



RIVERSIDE COUNTY/SEIU LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, June 12, 2008
SEIU Office
4336 Market Street
Riverside, CA 92501-3518

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: (*Chair)

Barbara Olivier, Human Resources
Shawn Atin, Human Resources
Roger Uminski, CHA
Doris Lackey, Human Resources

*George Daniels, SEIU
Judith Bustamante, SEIU
Stephen Butler, SEIU
Linda Love, SEIU
Mindy Markowitz, SEIU

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Ron Komers, Human Resources
Rod Gehrke, SEIU
Chris Kieskowski, Human Resources
Berninia Bradley, Human Resources
Eric Russell, SEIU
Tom Prescott, Human Resources
Tiffany Mendez, Human Resources
Sarah Franco, Human Resources

John Mooney, Human Resources
Noel Cady, SEIU
Patrick Chandler, SEIU
Jackie Napoles, SEIU
Catherine Eide Nelson, SEIU
Bennie Timson, SEIU
Anne Morettini, SEIU

IN ATTENDANCE:

Elizabeth Olson, Executive Office
Robert Fickel, Human Resources
Gus Martinez, Human Resources
Kris Sloman, Human Resources
Alex Najera, Human Resources
Chandrika Richardson, Human Resources
Kathy Byrd, Human Resources
Terry Wade, Human Resources
Michael McConnell, DPSS
Marilyn Barker, Human Resources

Gary Christmas, Executive Office
Fabiola Thomas, Human Resources
Lenora Reyes, Human Resources
William Berkley, Human Resources
Sue Birch, Human Resources
Luisa Viveros, Human Resources
Crystal Baldwin, Human Resources
Shondi Lee, Human Resources
Tiffany Mott, Human Resources

I. INTRODUCTIONS

Guests and members introduced themselves.

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES

The minutes of April 10 were reviewed and approved.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Community Health Agency Budget Challenges

George Daniels asked Roger Uminski about the status of potential layoffs. Roger replied that management has located positions for all but 2 of the 21 positions scheduled for layoff. One person is pursuing another job via the competitive process.

B. Update on State Budget Cuts

Gary Christmas provided an update on the County's budget process as well as the State budget process. The County Proposed Budget was adopted by the Board at the beginning of June. The Final Budget will be submitted to the Board for approval on June 24. The Proposed Budget and the Final Budget includes any recommended add-backs for cuts imposed by the Governor earlier this year. A bigger issue will be the downturn of the economy which has resulted in significant revenue decreases.

Gary said we will not know the degree to which the County will be impacted by State budget cuts until the Final Budget is approved. Some of the County's representatives have indicated the State will not adopt a budget until after the November election, but there have been conjectures by others as well. However, the County will address the issues passed along by the State once we are aware of what they are.

Gary Christmas said the County receives State budget updates from the Urban County Caucus and from the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and he would be happy to share this information.

C. DPSS Dress Code

George Daniels said there are two issues. The first question applies to Emergency Response Social Workers, and it is a question of why they are not permitted to wear jeans. The other question involves employees wearing union buttons. The department's dress code forbids employees to wear buttons supporting presidential candidates. There is a concern that union buttons are also being restricted, although they are permitted by law.

Barbara Olivier pointed out that there is a Board policy stating jeans are not acceptable, even for casual day dress. Kris Sloman said there was a recent discussion about jeans, and the department decided after much consideration that jeans are not professional attire and do not represent the department well.

There is an allowance in the DPSS dress code allowing jeans to be worn on Fridays only.

With regard to union buttons, there was an agreement that the department would consider buttons on a case-by-case basis, and that the department could not make that determination countywide. An SEIU pin is acceptable, but if it includes a political statement there would be a case-by-case determination as to whether a particular button is appropriate.

George Daniels said union buttons may contain a message which is a subject of negotiations, and the union is encouraging its members to support the union's position. George said the union does not have to obtain permission from the employer in order for employees to wear union buttons. Employees can also wear buttons relating to the FLSA issue ("We need to be paid overtime for hours worked overtime"). The law gives the union the right to do that.

The word "impasse" was raised, and Barbara Olivier asked for further clarification. Linda Love replied that the union sent a letter to the County asking for renegotiation of the dress code issue. It was the County's position that the question had been resolved, but the union disagreed. Kris Sloman said Tom Prescott sent a letter to the union on April 23 regarding the union's declaration of impasse and request for mediation with regard to the DPSS dress code. Barbara confirmed that the County did meet and confer, and the County will implement its decision. Mindy Markowitz said there were outstanding issues during the meet and confer process that were not addressed. She never had an opportunity to have another meeting with Tom Prescott to see where we were at. Barbara said Vi's issues were heard and discussed, and the County elected to uphold its decision. Mindy said there was a group meeting, and there was supposed to have been a follow-up meeting. The follow-up meeting never took place, and that's why the impasse letter was sent. Barbara said that would mean we are now at impasse. George said the union would take the legal steps it needs to take.

George Daniels stated that, with regard to union buttons, he recalls a meeting in which it was very clear that union buttons supporting political candidates or parties are not allowed, but that union buttons supporting union issues are acceptable. There is case law on this. We are now saying that the union must obtain the County's approval on a case-by-case basis. Barbara said the County's position is that one can wear a union button saying "I support SEIU," but to have a statement saying "We're not getting paid fairly," has a negative effect on the public that we serve. George Daniels said the union would deal with this because there has been case law, even for nurses. Barbara requested that George send her the case law citations to which he is referring.

Stephen Butler said he has a different recollection of Tom Prescott's original position on union buttons. He felt Tom was very open and accepting of the union's position, and there has been a complete change in his attitude.

Barbara Olivier said she would obtain clarification on union buttons, and added that she would like to see the citations referred to.

D. Education Committee Training Fund

Shondi Lee said she met with Linda Love and Mindy Markowitz. It was decided in past meetings to send a survey to SEIU members to determine how they wish to use training funds. There were only 25 responses, and the responses were not consistent. Shondi Lee said she would summarize the decision reached by Linda Love, Mindy Markowitz and herself, which was to develop a side letter to the original Agreement and Declaration of Trust between SEIU and the County.

An average of \$100,000 comes into the fund each year, and there is currently an amount of approximately \$400,000. The objective was to utilize training funds in ways that would not qualify through the Educational Support Program or other means. The original agreement provided for 20/20 program usage for a bachelor's degree in social work. The senior year requires field work time that currently does not qualify through the 20/20 program. They considered funding five 20/20 spots for bachelor of arts in social work (BSW) students in their senior year or a master of arts in social work (MSW) for Adult Protective Services (APS). A subcommittee would be formed to decide who would be placed in the 20/20 Program.

Barbara Olivier said if we are including social workers in the program, a department representative should be part of the subcommittee.

Shondi Lee said they were also considering five spots for nursing, either for Public Health or for RCRMC. This would be for County employees who are not presently nurses pursuing a nursing degree that have been accepted into a two-year nursing program or a bachelor degree nursing program who do not qualify for the LVN to RN program. The subcommittee would therefore include a member from the hospital. If the employees selected were not SEIU members, the Educational Support Program would fund the 20 hours that the employees are not working but are being paid. Once the person is promoted into the position and becomes an SEIU member, the Training Fund would reimburse the Educational Support Program fund.

Shondi Lee said the intent of the agreement is to help SEIU to obtain additional members and to enhance the skills of current SEIU members. The other option was to provide textbook and tuition reimbursement to a maximum of \$5,000 per year for a certain number of years, upper division or graduate level only, for those who are in a profession but would not qualify through the Educational Support Program to enhance their current skills. An example would be an employee that Shondi met with who is an environmental health specialist who has her degree and is working in the identified field. A master's degree in Public Administration would not qualify through the Educational Support Program, but it would enhance her current skills. The training fund could be used to help SEIU members who wish to further their education in the field in which they are currently working. In response to a question by George Daniels, Shondi explained that textbook and tuition reimbursement would be for current SEIU members that are in a profession in which they might enhance their current skills.

Barbara Olivier said the subcommittee did great work, but she expressed concern about depletion of all funds. Linda Love said the subcommittee wanted to offer opportunities to employees in other fields in addition to nursing. Shondi Lee said nurses and social workers represent the areas that are most in demand at this time. These careers require field work time, so the 20/20 program is critical. In many other areas employees can attend school at night and obtain their degrees. The other proposed category addresses those who are working in their selected professions and wish to enhance their current skills. Roger Uminski said the latter category would probably make up the largest group desiring to participate. Many employees want to obtain MBA or MPA degrees because they feel it would be helpful in pursuing promotional opportunities.

Shondi said we can develop criteria that would limit the number of eligible employees. Limiting the length of time one can be in the program should result in employees being more ambitious about pursuing their degrees more quickly. Barbara Olivier noted this is a wonderful enhancement for SEIU members, but there are other programs available through the ESP, such as the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) class. Shondi explained that there will be an onsite MBA program that will begin in September. It is an accelerated, 21-month program with an emphasis on management and includes a governmental budgeting required elective. The program will be held onsite at the Center for Government Excellence two nights per week. The full cost for 21 months is approximately \$14,500 (for an MBA). Barbara Olivier added that some participants will be assisted by payments from their department, and other departments will not subsidize the program because they do not need another MBA or MPA. Employees in the latter category could apply to the ESP for possible assistance. Shondi added that the enrollment application has been modified to indicate which union the employee belongs to.

George Daniels asked what the next steps would be. Shondi said she would like to meet again with the subcommittee and invite representatives from RCRMC, CHA and DPSS to attend. This could comprise the subcommittee that would set the criteria and participate in decision-making from this point forward.

E. 4/10 Work Schedules

Barbara Olivier said she included this as an agenda item because the Board recently took action on this. The Board simply encouraged departments to utilize a current policy. So there is nothing new, but it is an opportunity and a prompt to help employees have more access to flexible schedules. Human Resources committed to develop training programs and materials for departments who feel uncertain about how to move forward. Human Resources is also working with a committee of departments for whom it makes sense. This will not require mandatory participation. Departments have to ensure that they have adequate coverage but are encouraged to be responsive to employees' needs. In response to a question, Barbara stated employees could discuss the feasibility of alternate work arrangements with their supervisors, but they might receive more positive answers after Human Resources disseminates the training programs and materials. The Community Health Agency, DPSS, Mental Health, Probation, Fire and IT are working to provide support for all departments in identifying

groups of employees who could easily transition to an alternate work schedule. At this point we are relying on managers to have communication with their staff members to determine their interest. Again, it would not be mandatory. There is at least one job classification that is being considered to be structured as a telecommuting position. The respective union would be notified before we go forward.

The purpose and objective of considering a 4/10 work schedule was to give employees an option, not to penalize anyone. In response to a question about potential savings, Barbara Olivier explained that telecommuting would produce cost savings for the County in the long run. There would be additional costs at the outset in setting up employees in their home work spaces. Studies show there are real savings (though we can't pinpoint them) that will occur because employees are so excited about the ability to telecommute that they will work extra hard to ensure that they may continue to have that work schedule. We are also researching grants and other possibilities to increase rideshare, and the County will conduct a marketing campaign to publicize alternate work schedules.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The SEIU Labor-Management Committee will meet again on Thursday, July 10, 2008, at 11:00 a.m. at the SEIU office located at 4336 Market Street, Riverside, California.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Barker