

Personnel Committee
December 4, 2013
Minutes

~~~~~Approved 3.3.14~~~~~

The Personnel Committee of the Menominee County Board met on December 4, 2013 at 7:30 AM at the County Annex Building in Stephenson.

**Call Meeting to order:** 7:30 AM

**Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Roll Call:** Coms. Krienke, Plutchak, Piche, & Furlong are all present.

**Agenda:** Com. Plutchak, I'd like to switch item "a" and item "c" and add item d, the Sheriff Department Staffing Issue. Moved by Com. Furlong and supported by Com. Krienke to approve the agenda with the switch of items a and c and the addition of (d) the Sheriff Dept. Staffing Issue.

**Previous Minutes:** 10.18.2013~change public comment, Larry Schei "I commend" (not recommend). Moved by Com. Piche supported by Com. Krienke.

**Public Comment:** None

**Business:**

- a. Discussion of E-911 Part time vacancy:** Debra Wormwood: We have had a part time position that has been vacant since June of this year. A few problems for us is that we are having to pay overtime on a regular basis in order to maintain our staffing. My part timers are working 40 or more hours per week. Last week when I read in the paper that the county board was considering filling a position in Equalization. I feel that they should also consider a vacancy I have in my department. We cannot use other county employees because the State has passed minimum training standards. We have to maintain the training but I can't even send people to training because of being understaffed. If you consider hiring someone else in another county department, I think you should also consider hiring for a vacancy in 9-1-1. Plutchak: You are understaffed right now? That is a full time position? Debra: No it's a part time position. I have had to deny vacation in order to keep dispatch staffed. Plutchak: If you are not able to get to a call, what happens? Does it go to a state central dispatch? Say everyone is busy and a call comes in and everyone is currently on another line, what happens to that call? Debra: That call after it rings so many times will go to Delta County. Plutchak: Does anything go the State Police out of Negaunee? Debra: I don't know of anyone going to them as alternate dispatch. Furlong: What kind of benefits do the part timers get? Sick, vacation leave. Credit for MERS if they work 10- eight hour days per month. Debra: We have 7 full time and 2 part time with a Part time vacancy and myself. We try to maintain two dispatchers

at a time. Furlong: with the hiring freeze that the board imposed on itself, it's pretty hard to pick and choose which dept. we're going to hire based on the importance, until the county board gets rid of the hiring freeze, I don't know how we can fill these positions without going back on something that we enacted. Plutchak: We've got to get this hiring freeze taken care of. You're going to have to push harder or something Brian, this has to get dealt with, and we're starting to put people in bad positions. Furlong: the hiring freeze was to save money on the MERS system for long term financial liability. But what we're starting to see now is we're spending more money up front with overtime. Debra: We're paying overtime on a regular basis right now. Our part timers are working over 40 hrs/wk. we try to use part timers at straight pay rather than use the full timers with time and one-half (OT) to cover the shifts. Plutchak: the minimum training requirements, how much does that entail. Debra: First we do the dispatch training. 6-20 weeks based on skill level. State requirements, 40 hr. class plus 6 or 8 classes that are needed within their first two years. Total of about 100 hours of training. Piche: Keep in mind we're waiting for cooperation from the unions. When that happens, a lot of this can be resolved fairly quickly. Debra: I feel our position is as important as the position discussed in the newspaper for equalization.

**b. Discussion of Equalization Department, Staff Restructuring:** Plutchak: We're trying to fill a position for the longevity of the county, so we can keep this county running smoothly in the Equalization Dept., for the future. I suggest we post internally to see how many candidates we have that would be interested to fill that vacant position. So that person can continue with training if they don't have the qualifications yet to replace Peg if she leaves or if something should happen. Furlong: I'm a little confused. In my tenure here with the county, there has always been two positions in that office. I heard discussion at the CB meeting that previously there were three positions in that office. Somewhere down the road, one of those positions was eliminated and so was the funding. Now there are two positions in the office, Eq. Director and Staff Cartographer. I don't think it's fair to say, because somewhere down the line there "was" three positions in that office, so we hire another person. The board has a hiring freeze that they imposed on themselves. If we go ahead and "recreate" or fill this position that has been vacant and eliminated for a number of years, I think all of the other Dept. heads will try to follow, they all have immediate needs as well. You can't say one dept. is more important than another dept. This idea of recreating this position in the EQ dept., which really doesn't exist anymore, would be going against the hiring freeze that the county imposed on itself. Plutchak: There is a backup at 911, Debra just told us, if we can't catch the phones here, it goes to Delta County. If something happens at the Sheriff Dept., the state police will backup the sheriff dept., they have a backup. EQ doesn't have a backup; which is almost 70% of our budget and we are required by the state to maintain that office. Furlong: I'm not going to argue the point that dept. is rather important to our financial needs in the county. This idea of recreating a position that no longer exists, then we're hiring. If we hire in one dept. then every other dept. will be asking to do the same thing. When we voted on the hiring freeze, I asked if this would be an all or nothing thing, and the board said it was "all" a total hiring freeze in Men. Co. I voted against this because I knew something would happen, and here we are. Plutchak: We're not proposing to go outside,

we're posting internally and see if we have any applicants that are internal. Furlong: Then we get the trickledown effect. One office would be short in the end. John Anderson: Requests to speak since he missed the Public comment period due to icy roads. The board allowed John to speak. I don't think the EQ director would have requested a certified person in that office if it wasn't needed. There are certain things that a cartographer can do, and certain things they cannot. I made a request on Monday morning to get some work to do my job for 9 twps. and one city in this county. That request is sitting on the EQ director's desk. I can't get any work until she gets back. Because that work needs to be certified by an assessor. I can guarantee you that the requests I need won't be received until the Director comes back, because there is not another certified person in that office. There are other counties that have non-certified people in the office. I think a certified assessor should have been requested in that office long before this. It's time to do the right thing in the EQ dept. If you bury your head in the sand this won't go away. I hope you move this forward to the board for approval. Furlong: Annette has been in there with Peggy a long time, she's taken vacation before, and this is not something new. With the hiring freeze it's extremely hard for me to say the EQ dept. is more important because the assessors can't get their work when Peggy is gone as opposed to saying, it's not really important for 911 to not have people in place, or it's not important in the Clerk's office to not have people in their positions. Until we get the hiring freeze out of the way, or come to some kind of resolution, I am totally against hiring another person in any office. If there were a vacant position in that office, I wouldn't have a problem with this, but as it stands, we're trying to create a position in that office. Plutchak: Letter from the state tax commission. It states the importance of the requirements for the EQ office. Furlong: I'm not arguing the importance of that office. Plutchak: We're not creating a position at this point. Furlong: It's gone, it's been eliminated. Brian: It's a position that hasn't been there for a while. It's not currently on the position allocation list. It's something that was there before, but has been left aside for years. What's going to happen with Annette's position? Plutchak: The thing that really concerns me is, in order to receive the level three assessor certifications they need 3 years of training. If something would happen to Peg, that office would shut down. The assessors won't be able to get the info they need. Peg came to me and said she's considering retirement, then what do we do? If we don't make this happen now, we have to wait another year for this person to continue training. The sign up date is the end of Dec. This office is very important to this county to keep this county running. We can't fowl this up. We can post and transfer internally. I think this needs to go to the board and let them vote on it. We have no backup. Furlong: You're taking about this position that is lingering out there, it hasn't been filled or funded. Deb Wormwood is talking about a position that is there, is funded and she can't hire because of the hiring freeze. I think this board would be hypocritical to go out and say we're going to "recreate" this position when there are other positions that are in need and we can't do because of the hiring freeze. Plutchak: I'm not going to disagree, but the EQ dept. (not saying other depts. aren't as important) has no backup. People don't run businesses with no backups. 911 has backups, EQ has nothing. Furlong: this has been going on for the last five years. She took vacation for the last five years too. In my opinion, they're going to have to wait on this. Krienke: Brian when a position goes unstaffed and unfunded for a period of time, is it considered eliminated and wiped off of the books? Brian: you have to

look at the position allocation list of what is budgeted. The ones that aren't filled are vacant. The ones that aren't on there are off the books. Not that it doesn't exist, it was just never put back on the books. It can be added back on the position allocation list if the commissioners choose to restructure. Krienke: to fill the position we're talking about, the training required, is it required to be paid for by the county or can a person go out and get the training on their own. Brian: Some counties pay for training with an agreement for the employee to work for the county for so many years. Others do not pay for the training. Some counties allow a pay back of training after they've worked so many years. Krienke: But a person can go out on their own initiative to get this training and not expect to be reimbursed. Piche: I can't imagine the board wanting to go out on a limb on this one, saying we're right and everyone else is wrong. I can't see why we would want to do that? Have we had a legal opinion on this? Brian: I spoke to Stoker, says yes and no. he's on vacation now. The union doesn't have a problem posting the position as long as it's done correctly, but will have a problem if Annette loses her job. Plutchak: Did the union say anything about transferring Annette to another department? Would that cause any repercussion? Brian: We should ask Annette too. Plutchak: Annette has seniority over quite a few other employees in the courthouse. How many years before Annette considers retirement? Brian: I don't know, I didn't talk to her about that. Piche: I tend to agree with James a lot. The hiring freeze, if we keep trying to pass this, pass that, we're not going to get any cooperation with the unions. It's nothing new, the EQ dept. it's been going on this way for a long time. I would proceed with caution. Krienke: I don't understand why the hiring freeze is still in place and not resolved long ago. The hiring freeze does not affect the current employees. So I can't understand the resistance to this notion. We've had 20 opportunities for department heads to come in and offer an alternative. Come and talk to us. Give us some ideas on what to do here. Brian: On a positive note. I did talk to the union agent. He may be bringing this to the members after the holidays. As far as 911 goes, that union agent has everything, we may move on this a bit quicker. Plutchak: It sounds like everyone is split on whether to move this to the board or not. My opinion is it needs to be dealt with. Time is crucial, three years is a long time. We should do a roll call vote. I recommend moving it forward to the board, the filling of that position in advertisement within the county employee system right now. To fill that vacancy so that the individuals that apply that meet the requirements of level two assessor, can take and go start the training to continue to take the level three class to move into the equalization dept. if they choose to take Pegs place if Peg shall leave. Brian: So the recommendation would be to post for the staff appraiser. Plutchak: Yes, to fill that vacancy position from June of 2001. Krienke: This is not a new position. Plutchak: No. DuPont: It's not a vacant position either. It is not listed in the current position allocation list in the budget. Brian: We would have to put it in there. DuPont: It would have to be listed as a vacancy in there, so you would have to redo that also, as a board. And, there'll be an increase in the budget. Plutchak: It would be an increase in the EQ budget. I feel we really need to fill this. If we don't fill this we're putting the whole county in turmoil for years. It's not like someone can just walk in and fill this job. It should have been dealt with years ago, but we're stuck with it here. Brian: Recommendation is to post for the staff appraiser position – roll call vote: Furlong: No; Krienke: Yes; Plutchak: Yes; Piche: No. A tie vote is a dead issue. It can be brought back to the personnel committee again for discussion.

**c. Discussion of Administrator's Evaluation:** Brian: The first part is what existed. The self-evaluation, is what I added. After looking at it, I would also add number 6 as "review of previous goals". Krienke: Correct number 1, (accomplishments) plural. Furlong: This is like your previous evaluations with the exception of the self-evaluation. Plutchak: I don't see a problem with it. It fills the requirements of the bylaws. Furlong: Who will do the review? Plutchak: Personnel committee will do the annual review. We'll do this after the first of the year. Brian: We'll make the changes and get this back to the personnel committee prior to the eval. meeting. Plutchak: Let's take a vote on approving this structure and use it as our template. Furlong: I'll move we approve the admin. evaluation template, with corrections, Krienke: supports.

**d. Discussion of Sheriff Department Staffing issue:** Piche: I'd like Brian to bring us up to speed with where we're at. Brian: Basically the Sheriff dept. had a couple of vacancies of part timers in the jail. Now they're down to one part timer. He would like to get his vacant part time positions filled. He is having a hard time filling positions in the jail causing staffing issues. He has stopped all vacation time in order to staff the jail. I also spoke with the Undersheriff. Courthouse security is an issue as well. If there were a few part timers to fill in, we could possibly get the bailiff back in the courthouse as well. It's something that could be worked out. Right now it's a staffing issue. The sheriff put out a letter last week and I put a letter out to Stoker as well, but he's on vacation. Plutchak: I pretty much read the emails. Brian: Kenny did put out an ad for an eligibility list. That is a list for interviewing at a later date. Plutchak: He's trying to prepare himself so when the hiring freeze goes off he can get some people in there, which makes sense. I understand he's shorthanded. It doesn't do us any good. 911 is shorthanded. We need to get the unions moving. Brian: There is one thing in the jail. Corrections officers, part timers are not included in the contract as far as the union. Plutchak: if they move from PT to full time, are they? Brian: I have asked to get that in writing. The use of PT to replace full timers in the jail would be a breach of the contract. Furlong: The hiring freeze is working, every department is showing signs of stress. But if we go start picking and choosing, hire in this dept., hire in that dept., it's all going to fall apart. I got a feeling the hiring freeze was put in place to use as a bargaining chip to have the unions come to the table to negotiate that part of the contract to have new employees not be part of the "defined benefit" MERS system. Departments are spending a lot in overtime. There's a degree of stress, burnout and decreased morale. If the County commissioners decide they're going to start hiring here and hiring there, we're circumventing what the whole hiring freeze was meant to be. Reading through the sheriff's emails, it sounds to me that he is going to hire people. Is that what he's doing or is he creating an eligibility list for future hires? Brian: Originally he was going with the eligibility list. With this latest letter, he's looking at hiring. Furlong: what kind of law is he basing this on? Brian: That's what I asked Stoker? Furlong: If there is a law, I'm supportive, if not, I can't support this.

**Public Comment:** John Anderson: I thought the administrator had a vote. EQ director being signaled out, that they can't have the type of person that they want working for them in their office, like the other departments. She requested this over six weeks ago. Plutchak: The hiring freeze is a problem. John Anderson: Is there any discrimination going on here against the EQ director, that she can't request a person that she wants certified in that office. Furlong: It's not about the EQ Director or the EQ dept. It's about the hiring freeze that we put in place. It's not in

our best interest to pick and choose who's important. Am I against the EQ department, No. Plutchak: There are other offices that are short staffed that haven't come to us to complain. I have to be in a certain amt. of agreement with James on this. Jan Hafeman: My concern that the hiring freeze is putting emphasis on dept. heads, not employees. Charlene Peterson: We hear the same two problems hamstringing, MERS and Hiring Freeze. You have to operate, you can't continue to put yourself in this position. You're not allowing departments to grow in a healthy way. I recommend you bring the hiring freeze back to the board for re-evaluation. Kandace Curran: Background of what it takes to be an assessor. It took 18 months to become a level two. It'll take another year for the five pre-requisite courses. The state tax commission has made this very regulated. If we don't have assessors, then the state can take over. It is very important that we have certified assessors. I will go on for my level three because I made that commitment two years ago with my own money, sacrificed my kids, my weekends. It is very important to me and our county. I don't want to see Peggy retire, she has been great to work with. But I also feel that the office needs to be covered by someone that is certified. It's disheartening that this hiring freeze has gone on longer than six months. It's really a sad situation that this isn't moving forward. Charlene Peterson: At one point my husband was on the board. At that point, Annette was in EQ with Peggy. I like Annette as a person, but she is not capable of doing that job. I was also told at that time that she was instructed to go ahead and get her assessing degree and go to classes for this. I don't think she has made any attempt to do this. She isn't willing to go to school like Kandace did. Is the position right for that employee? Mari Negro: what do we have to do to push to get the hiring freeze brought to the table? How diligent are we at pushing this issue. Brian: I'm after them every day. Mari Negro: Do you have a call log? Brian: No, I don't keep track of calls. If someone's going to point the finger, then do. If you want to call the union, do. The employees are a little apprehensive.

**Commissioner Comment:** Plutchak: I'm a little disappointed on the way some things are headed. But I have to be in agreement with some things also, so it's a dead issue.

**Adjournment:** Moved by Com. Piche supported by Com. Furlong to adjourn at 8:59 AM