

PERSONNEL - COMMITTEE

Tuesday, January 18, 2022 - 10:00 AM

** This meeting was held remotely **

Stephanie DeZalia, Chairperson
JoePete Wilson, Vice-Chairperson

Chairwoman DeZalia called this DPW Meeting to order at 10:00 am with the following Supervisors remotely in attendance: Clayton Barber, Robin DeLoria, Stephanie DeZalia, Derek Doty, Shaun Gilliland, Roy Holzer, Ken Hughes, Steve McNally, Noel Merrihew, James Monty, Tom Scozzafava, Matt Stanley, Ike Tyler, Joe Pete Wilson, Davina Winemiller, Margaret Wood and Mark Wright. Charlie Harrington was absent.

Department Heads present: Jim Dougan, Judy Garrison, Jennifer Mascarenas and Dan Palmer.

Also present: Holly Aquino.

News Media: Sun News – Tim Rowland.

DEZALIA: Alright, I will call this Personnel meeting to order now that you can all hear me. I will call Jenn Mascarenas first. I see Jenn here.

MASCARENAS: Good morning.

DEZALIA: I wanted to start off by saying thank you Jenn for the help you have been helping me with this week, last week and the week before.

MASCARENAS: Your welcome. I have my monthly report and updated vacancy list. I believe Judy forwarded that to everyone on the committee. So, if anyone has any questions for me?

DEZALIA: Does anyone have questions for Jenn?

MONTY: It's also a revisit of my resolution about offering the Coroners the Covid-19, the buyback, the \$2,000. I'm not on this committee but I know we did get a response from Dan Manning saying it's perfectly legal for us to do that and I'm hoping somebody may want to chime in and revisit that with me and offer a resolution.

HUGHES: I would support that resolution as Jim has presented it. I'll make that motion.

BARBER: I'll second.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING INCLUSION OF THE ESSEX COUNTY CORONERS TO RECEIVE THE PREMIUM PAY INCENTIVE AS AUTHORIZED AND PURSUANT TO THE TERMS OF RESOLUTION NO. 278 OF DECEMBER 7, 2021. Hughes, Barber

DEZALIA: Discussion?

WINEMILLER: Yes, I have a question. I apologize if this was told to us before, can you hear me?

DEZALIA: Yes.

WINEMILLER: How much money was given to the full-time employees and how much money was given to the part-time? Does anyone know?

PALMER: Yeah, they were given exactly the same. It depended on how many hours you worked. If you put in a thousand hours from March 20 to 2020, to date you'd be qualified based upon the hours you put in.

WINEMILLER: So, March 20th to what date was it?

PALMER: Well, actually it's, we went right up until the day you guys passed the resolution but you can go all the way prospectively all the way till the end of 2023, if you wanted.

WINEMILLER: Okay, so regardless of their status, as long as they worked 1000 hours?

PALMER: Yes.

WINEMILLER: Okay and do the Coroners keep track of their hours or is it just per?

PALMER: That's actually what I was going to bring up to you, what will have to happen if we're going to do this for the Coroners, what we'll have to do is what I had to do with the full-time elected that don't keep a timesheet which they are not required to so what I did was Dan Manning helped me put together an attestation form that says, you attest that you spent at least one thousand hours working on Covid related stuff during that period. So, that's what we did, and that's what we would have to do with these Coroners if we chose to extend this to them, they would have to sign an attestation form that they spend at least a thousand hours of them doing it.

WINEMILLER: Okay thank you.

DEZALIA: Tom, go ahead.

SCOZZAFAVA: I'm not on this committee but I probably made my point clear, I don't support this. I won't support it. They are elected positions, we all ran last year we know what we are up against, our salaries are set. There is a public notice on what our salaries will be and this is an increase on what was actually posted so I don't support it.

PALMER: The only thing I will say Tom, is this is an incentive that's no different than supervisors who collect health insurance buybacks. We don't publish that salary. That's a separate amount that's provided to them, to the supervisors or elected officials or whoever it happens to be. So I don't think it constitutes a salary adjustment. I think it's an incentive given to employees and is justifiable.

SCOZZAFAVA: The other issue that I would have with this is that full-time employees received \$2,000, part-time employees are going to receive the same amount and you know, if a Coroner meets that 1,000 hours I would be shocked. Possibly they do but I don't believe it.

HOLZER: Question for Dan Palmer, Dan, wouldn't all those full-time, elected people and the Coroners aren't they required by New York State to fill out timesheets every 3 or 4 years for

retirement anyways?

PALMER: Yes, they are required to keep an activity log. Just so you know, we have two or three of the elected that keep a timesheet. They just do what everybody else but we have a couple that do not.

HOLZER: Thank you.

DELORIA: Yes, I just want to say that when Jimmy first put this motion out I did second the motion and it's just, in the world that I live in I see Coroners even though they may be designated part-time these people are 24/7 if anybody is going into an environment where it is Covid related, it would be these people and I just won't split hairs on it. I think it's an incentive, it's Federal funding and if we can provide this benefit based on a formula that Dan Palmer and Dan Manning have come up with then so be it. I just support it and that's where I stand on that. Thank you.

MONTY: I just want to add, that none of our employees, none of us on this call face Covid like our Coroners have. That's just the bottom line, they are going into homes where someone passed away, it could be a Covid home, a lot of these bodies that they are dealing with are tested positive for Covid. I mean, they are seeing it 100 times more than I am.

DEZALIA: I wanted to add I wasn't in support of this in the beginning but what Jim just pointed out they are going into homes and they are in direct contact but I do also want to make it clear I think Tom just made it clear that we, as the Board of Supervisors are the only ones that are not getting this incentive and this premium pay vaccine incentive. I know it's out there that we are only doing this so we could get this extra amount. I've heard that. I've been asked that but I want it clear that we are the only ones that have not gotten this premium pay because I got asked this this weekend, if the reason we did it so we can get the premium pay.

DELORIA: No. Thank you Steph. I wouldn't take it if it was offered.

DEZALIA: So, we had a move and a second. Is that correct Judy?

GARRISON: Yes.

DEZALIA: All in favor, okay Jenn, did you have anything further?

MASCARENAS: Nothing further for me.

DEZALIA: Okay, thank you Jenn.

MASCARENAS: Thank you.

DEZALIA: Okay, next Judy. Did you have anything for the committee?

GARRISON: Just my monthly report, nothing further unless anyone has any questions?

DEZALIA: Okay did anyone have anything for Judy? Okay, thank you Judy.

GARRISON: Thank you.

DEZALIA: Is Dan Manning here? I don't see him.

PALMER: I don't think so.

DEZALIA: No? Okay did anybody have anything else to come before the Personnel Committee?

PALMER: Shaun does.

GILLILLAND: I'm sorry Stephanie, I'm not on this committee but I was talking with Linda Beers this morning and I asked the question, have we hit the tip over on the omicron? She says we haven't tipped over yet but we are probably peaking so you know, Dan and I had a discussion this morning so I think with the board's concurrence you know, we'll make a call on Wednesday and possibly be back in session, in person next week. I throw that out there for anybody that has any problems with that? I think that once we show a tip over in infections on the way down, I think it's you know, probably would be prudent to go back in person. I think we get more done than on Zoom squares.

DEZALIA: Did anybody have any questions on that? Okay thank you Shaun.

PALMER: Steph, I've just got one thing I want to go over President Biden announced that all households will be eligible for up to eight, Covid at home tests that are going to be charged off against private insurance. I just want the Board to be aware that it looks like the method that they're going to use is they're going to charge it against the pharmacy coverage and unfortunately for us, as a county we are self-insured on the pharmacy side. So, you know, they set up the eight tests per month, at \$12 a test; we have somewhere around 1,000 lives in our group when you count the employees, their spouses, their children and our retiree group based upon that now, I'm not suggesting that everybody is going to run out and get eight tests per month but potentially that could be a \$100,000 a month for the county as a self-insured entity. Now I have talked specifically to Mark Crawford our Broker, he's talking to Excellus about trying to find out if there's some way that we could have that charged against the medical side as opposed to because the medical side we're insured, on the drug side we're self-insured. So, we're trying to see if we can have that charged against the medical side but I don't know that at this point.

So, of course the other thing is that irrespective of what everybody says, you know, when you charge it against private insurance it's not really free, at some point, you're going to have to pay a rate increase and I think all of us will be seeing some difference in rates coming up next year based upon what these tests potentially could cost.

DELORIA: Dan, I'll search my inbox here somewhere, I got an email from our insurance carrier last week, indicating that the physicians and medical centers and clinics can actually charge the insurance companies for those tests. So, I'll look into that I mean, there's no reason to go to the county for free if our insurance will pay for that but I will have to research that email.

PALMER: Yeah, that was the specific question that I asked Mark to get ahold of Excellus about whether it was going to be charged against the pharmacy side or the medical side and their indication was that it was going to be charged against the pharmacy side. It makes sense I mean, if you're going to go to a drugstore and be able to pick it up the only information the drugstore has on your health plan is really your pharmacy side. We'll see but that is just so you're aware as a Board.

DEZALIA: Okay, thank you Dan. Shaun, did you have something else?

GILLILLAND: Yeah, one other thing in talking with Linda, just for the information to the board, 28th of January at North County Community College, Linda has arranged with Quadrant testing for a full day, I think she said, like eight to four of free testing, PCR testing for anybody that shows up through Quadrant and they'll get their answers of Covid back within 48 hours so, she'll be putting that out on the Public Health website or on the Facebook page but I wanted everybody to be aware.

DEZALIA: Thank you. That's the 28th of January you said right?

GILLILLAND: Correct.

DEZALIA: Okay, did anyone else have anything? And I still don't see Dan here so, alright, I believe we are adjourned then, thank you.

As there was no further discussion to come before this Personnel Committee it was adjourned at 10:16 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Garrison, Clerk
Board of Supervisors