

Call to Order:

This meeting was called to order in the Vilas County conference rooms at 4:30 P.M. by Chairman Jim Behling with the following committee members present: Emil Bakka, Ed Bluthardt, Jr., Bob Egan, Sig Hjemvick, Erv Teichmiller and Linda Thorpe.

Others present during this meeting: Martha Milanowski, Ken Anderson, John Helgeson, Rachel White, Ron De Bruyne and David Alleman. A signature list of 41 Vilas County employees in attendance is attached as an addendum to the minutes.

Open meeting notices and quorum present verified by the Chairman.

Approve agenda to be discussed in any order by the Chair:

Motion by E. Bakka, 2nd by S. Hjemvick to approve the agenda to be discussed in any order by the Chair. All voted aye. Carried.

Approve minutes of the March 30, 2011 meeting:

Motion by E. Bakka, 2nd by S. Hjemvick to approve the minutes of the March 30, 2011 meeting as presented. All votes aye. Carried.

At this time the Chair requested that all in attendance introduce themselves.

Grievance policy:

The Chair recommended that this issue be delayed until a time later this month, in expectation of a Grievance Policy Template complying with language contained in the Budget Repair Bill (BRB), to be provided by the Wisconsin Counties Association.

Work rules:

The Chair initiated a discussion of current work rules and policies as contained in the employee handbook. E. Teichmiller presented a number of areas where he has identified discrepancies and inconsistencies between the employee handbook and contractual language. He also identified language that will no longer be germane due to the BRB. All of these points were discussed at length. Relevant comments made by committee members are listed as follows:

J. Behling – varying percentage reductions of starting wage rates, during probationary periods, could be made consistent by paying 100% of the starting wage at hire, and withholding certain added benefits until the probationary period is successfully completed.

S. Hjemvick – starting wage reductions during the probationary period were instituted to take into account reduced employee output during the initial new hire orientation and training period.

J. Behling – favors the future reclassification of vacation time, personal time and sick time off days to Personal Time Off (PTO) days.

E. Bluthardt – also favors a system of PTO days as a tool for better off-time management.

E. Bluthardt – concerned about the current benefit of providing for a pay-out of accrued sick time at retirement. This benefit has proved costly to department budgets.

J. Behling – current accrued sick day retirement payout is very generous.

S. Hjemvick – the committee needs to consider the 2011 vacation plans made and vacation days already earned and used by employees.

E. Teichmiller – current policy allows for Veteran's Day off in the Sheriff's Dept. Courthouse employees get the day after Thanksgiving in lieu of Veteran's Day. How can we create consistency here?

J. Behling – would prefer a single, comprehensive and consistent document to replace the current employee handbook.

E. Teichmiller – employee handbook should be the comprehensive document replacing individual contracts, and should also contain other employment related policies not currently published in the existing handbook.

E. Teichmiller – miscellaneous section contained in each individual contract will need to be reviewed and discussed.

E. Bakka – recommends going over the current employee handbook by section and taking action upon completion of each section.

B. Egan – urged the committee not to lose site of the value to Vilas County of the employees.

The committee expressed agreement with the existing Work Rules addendum to the employee handbook, but took no formal action.

The Chair asked that Employee Handbook be made an agenda item for the next meeting.

Employee compensation and benefits:

a. Sick leave:

To be discussed at a later date.

b. Vacation policy:

J. Behling will draft a Paid Time Off policy for future discussion at a later date.

c. Other employee benefits:

To be discussed at a later date.

Employee participation:

The Chair recognized employees who chose to speak. Their comments are listed below.

Dan Klessig – hopes that some type of annual sick leave carryover is maintained.

John Sprague – also would like to continue annual sick leave carryover. Crucial for older workers.

Helga Low – an additional worker does not need to be provided to do her job during her earned absences. She feels that there is no added cost to the county for her paid time off.

Chris Kamps – sick time accrual is very important, especially to the older employees.

Jeff Biertzer – relieved to hear that employees are valued. He urged the committee to retain that line of thought.

Carolyn Scholl – thanked the committee for the 4:30 P.M. meeting time.

Joe Fortmann – encouraged that employees are being allowed to participate. He urged the committee to use this opportunity to build trust between the employees and the County Board.

The Chair asked for a show of hands to indicate the number of employees planning to attend the next meeting. The majority responded in the affirmative.

Future meeting dates:

The next meetings will be held on Thursday, April 14, 2011 at 4:30 P.M.

Review and respond to employee correspondence:

Nothing new has been received.

Letters and Communications:

Nothing presented.

Adjournment:

Motion by E. Teichmiller, 2nd by B. Egan to adjourn. All voted aye. Carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:16 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
David R. Alleman
Vilas County Clerk