



## EAC Representatives' Meeting Notes

Employees Advisory Council (EAC) Representatives Meeting  
1:30 P.M., County Office Annex, Room 429, Clearwater, Florida  
December 17, 2008

### Call to Order

- ▶ Chairman Paul Rogers called the meeting to order at 1:30 P.M.

### Introductions

- ▶ A sign-in sheet has been filed and made a part of the record.

### Approval of Minutes

- ▶ The minutes of the October 15, 2008 EAC Representatives meeting were approved as submitted.

### Comments from Peggy Rowe, Human Resources Director

- ▶ Ms. Rowe referred to discussions held at the November 20 EAC Delegates meeting and indicated that she has since spoken with some of the Appointing Authorities regarding apparent confusion about how leave is approved, when leave is denied, and whether leave is considered to be scheduled or unscheduled; and that the Human Resources Department plans to “over communicate” the following using a variety of means:
  - o The fact that an employee has leave in his/her bank does not mean a supervisor must approve a leave request; leave can be denied whether an employee has 1,000 hours or zero hours in their leave bank.
  - o When leave is approved, it is scheduled time off. If an employee has given proper advance notice and has been granted scheduled time off, then it is scheduled and the supervisor should not say it is unscheduled.
  - o The communications will address other issues causing confusion regarding leave that came to light at the Delegates meeting.
- ▶ The proposed rule change discussed at length at the November Representatives and Delegates meetings will be brought forward for approval at the January 2009 Unified Personnel Board (UPB) meeting.
  - o Employees, including those covered under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), will not be allowed to take unpaid leave until they have exhausted all available leave in their bank.
  - o Responding to queries and comments by the Representatives, Ms. Rowe and Mr. Blasewitz related the following:
    - It is common practice; employees tend not to take unpaid leave when they have leave on the books.
    - The amount of leave employees receive will not change; the only change is that the bank must be exhausted before unpaid leave can be taken.



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- Human Resources understands that there is some opposition among the employees and acknowledges that there may be some unintended consequences; however, most employees will not be affected.
- The Appointing Authorities have indicated a desire for implementation of the proposed rule.
- o Mr. Rogers indicated that the EAC will always oppose a policy or rule change that would negatively affect the employees; and that it also opposes changes based on the actions of a few abusers.
- o Mr. Rogers plans to state the EAC's position at the January 8, 2009 UPB meeting and suggested that Representatives opposed to the proposed rule change appear to state their case.
  - Ms. Rowe pointed out that the UPB meeting is a public meeting, but not an open meeting; the Board will hear comments by Chairman Rogers, but others may or may not be allowed to speak, at the Board's discretion.
- o Human Resources will address other issues of concern raised by the Representatives, as follows:
  - Some employees are negatively impacted on their evaluations when their leave bank drops below 80 hours or when they have been under short-term disability.
  - The Clerk's Fiscal Records Specialists are required to take 40 hours of vacation per year and could be negatively impacted.
- ▶ Ms. Rowe will meet with County Administrator LaSala next week and should get a better understanding of what the next budget year will bring in terms of raises. She hopes it will be better than the 0 to 3 percent experienced in the last two years; and believes it is the desire of the Administrator to keep the employees informed about various issues, including the budget.
- ▶ Mr. LaSala will meet with EAC Representatives and Delegates representing departments under the County Administrator on January 14, 2009, at 10:30 A.M. at Heritage Village.
- ▶ The Market Survey is currently being conducted; and the Annual Report is also in the works.
- ▶ A number of scenarios will be considered to mitigate the budgetary impact on employees, and the EAC will be given an opportunity to provide input; it is too early to speculate what will be presented.
- ▶ Mr. Rogers indicated that a 0 to 3 percent increase costs the County approximately 1.75 percent, because of the staggering of anniversary dates, in lieu of a 3-percent across-the-board increase; and that management's rationale is that the 0 to 3 percent will save money and retain some form of merit to keep the performance evaluation meaningful.
- ▶ Discussion was held regarding the issue of granting ten hours of holiday pay to employees who work ten-hour workdays and ways the matter is currently being handled by various departments, as well as the issue of employees being given the option to work a ten-hour/four-day workweek.



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### EAC Election Committee Update

- ▶ Robert Cafazzo has been elected to represent the Supervisor of Elections, replacing Ana Carrera.
- ▶ It is time to elect EAC Delegates; Representatives should contact Peggy Sellards in Human Resources regarding any changes.

### Employee Advocate Update

- ▶ The Committee has received positive feedback regarding the program and the quality of representation provided by the Advocates.
- ▶ Preparations are being made for the next quarterly training session.
- ▶ A majority of employees are probably not familiar with the Advocate program; it would be helpful to provide information in the Pinellas Pen.
- ▶ Several Advocates have had to suspend or discontinue their service due to their job duties or for personal reasons, creating the need for five to eight additional Advocates.
- ▶ Human Resources will review Personnel Rule XXIV, Disciplinary Action, regarding severity of the penalty for using computers for personal purposes.

### Election of EAC Officers

- ▶ Chairman Paul Rogers, Vice-Chairman Chuck Lubitz, and Secretary Charles Toney were re-elected to serve in their current capacity as EAC officers for 2009.

### Legislative Committee Update

- ▶ The Committee consists of Charles Toney, Chuck Lubitz, and Jay Flaherty.
- ▶ Committee members plan to address Pinellas County Legislative Delegation members during their open forum meeting on January 9 to present the EAC's Florida Retirement System (FRS) requests.
  - o A 12-24 month window to allow employees with 25 or more years of service to retire with full benefits, eliminating penalties for retiring after less than 30 years.
  - o Change the calculation from the five highest years to the three highest years.
  - o Increase the annual benefit multiplier for classified employees from 1.6 percent per year to 2 percent.
  - o Increase the health insurance subsidy from \$5.00 per year of service and remove the 30-year cap.
- ▶ Various FRS issues were discussed.

### Adjournment

- ▶ The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 P.M.