

PERSONNEL, LICENSING, AND INSPECTION SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Personnel and Licensing and Inspection Services Committee Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Christians on Thursday, August 26, 2021 at 10:13 a.m.

Roll was called. Present: Mr. Hardy, Ms. Meyette, Mr. Erickson, Mr. Beggs, Mr. Morse, and Mr. Christians. Absent: Mr. Walker.

Also present: Ms. Peggy Wittman, City of Hart resident; Dr. Sobie, Oceana County Administrator; and Ms. Anderson, Oceana County Clerk; and Mr. Cavanagh, Oceana's Herald Journal correspondent.

Moved by Mr. Hardy and seconded by Ms. Meyette to approve the minutes from the July 22, 2021 Personnel, Licensing, and Inspection Services Committee.

Voice vote. Motion carried.

Moved by Ms. Meyette and seconded by Mr. Beggs to approve the agenda as presented.

Voice vote. Motion carried.

Ms. Wittman noted that she struggled to locate information on the County website prior to the meeting. She asked for clarification on how resolutions are presented to the commissioners. It was her understanding that the resolutions were discussed in committee meetings and then voted on in the immediately following regular board meeting. Mr. Christians confirmed that.

Mr. Morse reiterated that resolutions are discussed in committee meetings and if there are any reasons that the Board prefers to table the resolution for another time, that is done with an amendment to the agenda during the board meeting.

Ms. Wittman explained, that from a citizen's standpoint as she prepared for the meeting to determine if there was an item she would like to speak on, she was not aware of the process of tabling some resolutions so she did not print off the prior meeting agenda and was ill-prepared to comment on it. She explained that because she knew that one of the resolutions was to improve technology so that the county residents can be more involved, she would bring this up.

Ms. Wittman urged the commissioners to table the resolutions presented to the Personnel, Licensing, and Inspection Services Committee so that due diligence could be done and they could look at the material and costs involved in more depth before voting.

Dr. Sobie noted that copies of the agenda are available for the public in the board room prior to committee meetings.

Ms. Meyette stated that many resolutions presented are familiar to commissioners that have been in office for more than one term and board packets are provided one week prior to the meeting so commissioners have time to review the information and contact Dr. Sobie with any questions or concerns.

Mr. Beggs confirmed that board packets are received a week prior to the meetings. He also stated that he believed that the sub-committee agendas and minutes were on the website.

Ms. Wittman replied there is a lag in the posting of minutes to the website.

Mr. Hardy indicated that he does receive the board packet a week prior to the meeting but Commissioners also rely on the presenters of the resolution items to provide more in-depth information so Commissioners can make informed decisions.

Mr. Christians explained that the committee meetings are like a workshop to discuss the resolutions and determine if enough information has been provided or if there are any remaining questions or concerns that would prevent the resolutions from being voted on in the regular board meeting.

Dr. Sobie explained that all the committees are committees of the whole and so all Commissioners are involved in the committee discussions. Previously there were three-member committees, but all members attended. He recommended to the Board that all committees be changed to committees of the whole some time ago.

Dr. Sobie began discussion regarding consideration of a proposed resolution amending the vacation and sick leave policies. The resolution would change leave accrual to every pay period instead of on the anniversary of employment for vacation or once per month for sick. He has found that in hiring new employees one of the most requested benefits is leave. The structure of the proposed leave policy would allow a new employee to take a one-week vacation after being employed for six months. The updated policy wording also allows for employees to request time off to be taken without pay in the first three to six months.

Mr. Beggs related that this trend has become prevalent in the job market. There need to be incentives to encourage employees back into the workplace. Leave time is important to prospective employees. He has experienced it in his own business.

Mr. Erickson provided an example from his business as well. He indicated it is difficult to find a valued employee. He found one and allowed him to borrow against future vacation after only three months of employment because sometimes an employer has to offer a benefit to retain qualified employees.

Mr. Morse inquired if there should be additional vacation accrual tables referenced in the Personal Policy. The table that was provided only referenced a two-week leave, but there are three tiers of service. Dr. Sobie agreed and thanked Mr. Morse for pointing that out.

Mr. Christians asked if the Board could proceed with this resolution after the updates Dr. Sobie makes to the tables in the Personal Policy. Dr. Sobie responded that the additions he will be making did not affect the decision he was asking the Board to make.

Dr. Sobie facilitated discussion regarding consideration of a proposed resolution amending the longevity payment schedule. He pointed out the proposed changes should help to make the County competitive in the employment market and attract employees here and once they are here, will entice them to stay. The addition of two tiers and the increase in annual payment amount will incentivize employees to stay longer.

Mr. Beggs asked how the proposed longevity changes compared to the current union contracts in the Sheriff's Department.

Dr. Sobie thanked Mr. Beggs for asking that. He indicated that the proposed increase in amount per tier is more aggressive than the current rates in the union contracts.

Mr. Morse asked if there should be an additional tier for one year of service due to the competitive employment market. Dr. Sobie replied that he would prefer to bring a new employee in at a slightly higher step in the pay scale than offer the one-year longevity incentive.

Ms. Wittman asked if proposed resolutions were made available to the public. Dr. Sobie replied that they are not public record until an action to approve them has been taken.

Ms. Wittman reiterated then that as a citizen she would not get any detailed information about the resolutions until they are approved. She was grateful for the opportunity for public comment; however, she didn't have all the information to bring up valid points. She expressed that one of her concerns regarding these resolutions is how they affect the budget and she did not hear any discussion about how the two proposed resolutions will affect the budget and when they will be budgeted for. She urged the commissioners not to vote on these resolutions at the regular board meeting. She asked that financial analysis be provided on issues that affect the budget in the future.

There being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Christians adjourned the Personnel, Licensing, and Inspection Services Committee meeting at 10:42 a.m.

Respectfully,

Amy L. Anderson
Oceana County Clerk