

APRIL 12, 2005-WORKSHOP

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Workshop to discuss the Retention of County Personnel on Tuesday, April 12, 2005 at 1:30 p.m. at the Walton County Courthouse.

The following Board members were present: Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen, Chairman, Commissioner Scott Brannon, Vice-Chairman, Commissioner Larry Jones, Commissioner Cindy Meadows, and Commissioner Rosier Cuchens. Mr. Ronnie Bell, County Administrator, and Mr. Gary Vorbeck, Director of Legal Services, were also present.

Chairman Pridgen called the meeting to order.

Mr. Gary Mattison, Human Resource Director, came before the Board to discuss the retention of county personnel, along with offering and collecting suggestions in how to resolve this matter. He presented the Commissioners with material regarding his presentation. He went on to state that during a meeting between himself and other Human Resource representatives from local large area businesses, discussion was held regarding retaining and attracting employees. Mr. Mattison stated that in order to put employee retention in perspective, the Board had to consider how Walton County compared to the Panhandle, the State, the Region and the Nation. He also stated that some areas of maintaining employee stability are especially difficult due to specific needs of a community such as Planning, Engineering, and EMS personnel. Mr. Mattison expressed the need to consider all the factors involved in employee retention, in order to encourage employee stability.

Mr. Mattison informed the Board that the following exhibits offers tools in how to work towards alleviating employee retention:

1. Key Questions Addressed Directly from Records
2. "Turnover Iceberg"
3. Recommended Categories for Accumulating Turnover Costs
4. Tools to Diagnosis Turnover Problems
5. Key Questions to Ask Employees, According to National Gallup Poll
6. Typical Solutions for Managing Employee Retention
7. Employee Suggestions for Improvement to Walton Board of County Commissioners
8. Current Vacancies for the Walton Board of County Commissioners

Mr. Mattison stated that the purpose of the questions listed in Exhibit 1 were to determine the factors involved in county turnover statistics. He explained that Exhibit 2 listed the visible and invisible turnover costs. Commissioner Cuchens questioned Mr. Mattison about the visible turnover costs. Mr. Mattison shared with the Board the factors involved in determining the percentage of visible turnover costs, such as: the hiring process, interview time and costs, job position, location of job, training time, and wages.

Mr. Mattison informed the Board that Exhibit 7 contained employee suggestions for improvements to Walton County gathered from a survey requested by the County Administrator. Discussion was held regarding the effectiveness of the survey. Mr. Mattison stated that one of the main issues that was discussed in the survey was subsidizing childcare. Commissioner Meadows questioned Mr. Mattison on the percentage of Walton County employees who are paying for childcare. Discussion was held regarding this issue.

Mr. Mattison briefly summarized Exhibit 8, discussing current employment vacancies throughout the county departments. Commissioner Brannon asked Mr. Mattison about when Ms. Pat Blackshear was going to be scheduled to start working as

the Planning and Development Director for the county. He informed the Board the Ms. Blackshear is scheduled to start her employment on May 2nd, 2005.

Mr. Mattison shared with the Commissioners the importance of establishing first-rate employee training methods. Mr. Mattison suggested establishing a new county position, for a Training Coordinator, whose specific purpose would be the training of new employees. Discussion was held regarding the training of new employees.

Commissioner Jones questioned Mr. Mattison about the orientation process, stating the importance of every new employee being familiarized with all departments of the county. Commissioner Cuchens suggested providing information to the new employees that detailed the different department's functions and locations. Commissioner Meadows suggested training videos, discussing the benefits of different videos during different steps within the hiring process. She also suggested teaming a new employee with a current employee to assist the new employee through the training process. Chairman Pridgen suggested providing a yearly orientation to update current and new employees of the changes taking place within the county. Discussion was held regarding management training for current employees looking to move forward in their departments. Mr. Mattison commented on the suggestion regarding management training, stating that one of the key factors to better management and supervision is sufficient training.

Mr. Mattison shared with the Board a suggestion given to him regarding hiring a county physician. He encouraged the Commissioners to look outside of the box as to what would best benefit the county. Mr. Bell brought up the issue of increasing insurance rates. Mr. Mattison stated that the county has investigated and discussed hiring a county

physician. Additional discussion was held regarding this matter. Commissioner Meadows questioned Mr. Mattison about preventative programs being established, to help lower insurance rates. Mr. Mattison stated that discussion has been held regarding preventative programs, such as a wellness program.

Mr. Mattison discussed the effectiveness of the current evaluation systems in regards to encouraging employee satisfaction. Mr. Bell commented on the effectiveness of current employee evaluations. He stated that an employee's focal point is on the numbering system, rather than the comments provided. Discussion was held regarding ways to make the evaluation process more effective, as well as encouraging to the employee.

Mr. Mattison briefly discussed the salary schedule and insurance rates. He stated that the increasing insurance rates were being addressed. Mr. Bell commented on the importance of employees enjoying their job, so their focal point is not always on their salary. He suggested offering more incentives to employees. Commissioner Meadows commented on the importance of employees feeling significant to their employers and the county. Commissioner Brannon suggested gathering ideas and suggestions from current county employees in regards to evaluation systems and how their positions could be improved. Additional discussion was held regarding these suggestions.

Mr. Mattison discussed the issue of overtime and offered suggestions on how to offer flexibility to the employees. He also presented the Board with the last exhibit, which discussed Exit Interviews and listed the main causes for employees leaving Walton County. Discussion was held regarding the causes that could be changed, along with suggestions given in how to encourage employees to stay in Walton County.

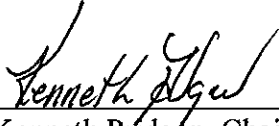
Commissioner Jones discussed the importance of correctly matching job positions with the right type of person. He also expressed his appreciation to the employees currently employed by Walton County, stating the importance of providing the employees with all the tools necessary to do the best job they can.


Ms. Sara Commander, Public Information Coordinator, discussed the effect of the increasing gas prices, and offered suggestions regarding commuting and shuttle vans. Mr. Bell suggested contacting Tri-County to inquire about the costs for renting a shuttle bus. More suggestions were offered and discussion was held regarding ways to help with the commuting process.

Mr. Bob Dobes addressed the Board to comment on the suggestions given throughout the meeting. He commented on the significance of exit interviews, in regards to receiving useful information in how to better that job position. He also discussed the importance of cross-training and positive reinforcement.

Discussion was held regarding the county planning an event that would bring all county employees together to build employees pride for Walton County. The Board expressed their thanks to Mr. Mattison for his presentation.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

APPROVED: 
Kenneth Pridgen, Chair

ATTEST: 
Martha Ingle, Clerk of Court