

Call to Order:

This meeting was called to order in the Vilas County conference rooms at 10:00 A.M. by Chairman Jim Behling with the following committee members present: Emil Bakka, Ed Bluthardt, Jr., Bob Egan, Sig Hjemvick and Linda Thorpe. Erv Teichmiller arrived at 10:18 A.M.

Others present during this meeting: Ken Anderson and Monica Baltich. Two Vilas County employees were also in attendance. Open meeting notices and quorum present were verified by the Chairman.

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

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

Approve minutes of the August 15, 2011 meeting:

Motion by L. Thorpe, 2nd by E. Bluthardt to approve the minutes of the August 15, 2011 meeting as presented. All voted aye. Carried.

Grievance policy final draft:

Vilas County Grievance Policy – resolution to County Board:

The Chair took up the topic of the final draft of the grievance policy and the approval of the submission of an enabling resolution as concurrent items. For purposes of discussion, he requested that a motion be made and seconded to approve the grievance policy and to also approve the submittal of the enabling resolution to the County Board. **Motion by L. Thorpe, 2nd by E. Bluthardt to approve the current draft of the proposed grievance policy and to send it to the County Board, in resolution format, for their approval. Discussion.**

E. Bluthardt feels that A. Phillips' memorandum offers a thorough and reasonable explanation of the portions of the grievance policy draft that were under question. S. Hjemvick concurred with that assessment.

A. Phillips discussed the issue surrounding the Human Resource Director (HR) not being required to submit a written ruling to the grievant. That language is designed to protect the grievant in situations where HR may be unable or unwilling to render a decision. He also stated that if HR sustained a grievance, that decision was final and not subject to further appeal by the County Board.

J. Behling asked how costs related to an Independent Hearing Officer (IHO) were to be allocated. A. Phillips responded that the assumption was that the county would fund those costs. E. Bluthardt objects to any costs of the grievance process being borne by employees. He would like the policy to clarify the funding of costs. A. Phillips responded that county funding of the grievance procedure was already implied in the policy. J. Behling also feels that it is unnecessary to further clarify funding. **Motion by E. Bluthardt, 2nd by S. Hjemvick to clarify the cost issue by amending the grievance policy to include language stating that Vilas County shall bear all costs of the grievance policy except where otherwise stipulated in the policy. All voted aye. Carried.**

J. Behling initiated a discussion concerning employee rights to open and closed hearings before an IHO. A. Phillips stated that the closed hearing was designed to protect employee reputations and privacy. K. Anderson objected that this closed hearing stipulation was in violation of Wisconsin open meeting statutes. A. Phillips responded that open meeting statutes referred to meetings involving legislative and governing bodies; what is being stipulated to in this instance involves a hearing before an IHO.

A. Phillips asked for direction regarding future changes to the grievance policy, specifically whether or not changes would require full County Board approval. The pros and cons were discussed. E. Bluthardt favors a process whereby all grievance policy changes are referred to the Legislative & Judicial Committee and then to County Board. S. Hjemvick favors the current procedure whereby the Personnel Committee adjudicates and approves employment policy. Citing past experiences and the importance of the grievance policy, E. Bluthardt's concern is that board members outside of the Personnel Committee will not be informed regarding future grievance policy amendments. B. Egan and E. Bakka both favor maintaining the Personnel Committee's longstanding jurisdiction regarding all employee policy, including the grievance policy. S. Hjemvick felt that board members could be kept up to date with employment policy changes by providing all members with the employee handbook and subsequent updates. A. Phillips stated that this was a policy decision. M. Milanowski stated that the current resolution could be amended to provide for that occurrence. E. Bluthardt maintains that the County Board needs to approve all grievance policy changes. **Motion by S. Hjemvick, 2nd by E. Bakka to require the HR Director to submit all proposed changes in the grievance policy to the Personnel Committee for their approval. Discussion.** E. Teichmiller and J. Behling both pointed out that current County Board Standing Rules clearly stipulate that the Personnel Committee decides employment policy, subject to change by the County Board. **S. Hjemvick withdrew his motion. Motion by E. Bluthardt, 2nd by B. Egan to amend the grievance policy resolution by adding language that stipulates that all future grievance policy amendments be published as updates to the employee handbook. All voted aye. Carried.**

At this time, the Chair called for action on the original motion to approve the grievance policy and to submit the enabling resolution to the County Board. **Motion by L. Thorpe, 2nd by E. Bluthardt to amend their original motion and second as follows: Approve the current draft of the proposed grievance policy *as amended* and to send it to the County Board, in resolution format *as amended*, for their approval. All voted aye. Carried.**

Public participation:

No members of the public in attendance chose to speak. E. Teichmiller presented a concern from an employee regarding future use of vacation days and other types of earned time off. The concern is that the county may arbitrarily reduce or eliminate future earned time off. The employee would like to know if it would be wise to use up earned time off prior to possibly losing those benefits. M. Milanowski stated that the future of earned time off remained to be discussed. She also recommends that a communication from the Personnel Committee or the Transition Committee be issued to all employees clarifying the issue of earned time off.

Letters and communications:

Nothing presented

Adjournment:

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:17 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
David R. Alleman
Vilas County Clerk