

**LRES (LABOR RELATIONS & EMPLOYEE SERVICES) COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**County Board Room, Oneida County Courthouse**  
**January 21, 2021 1:00 p.m.**

**LRES COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ted Cushing/Chairman, Billy Fried/Vice-Chairman, Dave Hintz, Sonny Paszak and Scott Holewinski

**ALSO PRESENT IN PERSON:** Lisa Charbarneau, Jenni Lueneburg (LRES); Tara Ostermann (Treasurer); Dan Hess (Sheriff's Office); Mike Romportl (Land Information); Mary Rideout (Social Services); Kyle Franson (Register of Deeds); Karl Jennrich (Planning & Zoning)

**ALSO PRESENT VIA ZOOM:** Jason Rhodes (ITS); Joel Gottsacker (ADRC/Social Services); Linda Conlon (Public Health); Tammy Javenkoski (Veteran Services); Brenda Behrle (Clerk of Courts); Jean Meyer (Branch I); Brian Desmond (Corporation Counsel); Steven Schreier (County Board)

**CALL TO ORDER AND CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Cushing called the LRES Committee to order at 1:00 p.m. in the County Board Room of the Oneida County Courthouse. The meeting has been properly posted in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law, and complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion by Paszak to approve today's agenda. Second by Fried. All Committee members voting 'Aye'. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No comments made by attendees on Zoom or in the County Board Room.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Fried to approve the minutes of December 22<sup>nd</sup> and January 6<sup>th</sup>. Second by Holewinski. All Committee members voting 'Aye'. Motion carried.

**APPROVE BILLS AND VOUCHERS**

Charbarneau provided the vouchers and bills, totaling \$3,733.40. Motion by Holewinski to approve the vouchers and bills as presented. Second by Paszak. All Committee members voting 'Aye'. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT COMPENSATION**

Charbarneau discussed the LRES and Administration Committee's approval to move the current Public Health Nurses at Steps 3 and 4 to Steps 7 and 8, in order to help with employee retention. Discussion held regarding the best approach for setting the Nurse's next steps moving forward. Charbarneau provided a list of three different options to the Committee. Charbarneau reviewed her discussion with Patrick Glynn/Carlson Dettmann regarding the Public Health Assistant Director and Director wages in comparison to the Nurse wage. Glynn feels the positions are in the correct Grade Levels but are 6% behind market due to being set based on 1950 annual hours, rather than the standard market 2080 annual hours. Charbarneau discussed the difficulties other counties are having in recruiting and retaining Public Health management and Nurses. Conlon discussed the vacancies in her department and the huge workloads held by the current Nurses and Public Health staff due to the pandemic. Charbarneau reiterated the importance of approving this request and suggests keeping the Nurses at their current event dates to keep things fair (Option 2). Smith says Option 2 would add an additional \$19,360 to the fiscal impact of this request and would need to come from tax levy. Motion by Fried to adopt Option 2 as presented. Second by Cushing. Fried discussed the importance of supporting Public Health. All Committee members voting 'Aye'. Motion carried. This request will go back to Administration Committee for further review.

### **TELEWORK POLICY**

Charbarneau discussed this Committee's efforts to put a Telework Policy in place. Charbarneau says at today's Department Head meeting, managers voiced concerns over the potential Telework Policy, noting that creating one policy for all departments will be limiting, in addition to concerns over client and technology confidentiality issues if time logs and computer use are required and audited. Romportl provided input on rotating his staff working in office and at home during the pandemic in order to ensure office coverage. Romportl also discussed the increase in workloads due to the active real estate market and county business continuing on, even if in-person access to offices is limited. Romportl says he has always kept a close watch on the operations of his office and reassured that if work was not getting done from home, he would be addressing the problem. Romportl feels that a Telework Policy should be put into place but the policy needs to provide flexibility for departments and managers to make decisions that are best for the individual department's needs. Romportl hopes this Committee will support working from home in the future and feels that there are benefits to both the employee and the county. Fried commented on the need for accountability in the Telework policy and wants to make sure things are getting done during the lull. Romportl says there is a misconception that when the halls of the Courthouse are quiet, that there is a lull in work which isn't true. Romportl says workloads are up and a lot of public contact is happening via phone, mail and email. Franson and Rideout provided similar comments regarding increased workloads, increased public contact and the importance of a flexible Telework Policy. Charbarneau will continue working on the Telework Policy.

### **COUNTY STAFFING LEVELS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Charbarneau reviewed the discussion at the January 6<sup>th</sup> LRES Committee meeting regarding Fried's concerns over work levels due to limited public in the county facilities during the pandemic, and questioned if more furloughs should occur for any departments short on work. Charbarneau discussed the topic at today's Department Head meeting and the consensus was that current workloads are the same or more for various reasons. Charbarneau understands the perception that due to lack of foot traffic in county facilities, that work may be down but this is not the case due to the public using electronic and phone methods to continue county business. Rideout provided input regarding increased phone, Zoom and email contacts to make up for in-person contact with clients, and notes that court petitions for children are up 81% since 2019 which adds a substantial amount of additional work for both her office and Corporation Counsel. Rideout says the only area of Social Services that has seen slight decreases in workloads is the Economic Support unit but due to staff quarantines from the office, this evens out the slightly lighter workloads. Charbarneau notes that all staff are now required to do business with other departments by phone and email whenever possible, which also lowers the amount of foot traffic throughout county facilities. Jennrich says workloads for all areas of his department are up, and 2020 revenues for Planning & Zoning are up about \$42,000 from 2019. Jennrich says between increased business and dealing with staff quarantines, it has been a difficult. Jennrich understands the county is under financial constraints but reassured the Committee that Department Heads are doing all they can to furlough employees when possible. Franson provided additional comments about the need to alternate staff in and out of the office in order to avoid an entire department being quarantined in the event of a COVID-19 close contact. Franson also notes that due to the busy real estate market, workloads in the Register of Deeds office are increased and phone/email contacts are up significantly to make up for the lack of public coming into the office. Desmond discussed the increased caseloads since reopening to the public in June, partially due to the courts not being open for March through June and needing to make up for the lost time. Rhodes discussed his staff working longer hours to help with the increased electronic needs for employees working from home and to deal with staff quarantines. Rhodes confirmed there has been no lulls in work in his department. Fried asked the status of LTE usage within departments; Charbarneau states there are very few LTE's working but the ones that are working are performing essential tasks such as Public Health and Sheriff's Office. Fried stated he was pleased to hear departments are working through the changes in

**COUNTY STAFFING LEVELS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC (continued)**

workloads and feels the comments made today are important feedback he can provide to his constituents. Charbarneau discussed the need for additional staff at the COVID-19 vaccine clinics coming up.

**CLOSED SESSION**

Motion by Hintz, second by Paszak to go into closed session pursuant to section 19.85(1)(c) for purposes of considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee. (Topic: Finance Department Employee Compensation)

Roll call vote taken; all members voting in the affirmative. Motion carried. Committee went into closed session at 1:58 a.m.

Staff and others present in closed session: Charbarneau, Lueneburg, Smith and Schreier

**RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

Motion by Holewinski, second by Paszak to return to open session. Roll call vote taken with all members voting in the affirmative. Motion carried. Committee returned to open session at 2:03 p.m. No motions were made in closed session.

Upon return to open session, the following motions were made:

Motion by Holewinski to approve an additional step in Grade H from Step 6 to Step 7 for the Payroll Technician. Second by Cushing. Roll call vote taken with all voting in the affirmative. Motion carried.

**NEW HIRE – STARTING WAGES**

Charbarneau says the Committee had previously voiced concerns about hiring too many new hires at above Step 1 on the wage schedules. Based on these concerns, Charbarneau provided a spreadsheet showing the starting wages for new hires in 2020. Charbarneau says this spreadsheet shows that most new hires started at Step 1 and the few new hires that started at higher wages were in positions that are difficult to recruit and retain employees. Holewinski would like the spreadsheet to reflect annual hours in the future.

**HEALTH ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

Charbarneau discussed the Committee’s approval to add \$12,500 in county funding to continue the Health Enhancement program that was previously funded by the health insurance carrier, Group Health Trust, but has since ended due to a change in health insurance carriers for 2021. Charbarneau proposes no changes to the Breastfeeding, Tobacco Cessation and Weight Loss funds; discussion held on each program. Charbarneau discussed her proposed changes to the Fitness Incentive Fund which previously offered \$12.50 per month per employee for reimbursement of memberships, classes and events related to fitness and exercise. For 2021, the new health plan carrier, Aspirus Health Plan, includes an Exercise Rewards reimbursement to all adult members covered, which pays \$30 per month per member, if the member proves they visited a health/fitness club at least 10 times per month (30 minute minimum per visit). Due to this program being offered and paid for by the health plan, Charbarneau is proposing no longer offering the county funded Fitness Incentive reimbursement to employees and dependents covered on the health plan. Charbarneau proposes changing the Fitness Incentive fund to reimburse employees not on the county health plan \$30 per month for health club memberships, provided the employee shows they visited their fitness club at least 10 times in the month (minimum 30 minutes per visit). Fried questioned offering employees a reimbursement for health club memberships at a time when employees should stay away from fitness clubs

**HEALTH ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW (continued)**

due to potential COVID-19 exposure. Discussion held. Committee is agreeable to the proposed 2021 health enhancement programs and agrees for Charbarneau’s office to proceed with administering the discussed programs.

**LRES DEPARTMENT REORGANIZATION**

Charbarneau states now that Troy Huber has been appointed Facilities Director, he has chosen Employee Services Assistant Lindsey Kennedy as the Assistant Director for Buildings & Grounds, therefore leaving a vacancy in the LRES Department. Charbarneau provided three options for a potential reorganization of the Employee Services Assistant position to a part-time position in order to find a cost savings and restructure the department. Charbarneau says the Committee had directed her in the past to get positions to 2080 annual hours when cost savings could be found in the process. Discussion held by the Committee regarding concerns over moving any staff to 2080 annual hours, even with a cost savings, as recommended in Options 2 and 3. Based on Committee discussion, Charbarneau recommends Option 1 which would move the Employee Services Assistant position from full-time to 75% and no additional hours for the remaining LRES Staff. Holewinski suggests moving the position to 50% and feels the two remaining LRES positions should cover the additional work with no extra hours added due to being Exempt positions. In-depth discussion held with Committee agreeing to keep the position budgeted at full-time and moving the position to 50% part-time with the potential of increasing it up to 75% as department needs are determined moving forward. No motion needed at this time on the change.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No comments made by attendees on Zoom or in the County Board Room.

**FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS**

Salary wording in Employee Handbook  
Deputy Contract  
Job Posting and Hiring policy

**FUTURE MEETING DATES**

February 3, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.  
February 18, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Cushing announced the adjournment of the LRES Committee meeting at 3:00 p.m.

/s/Ted Cushing  
Ted Cushing, LRES Committee Chairman

February 3, 2021  
Date

/s/Jenni Lueneburg  
Jenni Lueneburg, Committee Secretary

February 3, 2021  
Date