

Minutes
Trempealeau County Transition Study Group
April 14, 2011

Jami Kabus called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m. in the Packer Room of the Courthouse in Whitehall, Wisconsin.

The open meeting law requirements were met.

Present:

Jami Kabus	Paul Syverson
Rian Radke	Kevin Lien
Richard Anderson	Jeff McIntyre (10:10 a.m.)
Jim Johnson	Nick Gamroth (10:15 a.m.)

M/2nd by Johnson / Lien to adopt the agenda. Motion carried 6-0.

Discuss Policies, Procedures and Employee Handbook

Kabus advised that Governor Walker is proposing numerous changes throughout the state. Since P/B Committee is not involved in day to day operations of the county, the P/B Committee has requested information that will be helpful when addressing county policies and procedures, which could replace collective bargaining agreements.

The group was provided with a summary of Act 10 which would affect many employees. The exception would be public safety employees, Sheriff's Deputies and Detectives, who would still have full bargaining rights.

When the law will take affect remains unknown at this time. In the meantime the Personnel/Bargaining Committee is moving forward, requesting suggestions to countywide policies so that the county will be prepared if/when Act 10 is implemented.

The group was provided with a chart comparing contracts throughout the county. There are going to have to be differences between departments because of different operating procedures and schedules of the departments. The goal is to have the handbook apply general issues to all employees.

One of the questions that came up was if vacation should be exactly the same across the board, regarding how fast one accrues vacation. A concern with converting vacation days to straight hours is that some employees work shifts, other than the typically eight hour day (8.5, 10, and 12 hour days were examples given). The committee discussed a variety of options for leave time.

There was a discussion of standardizing the use of sick leave for things such as call-in, etc. The group also discussed developing some standards for excessive use of sick time. The group also discussed the possibility of converting accumulated sick time over to insurance upon retiring. The group also discussed the possibility of converting sick time to cover the cost of health insurance deductibles and/or premiums by the use of special "banks".

The question that came up was regarding payout for employees who are laid off. There was discussion of developing a vested process for employees to be eligible for cashing out sick time, etc.

The group expressed interest in reviewing a PTO program. When discussing PTO options the group felt that holidays should not be lumped into PTO. There would need to be a cap on PTO time to make it manageable for budgeting purposes. For the next meeting Kabus will obtain samples of PTO programs for the group to review.

The group discussed developing a separate county-wide account for budgeting for retirement payouts as it is difficult to account for these types of payouts within department budgets. This has also been an area of concern that has been brought up by the auditors each year.

The group also discussed seniority, particularly the use of seniority for job postings, bumping, lay-offs, etc. There was a question if seniority could be incorporated into the Employee Handbook. Kabus advised that for non-represented employees, positions are advertised both internally and externally to expedite the process and to select the most qualified candidate for open positions.

The group also discussed wages. There was discussion of applying steps and pay grades, as many positions max out very quickly. There was also discussion of pay for performance. The consensus of the committee was that there are many issues associated with pay for performance. Kabus advised that there has been some discussion about discontinuing performance reviews. She advised it may be an option to have Maximus involved in reviewing the appropriate salary ranges for positions.

Another question that came up is the calculation of comp-time. At this time the calculation of comp time varies based on position and department. There was also discussion about requiring comp time to be used within a certain time period.

There was also discussion of probationary periods. The consensus of the group is that a one-year probationary period is preferred, but will need to discuss further.

The group also discussed the need to develop a grievance procedure, to replace those outlined in bargaining agreements. This grievance procedure can then be utilized to meet the needs of Trempealeau County.

Kabus was requested to setup meetings with each department head to discuss the needs of specific departments.

The next Transition Study Group meeting will be held on Thursday, April 21, 2011 at 1:30 p.m. in the County Board Room.