



**RIVERSIDE COUNTY/LIUNA, LOCAL 777
LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, March 9, 2005, 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

Fred Lowe, LIUNA
Sandra Brown, LIUNA
Carol Keating, Human Resources
Sala Ponnech, LIUNA
Kathie Delgado, LIUNA
Ryan Douglas, LIUNA
Linda Gonse, LIUNA
Linda Jefferson, LIUNA

ABSENCES

Victor Gordo, LIUNA
Stephen Switzer, LIUNA

Jack Mosqueda, LIUNA

IN ATTENDANCE

John Mooney, Human Resources
Walter Brandes, LIUNA
Michael Fields, Human Resources
Andi Bernard, Human Resources
Tiffany Mendez, Human Resources
Mark Carleson, Human Resources
Peter Morelli, Human Resources
Tom Prescott, Human Resources

Jasmin Loi, Human Resources
Roger Uminski, Community Health Agency
Cathy Ray, Human Resources
Chrissy Barrett, Human Resources
Sayori Baldwin, Human Resources
Fernando Vizcarra, RCRMC
Tami Douglas-Schatz, Human Resources
Marilyn Barker, Human Resources

I. INTRODUCTIONS

Members and guests introduced themselves.

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES

The minutes of February 9, 2005 were reviewed and approved.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Update on County's Participation in Health and Safety Fund

Mark Carleson reported that Travis Parson from the Fund came to Riverside in January, and he and Mark met with representatives of DPSS and RCRMC. Travis and Stephen Switzer met with John Steele from Child Support Services. Travis is doing some follow-up from his Washington, D.C. office. DPSS staff has provided him with some information relative to their ergonomic program. Mark said Travis would also develop draft surveys for DPSS and RCRMC which would be subject to collegial review of the content of the survey.

Mark said Safety Office staff would like to employ Travis' ergonomic expertise to enhance the ergonomic assessments that they perform.

There was discussion about the special computer mice now being utilized in the Sheriff's Dispatch Center. The mice required adjustments, and they have now been returned. Kathie Delgado said Human Resources is doing a good job of recruiting high quality individuals for Sheriff's Dispatch, and efforts like the computer mice help with retention.

Michael Fields described a job fair that was held for Sheriff's Dispatch positions in January. The job fair was held in the Riverside County Administrative Center on a Friday, and was set up so that individuals had the opportunity to sit through orientation and hear from current dispatchers. Prospective employees also watched a video about one of our dispatchers who was named Dispatcher of the Year which illustrated real-life conditions that dispatchers deal with on a daily basis. Ron Komers further explained that we are attempting to complete as much of the selection process as possible at one time. Fingerprinting, drug testing and pre-employment physicals are done on site to help expedite the process.

At Fred Lowe's inquiry, Ron Komers said there were no current County employees involved in the job fair in terms of applying to be a dispatcher.

Michael said the job fair was exceptionally helpful. There were 14 individuals who passed typing and Crite-Call sections of the examination. Those individuals were brought in to the department for orientation, and background checks are underway. A similar job fair is planned for the Indio area on April 30.

At Fred Lowe's inquiry, Michael Fields said dispatchers are fully trained through the Sheriff's Academy, and this is supplemented by one-on-one instruction by Sheriff's Training Officers. However, part of the challenge in retaining dispatchers is that other jurisdictions encourage individuals to go through Riverside County's training process, and then recruit them for their agency.

Ron Komers said this position has a Difficult-to-Recruit designation, and we also have the ability to pursue a bonus program that is currently utilized for social workers. The bonus program offsets employee retirement contributions during the first five years of employment. These two items have been discussed with Captain Grotefend, and a proposal is being considered. Michael Fields said he read a copy of the proposal, and if implemented it would definitely be helpful with recruitment and retention.

Fred Lowe offered a suggestion to develop a list of private colleges, and then meet with representatives from the various schools to propose a training program for sheriff dispatchers. Barbara Olivier said this would be advantageous from the standpoint that individuals would already be trained when they begin their employment with the County. It also offers the opportunity for individuals to decide if they are suited to the position of dispatcher. Ron Komers said there is a relationship between the Ben Clark Training Center and Riverside Community College, and perhaps sheriff's dispatcher training could be developed between these two organizations. Ron Komers said the County will continue with its commitment to help recruitment and retention for sheriff's dispatchers. Kathie Delgado has been very helpful in this regard.

B. Update on Classification and Compensation Studies

Barbara Olivier reported the Office Support Study is currently under review. It consists of approximately 4200 positions and more than 200 classifications. A total of 605 audits have been completed, which is 14.4% of the total number of positions. The audit phase should be completed by the end of March. That will be followed by the issue resolution/discussion stage, which should be done by the end of May. A Board letter would then be prepared, and that would be done by the end of June or early July. Barbara distributed copies of the schedule for the Office Support Study.

Ron Komers said that it may be advantageous to commence negotiations at the same time the Office Support Study findings are implemented due to cost considerations.

Kathie Delgado requested regular updates on the Office Support Study. Barbara said this would be provided.

C. RCRMC Uniforms

Fernando Vizcarra, Assistant Hospital Administrator, reported that RCRMC would like to require uniforms for all staff in Plant Operations, which includes craftsmen and gardeners. An informal poll indicated that approximately 3/4 of the employees are in favor of this. Fernando Vizcarra is proposing giving each employee four shirts and four pants once a year. Employees would be responsible for laundering their uniforms (which will be wash and wear). Uniforms would be replaced if they are damaged on the job. The uniforms will cost \$25 per set, so the cost per employee would be \$100.00 (for four sets). Uniforms would be replaced once a year.

Fernando explained the reasons for wanting to make this change: First, for a more professional appearance. When these employees walk into hospital areas, they are not identifiable as County employees. There is a safety aspect in areas where employees deal with high temperatures (e.g., the boiler room or electrical equipment where there could be sparks). Long-sleeved cotton shirts are safer because cotton won't melt onto the skin (as polyester does) in the event of an accident. Gardeners and certain other positions would have the option of purchasing long- or short-sleeved shirts, as well as shorts for summer weather.

Ron Komers inquired whether employees were included in the process of uniform selection. Fernando said he held meetings with his employees to discuss various options, but there were many different opinions and they were

unable to come to a consensus. Fred Lowe suggested that Fernando might utilize insignias on shirts, as this makes employees feel they are part of a team. Ron Komers suggested that Fernando preselect a model uniform, then have a meeting to obtain employee input and involvement of union staff, and then make a final decision after this.

Carol Keating noted that the value of uniforms would be added to employees' compensation for pension purposes.

D. Update on Animal Services

Roger Uminski reported that the new director, Robert Miller, is now on board. Robert has been to the Blythe Animal Shelter, and is thoroughly reviewing department procedures. He has been careful to gain employee input before making major changes. Ron Komers noted that Roger arranged for Animal Services employees to consider all of the candidates and offer input. Robert Miller was the staff's choice as the new director. Kathie Delgado added that employees were very happy to be included in the selection process, because it showed that their opinions were valued.

E. Pension Update

Fred Lowe said it seems the public's perception of Governor Schwarzenegger as a nonpartisan politician has changed. There are speculations that his popularity is waning. Fred distributed copies of the language submitted for the ballot initiative. Ron Komers noted that the proposal includes the elimination of death and disability benefits.

Fred Lowe said Ron Komers played a great leadership role on behalf of County employees on the pension issue. After attending a Pension Advisory Review Committee (PARC) meeting, Fred had a better understanding of the nature of the discussions and mind-set of other committee members. Ron Komers thanked Fred, and said his goal is to ensure that a fair and balanced description of the issues is presented to the Board of Supervisors. The fact that the Board of Supervisors voted to support a defined benefit plan was newsworthy across the nation. The Board's vote was in part due to the response and involvement of both LIUNA and SEIU in the process. The Board should be congratulated for making this stand and appreciated for the risk they took. The Board recognizes that the pension issue entails more than just dollars and cents. It's important for those who vote on the initiative to realize that the proposal will not save money in the short term, and the quality of public servants would diminish.

Fred Lowe noted that Governor Schwarzenegger has encountered great resistance lately on the pension issue due to the efforts of unions and other employee groups. Ron Komers said the proposal would bring wholesale changes, and it ties employers' hands from fixing the problems in that it forbids the implementation of any supplemental plan. Ron noted that employees gave up scheduled pay increases to pay for the cost of our pension formula (3% @ 60).

Barbara Olivier outlined agenda items for the next PARC meeting, including a request from deputy district attorneys to receive Safety pensions. There was further discussion about this topic and the inclusion of Social Security benefits.

Sandy Brown inquired whether overtime pay is included for pension purposes. Carol Keating explained that for regular employees, overtime pay does not count towards their pension. However, overtime does count for temporary employees who have less than 1,000 hours.

Barbara Olivier said another item that will be presented at the next PARC meeting will be a CalPERS pension proposal called the 1959 Survivor's Benefit which gives a lump sum benefit in addition to any other pension benefits to which individuals are entitled. This would apply to Safety members only. It is a small benefit, and it is funded separately from all other pension benefits. The County has over funded its 1959 Survivor's Benefit fund because CalPERS' overestimated these costs. Since the 1959 Survivor's Benefit is funded separately, funds may not be applied to the general CalPERS pension fund. The question is whether to pool these funds with the State, or let our members have the benefit that the County has already paid for.

Ron Komers explained a new requirement by the Government Accounting Standards Board for cities and counties to evaluate the long-term cost of providing post-retirement benefits. This obligation must now be shown on the County's books, and begin to fund it over time. For some counties this obligation is huge, as in Orange County. It is not that significant for Riverside County. However, a report evaluating these costs will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for informational purposes.

Sandy Brown requested an explanation of the VEBA Special Pay Plan. Ron Komers said we would arrange to have a discussion on the plan for a subsequent meeting.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The LIUNA Labor-Management Committee will meet again on Wednesday, May 11, 2005, at the LIUNA offices at 4000 10th Street, Riverside.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Barker

