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03-12-10-2

AGENDA COVER MEMORANDUM

AGENDA DATE: December 10, 2003

PRESENTED TO: Board of County Commissioners

PRESENTED BY: Greta Utecht, Human Resources Manager
Ollie Snowden, Public Works Director and Vacancy Review Committee Chair

AGENDA TITLE: **IN THE MATTER OF PROVIDING A STATUS REPORT REGARDING THE WORK OF THE VACANCY REVIEW COMMITTEE, AND REQUESTING DIRECTION AS TO ITS FUTURE SCOPE.**

I. ISSUE

The Vacancy Review Committee (VRC) has been in place for nearly one year. It was established as a result of work done in conjunction with the County's Strategic Plan implementation, and is one of the management tools approved by the Leadership team in December 2002. After 11 months of reviewing vacancies, the committee requests further direction from the Board as to whether the committee should continue to require that all vacancies come before the committee prior to posting and as to the full scope of review to be undertaken by the committee.

II. DISCUSSION

A. Background

The VRC first started reviewing positions in December 2002. At the same time, personnel analysts began checking with every department to clarify the status of vacancies listed in the budget as funded positions. Because BRASS (the County's budget projection system) and PeopleSoft (our personnel and payroll tracking system) were not in agreement as to which positions were truly vacant, Human Resources and Information Services staff worked together to create new reports that accurately list the number of current budgeted vacancies in each department. The new reports also track eliminated positions.

In summary, the formation of the VRC has been the catalyst for several system improvements, and HR and budget staff now have much more accurate information with which to make sure that budget authority and position management are in alignment.

To date the VRC has reviewed approximately 160 positions. In order for the committee to make a determination on a vacancy, the department is asked to complete the vacancy review checklist (attached), which asks about the position's funding and status. The checklist also asks whether the department has engaged in process improvement, streamlining or reorganization analysis prior to deciding to post the vacancy. Of the more than 160 positions reviewed, more than 60 were the result of some form of process improvement or reorganization. In several cases where the manager checked "no" to the question asking whether process improvement had taken place, a comment was added indicating that reorganization or process improvement would be welcome if he or she had more information as to how to go about it.

Perhaps one of the biggest benefits resulting from the VRC is that the members have had an opportunity to learn a great deal about the kind of work done by County employees in other departments. It isn't often that someone from H&HS has the chance to hear about what a Waste Management Supervisor does, or for someone from the Sheriff's office to learn about the new Federally Qualified Health Clinic's creation.

B. Analysis

The committee has yet to veto any request, although in several cases the hiring managers were asked to clarify information presented, and in one case, a position in RIS was changed from regular to temporary status directly as a result of the VRC's feedback.

Over the period of time that the VRC has been operating, 65 positions have either been eliminated or have had their funding de-authorized. Because of the foresight and planning in the affected departments, to date only 12 employees who were laid off remain out of work. With more budget reductions likely in our future, departments are again holding vacancies and not requesting that they be refilled—as of this date, Human Resources is aware of at least 6 positions that are funded but unfilled.

In addition to the staff support provided by the Human Resources manager, the personnel analysts provide technical background on each position to the committee. In almost every case, managers have consulted with HR about their vacancies prior to filling out the checklist and appearing before the VRC. Because the checklist is so detailed and comprehensive, and because it requires department director approval before submittal to the VRC, positions have gone through a rigorous analysis within the departments before ever getting to the VRC. (One member of the committee compares the committee's role to that of the Grand Jury: Our District Attorney's

office can't charge anyone with a felony unless the Grand Jury approves. The Grand Jury almost never says no because prosecutors don't take cases before the Grand Jury unless they have a solid argument.) Managers don't take positions to the VRC until they have reviewed them thoroughly and can justify their posting.

It is because of this rigorous analysis and the fact that the Board has already approved many of the positions coming before the VRC that the committee has not found cause to deny any position. In fact, once a position has been approved by the Board, the members of the VRC question whether it is even appropriate or necessary that they review these vacancies. (For example, Mike Wellington, LCARA manager, recently brought a vacancy to the VRC for a Senior Office Assistant. Knowing how hard the BCC worked to find funding for LCARA during the last budget process in order to save positions there, with Mr. Wellington's assertion that already reduced service levels would be further decreased, the VRC members did not feel as though they had the authority to question the position.)

In addition to the factors listed above, a position's funding source has a major influence in the level of scrutiny it receives. If a position is funded by a dedicated revenue source (e.g., road fund, waste fund) that is currently stable and has a stable forecast, the need for vacancy review is mitigated. On the other hand, should positions funded by the general fund be given a higher level of examination, given our general fund's outlook? And if so, how does this examination differ from how department directors prioritize services during the budget process?

Along with providing the Board with a general update regarding the VRC's work to date, the VRC is anxious to get more specific direction on the following questions:

1. Should departments continue to bring non-general fund vacancies to the VRC?
2. Does the VRC have the authority to deny a posting request to a department? If denied, what recourse does the department have?
3. Should departments continue to bring positions that have already been approved by the BCC for that fiscal year to the VRC? If so, what is the purpose of that review?

C. Alternatives/Options

1. Require that departments continue to complete the vacancy review checklist, to be reviewed and approved by department directors. If the position is funded to any extent by general funds, the VRC must review and approve prior to posting. The hiring supervisor or manager should attend the VRC meeting to respond to any questions by the committee. All positions must have the checklist completed and submitted to HR with a posting request. Non-general fund positions would not require VRC review.

2. Continue requiring that every vacancy be reviewed by the VRC and use the VRC as a forum for sharing ideas and information regarding process improvement, reorganization and other service enhancement efforts, with careful scrutiny given to those positions that may be impacted by future budget cuts or a negative funding outlook. Hiring supervisors and managers should present their positions to the VRC, focusing on the process improvements, reorganizations, service and/or activity changes that have resulted in the position needing to be posted. HR should track these arguments and report back to the BCC at regular intervals. If the VRC recommends that a position not be refilled, the department can appeal the VRC's decision to the Board.
3. Discontinue the Vacancy Review Committee, but continue to require that hiring managers complete a Vacancy review checklist as part of the posting process so that HR can continue to track and monitor vacancies.

D. Recommendation

Approve Option 2.

III. IMPLEMENTATION/FOLLOW-UP

Following Board action, HR will send out new guidelines for submitting positions to the VRC.

IV. ATTACHMENT

Vacancy Review Checklist



PROCESS FOR REVIEWING POSITION VACANCIES

"When vacancies occur, it is in the best interest of the County and its citizens to review work processes and to determine whether the vacant positions and associated resources can be better utilized."

Adopted Lane County Strategic Plan, A4(c)

Answers to questions should be described or justified fully. For example; if the service delivery will be impacted, please explain how on a separate attachment/sheet.

Position Title/Classification: _____ **Position #:** _____ **How long vacant?** _____

Dept./Division: _____ **Dept Contact & Phone:** _____

Position vacated due to: Retirement ☐ Termination ☐ Resignation ☐ Other ☐ _____

Employee Group Designation: _____ **Will someone attend the VRC to discuss?** YES ☐ NO ☐

If so, who? _____

1. POSITION FUNDING

1a. Is the position in the General Fund? YES ☐ NO ☐

1b. Is the position funded through the General Fund and other funds? YES ☐ NO ☐
If yes, please specify: _____

1c. Is the position funded through Grants, Contracts, and/or Enterprise Funds? YES ☐
NO ☐

If yes, please specify: _____

1d. What is the full cost of this position (include benefit and indirect charges)? \$ _____

2. SERVICE NECESSITY

2a. Is the position key to service being delivered? YES ☐ NO ☐
If yes, please describe: _____

2b. Is the service mandated or core? YES ☐ NO ☐
If yes, please describe: _____

{Step 1. NOTE: *Strategic Plan*, B3, Funding Priorities - immediate and critical life and health safety needs; 2. Direct response to broad County goals such as personal safety, property safety, infrastructure safety, health safety, basic needs, serving youth; 3. Other mandated services with demonstrated cost-effectiveness and broad public support; 4. Contributes to the attainment of broad County goals and there are sound fiscal reasons to continue}

2c. Will there be unintended negative impacts if not filled? YES ☐ NO ☐
If yes, what impacts? _____

3. ORGANIZATIONAL REDESIGN

3a. Can the work be done differently or combined with other positions (RPI type analysis)? YES ☐
NO ☐

If not, why not? _____ If yes, what is the plan? _____ (If yes, go on to #4).

3b. Is the service supported by the *Strategic Plan's* funding priorities (section B3)?

YES ☐

NO ☐

If yes, how? _____

3c. How will service delivery be impacted if done differently or reorganized? _____

3d. Is it reasonable to review consolidation options?

YES ☐

NO ☐

If not, why? _____

3e. Is this a one of a kind position and/or function?

YES ☐

NO ☐

4. Organization Redesign

4a(1). Use of positions funding for a limited time?

YES ☐

NO ☐

4b(2). Are technology investments involved?

YES ☐

NO ☐

If yes, please describe: _____

4c(3). Will there be or are there process improvements underway?

YES ☐

NO ☐

Please provide some description of PI or explanation of why not: _____

5. NATURE OF THE POSITION

5a. Is it a limited duration position:

(1) not technically a temp position?

TEMP ☐

NOT TEMP ☐

(2) what is the length of funding? _____

(3) what is the funding source (e.g. grant, one-time \$, foundation)? _____

5b. If left vacant for now, could this position provide a place for an employee otherwise likely to be laid off?

YES ☐

NO ☐

If no, why not? _____

5c. Are there likely to be labor relations issues created if this position is held vacant or eliminated?

YES ☐

NO ☐

If yes, what are they likely to be? _____

6. CLASSIFICATION OF THE POSITION

6a. Does this create a "learning" or apprenticeship" position? A career ladder?

YES ☐

NO ☐

6b. Is the classification too broad or narrow or no longer representative of what is needed?

YES ☐

NO ☐

6c. Do classification specifications accurately reflect tasks and functions (e.g. changes in technology)?

YES ☐

NO ☐

If no, please describe: _____

Signature: _____
Department Director

Date: _____

For Vacancy Review Committee (VRC) and Human Resources Only:

7. OUTCOME OF REVIEW

- ☐ Position Eliminated
- ☐ Authorized for Internal Posting
- ☐ Authorized for External Posting
- ☐ Return to Department for Additional Analysis
- ☐ Hold for Potential Layoffs

Signature: _____
Chair/Vice-Chair VRC

Date: _____

REMINDER: Please email an electronic copy to LC HR Vacancy Review. The signed hard copy should be forwarded to your HR Analyst.

