discussed funding for the ESP. The Board is enthusiastic about the Educational Support Program, and it approved \$1 million for the program. There was discussion about charging back certain expenses to departments vs. having the ESP pay for certain expenses. This would be negotiated on an individual basis.

C. Wellness Program

Dr. Dave Williams was in attendance to discuss the Wellness Program. Fred Lowe said he attended a recent Wellness seminar, and it was very illuminating and very well received.

Dr. Williams described the leading causes of death in the United States. Based upon diagnoses, heart disease is number one, cancer number two, and strokes are the third leading cause. Dr. Williams then discussed the leading root causes of death in the United States. Smoking is the leading lifestyle disease, followed by lack of exercise and alcohol. While we do not have all the data on the effects of stress, there is a new field of medicine in which this is studied (Psychoneuroimmunology), and we are beginning to learn more about the negative impact of stress on our health.

Dr. Williams then discussed obesity statistics across the country over the past 20 years. Greater than 25% of the population is considered obese. Obesity increases the risk of diabetes. Based on statistical data, it is possible to predict the probability that an individual would have Type 2 diabetes. Dr. Williams has more information on this for anyone who is interested. There are now tests that can be performed to detect early signs of an underlying process that would eventually lead to diabetes.

One of the driving forces of obesity is partially hydrogenated or hydrogenated oils and trans fatty acids. Reducing these ingredients wherever possible is a first step that individuals can take to improve their health. The more highly processed food is, the healthier it is.

Dr. Williams reviewed statistics gathered from 445 Healthy Lifestyle Rewards Program participants, of which 86% are female, and 64% of which are under age of 50. The data shows that 41% of these individuals are obese. If you include "overweight" data, the percentage is 73%.

Dr. Williams then discussed a condition called metabolic syndrome. The underlying problems are inflammation and insulin resistance. When one has insulin resistance, the pancreas is overworked. The way to detect the presence of insulin resistance is through extensive testing, which is not commonplace at this time. Hopefully at some point in the future this type of testing will become more common.

Dr. Williams discussed cholesterol and the presence of plaque in blood vessels. When there is plaque, there is a possibility that a piece of plaque could break off and enter a blood vessel, which causes clotting, and the result is a heart attack or stroke.

Dr. Williams described things that people can do to reduce insulin resistance: Reduce weight, quit smoking, increase physical activity. Dr. Williams cautioned that diabetics should consult their physician before they increase physical activity because medication changes may be necessary in anticipation of increased physical activity. Use of extra virgin, cold pressed olive oil is helpful in insulin resistance, although it is high in calories. Eating fresh fruit and vegetables helps to prevent cholesterol from oxidizing, which is harmful to blood vessels.

Through recent research scientists are discovering that one's thoughts and mental outlook can influence the process of inflammation. Literature also shows that spirituality and social connectedness are important factors in improving one's health. Recent studies show that there are nerve fibers that connect the brain to

the immune system, and that mental stress or a bleak outlook negatively impacts one's health.

Dr. Williams distributed brochures and vouchers for fitness club membership. Dr. Williams said employees could contact him to request a health risk evaluation, and Dr. Williams' staff would come to their work location and conduct an evaluation at the worksite.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The LIUNA Labor-Management Committee is scheduled to meet again on Wednesday, February 14, 2007 at the LIUNA offices at 4000 10th Street, Riverside.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Barker

FOLLOW-UP -- NOVEMBER 8, 2006 LIUNA LABOR-MANAGEMENT

Presentation on Center for Government Excellence

Nancy Taylor