An Overview of the Unified Personnel System & the Human Resources Department

Pinellas County Government

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Pinellas County Government

Pinellas County is a Charter County of the State of Florida providing a full range of government services. Municipal services are provided to the unincorporated areas of the County with the Municipal Services Taxing District. The Board of County Commissioners is the legislative body for Pinellas County. Three Commissioners are elected at large but live in specific districts; four Commissioners are elected from single-member districts. The Constitutional Officers of the County are the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Property Appraiser, Sheriff, Supervisor of Elections and Tax Collector.

The Unified Personnel System (UPS)

Pinellas County's Unified Personnel System was established in 1975 by a special act of the Florida Legislature. The Unified Personnel System is composed of 11 different members or "Appointing Authorities." At the present time the UPS has approximately 3,430 positions (more than 2,930 classified and more than 480 exempt) which are distributed into more than 700 job classifications. Initially, the Sheriff was a member of the UPS but is no longer included among the Appointing Authorities.

Appointing Authorities

The 11 UPS Appointing Authorities and their major functions are:

County Administrator Robert S. LaSala County Administrator 	The largest Appointing Authority with 21 departments and more than 2,090 positions: • Animal Services • Community Development • Culture, Education & Leisure (Parks) • Economic Development • Emergency Management • Environmental Management • Health & Human Services • Justice & Consumer Services • Public Works • Public Safety Services • Real Estate Management • Risk Management • St. Petersburg/Clearwater Airport • Utilities
Business Technology Services Paul F. Alexander, III Executive Director 	The fourth largest Appointing Authority with more than 170 positions serving UPS organizations and their employees: • Information Systems Business Applications Development and Maintenance • Information Systems Project Management • Networking and Telecommunications • Web Portal Management • Information Systems Security Management • Information Systems Customer Support
Clerk of the Circuit Court Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court 	The second largest Appointing Authority with 2 operations and 6 service locations and more than 550 positions serving citizens and UPS organizations and their employees: • One of four Elected UPS Constitutional Officers • Recording Services • Marriage and Passport Licenses • Tax Deed Sales • County Records Custodian (Civil, Court, Criminal, Probate, Board, Internal) • Court Assistance • Jury Management • Internal Audit • County Financial Accounting and Reporting • Printing, Mail, and Courier Services

Construction Licensing Board
Rodney S. Fischer, Executive Director

Approximately 10 positions regulating and serving the construction industry:

- Regulation of Construction and Home Improvement Contractors
- Certification and Registration of Contractors Amendment of Florida Building Codes for County-wide Application and Enforcement
- Appeals and Interpretations of Building Codes that Conflict or are Ambiguous

Office of the County Attorney
James L. Bennett, County Attorney

Approximately 40 positions serving various County organizations and boards:

- Legal Representation of County Government, Board of County Commissioners, Advisory and Regulatory Boards, and Constitutional Officers
- Prosecution and Defense of Civil Actions
- Review of Ordinances, Resolutions, Contracts, Bonds, etc.
- Legal Advice and Guidance

Human Resources Department
Peggy Rowe, Director

Approximately 35 positions serving UPS organizations and their employees:

- Employee Benefits
- Employee Communications
- Employee Relations
- Employment & Volunteer Services
- Pay & Classification
- Records Administration
- Training & Development

Office of Human Rights
Leon W. Russell, Director

Approximately 15 positions serving citizens and UPS organizations and their employees:

- Equal Employment Opportunities for County Citizens and Employees
- Investigations of Unlawful Discrimination in Employment
- Mediation of Disputes
- Development and Enforcement of County Affirmative Action Plan
- Investigations of Violations of Fair Housing Act

Pinellas Planning Council
Michael C. Crawford
Interim Executive Director

Approximately 15 positions serving the County's 24 municipalities, the unincorporated County, and School Board:

- Countywide Planning Authority on Land Use
- Administration of Countywide Development Plan
- Research
- Technical Assistance to Smaller Communities

Office of the Property Appraiser Pam Dubov, Property Appraiser 	The fifth largest Appointing Authority with more than 140 positions serving citizens: • One of four Elected UPS Constitutional Officers • Appraisal and Valuation of Private and Commercial County Property • Accurate and Uniform Property Valuations for Taxing Authorities • Mapping of County Parcels and Sub-Divisions • Maintenance of Database of County Properties and Sales Values
Supervisor of Elections Deborah Clark, Supervisor of Elections 	Approximately 45 positions serving citizens: • One of four Elected UPS Constitutional Officers • Conduct of County Elections at all levels • Registration of Voters • Education of Voters • Maintenance of Voting and Voter Records • Registration of Election Candidates
Office of the Tax Collector Diane Nelson, CFC, Tax Collector 	The third largest Appointing Authority with 6 service locations and more than 295 positions serving citizens: • One of four Elected UPS Constitutional Officers • Collection, Accounting for, and Distribution of Taxes and Fees • Issuance of Driving, Hunting and Fishing Licenses • Issuance of Motor Vehicle, Mobile Home and Vessel Registrations • Issuance of Titles and License Plates

All Appointing Authorities abide by the Personnel Rules and work collaboratively to establish sound and cost effective human resource strategies and address employee concerns.

The Unified Personnel System Act

Enacted by the Florida Legislature, the act established a Classified and Exempt Service, a seven member Personnel Board, a Personnel (Human Resources) Department, and prescribed terms and conditions of operation. The act's purpose is to provide equal employment opportunities to qualified applicants for public service jobs and to promote efficiency and economy in the public service.

The Original Personnel Act was Chapter 75-488, Laws of Florida. It was subsequently amended by Chapter 77-642.

Some of the act's objectives and effects were:

- Elimination of discrepancies in hiring practices, pay scales, benefits, discipline, etc…
- Providing one centralized location for County job applicants
- Ensuring that merit principles are followed for appointments, retention, pay, promotions, etc...

The Personnel Board

The seven members of the Personnel Board each serve a two-year term. Two of the board members are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, two by the Constitutional Officers, two by the Employees' Advisory Council, and the seventh by the other six board members. The Director of Human Resources is appointed by and serves at the discretion of the Board. Personnel Board members have numerous responsibilities including:

- Approving Personnel Rules, pay plan adjustments, reclassification of positions and pay grade changes in accordance with the legislative act
- Requiring observance of the provisions of the act and its resulting rules and regulations
- Hearing and determining appeals and complaints concerning the administration of the act

The Employees' Advisory Council (EAC)

The Unified Personnel System Act also officially sanctioned the Employees' Advisory Council. Representing classified employees, the EAC serves in an advisory capacity to the Personnel Board concerning personnel matters, policies, rules and regulations. Its mission is to "continually improve employees' quality of work life…" The EAC currently consists of 15 elected representatives allocated to the various Appointing Authorities. The EAC structure includes delegates at every worksite throughout the County. These delegates serve as an up-and-down communication link between employees at their work locations and the Council's representatives.

The EAC has been in existence since the late 1960's.

The Personnel Rules

There are presently 28 Personnel Rules that prescribe employment policies and practices that all Appointing Authorities in the Unified Personnel System must follow. Each of these rules was established by approval of the Personnel Board and can only be modified with the board's approval. The Appointing Authorities possess the authority to establish departmental rules and regulations concerning the conduct of their employees in addition to any such rules and regulations established by the Personnel Board.

The Human Resources Department

The Human Resources Department, one of the 11 Appointing Authorities, includes: Benefits, Employee Communications, Employee Relations, Employment & Volunteer Services, Pay & Classification, Records Administration, and Training & Development.

Director of Human Resources Peggy Rowe

Assistant Director Gene Pressoir

COMMUNICATIONS & VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Manager: Laura Berkowitz

- *Pen* Employee and Retiree Newsletter
- Customer and Employee Surveys and Focus Groups
- Direct Correspondence to All Employees on Key Issues
- Research on Key Issues
- Human Resources Department Annual Report
- Employee Personnel Manual
- *Colors of Pinellas* Employee Art Show
- Suggestion Awards Program

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Manager: Jean Magee

- Performance Appraisal Program
- Employee Grievances
- Disciplinary Actions
- Internal Investigations of Alleged Misconduct
- Conflict Resolution/Mediation Services
- EAC Liaison and Administrative Support
- Employee Counseling
- Guidance on Interpretation of Personnel Rules

EMPLOYMENT & VOLUNTEER SERVICES/HR INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Manager: Beverly Waldron

- Recruitment of Qualified Job Applicants
- Administration of Employment Tests
- Volunteer Services Program Coordination
- Temporary Employment Services
- Employment Counseling
- Administration of County Layoff and Bumping Procedures
- Human Resource Information System Coordination

TOTAL COMPENSATION BENEFITS SECTION

Manager: Dave Blasewitz

- Employee Health Benefits
- Wellness Program and Fitness Center
- Retirement and Deferred Retirement Plans
- Dental Plans
- Short-term and Long-term Disability Benefits
- Employee Assistance Program
- Family & Medical Leave Act Compliance
- Americans with Disabilities Act Accommodations

TOTAL COMPENSATION PAY & CLASSIFICATION SECTION

Coordinator: Jack Loring

- Maintenance of Pay and Classification Plan
- Annual Market Survey
- Position Classification Audits through “Cyclic Reviews”
- Human Resource Information System Support

TRAINING & HR SUPPORT
Coordinator: Joan Read

- "Soft-skills" and "End-user Software" In-house Training Courses
- Internal Consulting Services (Team Building, Organization Development, Leader Transition)
- Tuition Reimbursement Program
- Resource Library

Applying Merit System Principles

The UPS philosophy is based on merit system principles. These principles are the public's expectations of a system that is efficient, effective, fair, open to all, free from political interference, and staffed by honest and competent employees. Section 2301, Title 5, U.S. Code, applies only to federal agencies and not Pinellas County. However, it effectively outlines what merit system principles are. To paraphrase:

- Recruiting qualified individuals from all segments of society and selecting and advancing employees on the basis of merit after fair and open competition which assures that all receive equal opportunity.

- Treating employees and applicants fairly and equitably, without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or handicapping condition, and with proper regard for their privacy and constitutional rights.

- Providing equal pay for equal work and recognizing excellent performance.

- Maintaining high standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest.

- Managing the work force efficiently and effectively.

- Rewarding, retaining, and separating employees on the basis of their performance.

- Educating and training employees when it will result in better organizational or individual performance.

- Protecting employees from arbitrary action, personal favoritism, or coercion for partisan political purposes.

- Protecting employees against reprisal for the lawful disclosure of information that uncovers illegal and/or wasteful activities.

Total Compensation Practices

The Human Resources Department bases its pay plan and employee compensation philosophies on total compensation. These decisions take into account, not only a position's salary range, but also the value of benefits provided. Total compensation consists of salary, leave earned, insurance paid by the County (Health, Dental, Life, Short and Long-Term Disability), and retirement plan (100% paid for by Pinellas County). This practice helps ensure that the Human Resources Department abides by merit system principles in hiring and retaining, and that UPS employees are fairly compensated.

Pinellas County Human Resources Department

400 S. Fort Harrison Avenue
Clearwater, FL 33756

Phone (727) 464-3367
Fax (727) 464-3949

Internet: www.pinellascounty.org/hr
Intraweb: http://ups.co.pinellas.fl.us