

July 25, 2006

## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Personnel Committee met Tuesday, July 10, 2006 at 4:00 p.m., in the QC Meeting Room, Third Floor, County Administration Building, 215 East Central, Bentonville

Committee Members Present: Allen, Harrison, Hill, Sheridan, Stephenson, Tharp, Wolfe

Others Present: County Judge Gary Black, Assessor Shirley Sandlin, Collector Greg Hoggatt, Barb Ludwig, Travis Harp, Thomas Dunlap

Media: Joe Askins – Morning News; Jennifer Turner – Benton County Daily Record

Chair Robert Stephenson called the meeting to order.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None

### **MINUTES:**

JP Tharp made motion to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2006 meeting as distributed, seconded by JP Harrison. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **1. New Grade and Job Description for Director of Planning and Development**

JP Stephenson stated that Barbara Ludwig has researched comparable positions in the area. Barbara Ludwig stated that the JESAP Committee has recommended a range of \$43,000 to \$65,000, with a maximum hire-in rate of \$48,600. She said that if an exceptional candidate was being considered, they could ask for a waiver to go above the \$48,600. JP Allen stated that the department seems to be paying for itself, especially taking into consideration the \$20,000 expenditure on software. He said they are going to need someone who is very talented, and they are going to need to pay more if they want someone to move here and take the job and he is not sure this level of pay will do that. Barbara Ludwig stated that the JESAP committee had considered internal equity in making the recommendation. She said that you have to pay well, but you also have to consider what you are paying other managers. JP Stephenson stated that they are looking for a very strong candidate to fill an essential and dynamic position in Benton County. She suggested that the position be advertised at a midpoint of \$43,000 to 54,000. JP Sheridan asked if the salary had to be included in the advertisement. Barbara Ludwig stated that most of them did. JP Sheridan stated that this position is vital to the county, and if they have to pay more than they are paying another professional, then this is a case where a larger salary would be justified. He said the position is a heavy load, and even if they find somebody, if they do not pay them well they will not be able to keep them. Travis Harp stated that they would prefer to advertise the qualifications and leave the salary open. Barbara Ludwig suggested that the application could ask for current salary ranges. The committee discussed whether or not to include salary range in the advertisement. JP Allen stated that \$10,000 or \$20,000 is not much money when thinking about the ramifications of a mistake in this department.

JP Sheridan made motion to advertise the position without salary range, and have the County Judge bring back the qualified applicant with a recommendation of a salary, and present it to either the Personnel or Finance Committee, seconded by JP Tharp. County Judge Gary Black stated that he would rather they give him a range, and allow him to hire someone within that range. He also noted that there are not a lot of applicants on the market, and that Hot Springs has been looking for someone for over a year. Barbara Ludwig stated that if they specify sending something to either Personnel or Finance, they may have a problem coordinating the meeting dates with a desired starting date for the new person. JP Harrison said he liked the suggestion of leaving the range open. JP Allen stated that he agreed with not publicizing a range, and that if a dollar figure is out there, then that is the caliber of person who will apply for it. He said he did not agree with handcuffing the people who are doing the interviewing by not letting them know what their limits are. County Judge Gary Black asked that they give him the low end and high end of the range, and allow him to go out and hire someone within that range. JP Sheridan stated that he would accept a friendly amendment to list the range. JP Allen stated that he would like the interviewing committee to be given a minimum and a maximum, but did not think they should use that range in the advertising. Travis Harp stated that they could use the range of \$43,000 to \$65,000, but not publicize it, and they can negotiate the salary. JP Allen stated that they would not have to go through the Quorum Court or deal with a midpoint if they are given that entire range to negotiate with. JP Stephenson stated that they needed to have a recommendation to take to the Quorum Court this coming Thursday. JP Sheridan withdrew his motion, and JP Tharp agreed. The committee agreed with a unanimous voice vote. JP Sheridan made motion to allow the County Judge to proceed with hiring of the Director of Planning and Development, and to allow a salary range of \$43,600 to \$65,000, and that this recommendation be forwarded to the July 27, 2006 Quorum Court meeting, seconded by JP Tharp. JP Allen asked if the motion had included language stating that the salary should not be published. JP Stephenson stated that they should leave that up to the County Judge's discretion. JP Sheridan asked if what they are proposing is in conflict with any JESAP policy. Barbara Ludwig stated that as long as the Quorum Court approves a waiver of the salary range policy, then it would be acceptable. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **1. Update on Request for Collector's Office**

Collector Greg Hoggatt stated that he wants to change the request that he made at the July 10, 2006 Personnel meeting, and no longer wants to delete the Assistant Bookkeeper I position. He said he has decided that they will need that position in order to have enough personnel to staff the new office in Rogers. He added that he will be asking for one more position during budget requests so he can put two people in the new office. JP Stephenson noted that this is a commissioned account. JP Sheridan asked how many employees are now located in outside offices. Greg Hoggatt stated that he has one employee in each of the offices in Gravette and Siloam Springs, and 3 in the 28<sup>th</sup> Street office. JP Sheridan stated that several times when he has stopped in at the 28<sup>th</sup> Street office, they were not busy. He asked if they could combine positions with the Assessor's office, since they have an employee in each of those offices also. Greg Hoggatt stated that he has checked the numbers in all of those offices, and the 28<sup>th</sup> Street office sees more people than the main office in the Administration Building. He added that sharing

an employee with another department would be difficult due to bonding issues and the fact that the two offices are funded separately. JP Harrison made motion to add the additional Assistant Bookkeeper I to the ranking sheet, seconded by JP Wolf. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

## **2. Ranking of Mid-year Personnel Requests**

JP Stephenson stated that the personnel requests from the July 10 Personnel meeting have been divided into two categories – Fully Funded, and General Fund. Barbara Ludwig stated that the positions should be ranked with the highest priority receiving number 1, and so forth. JP Sheridan stated he did not see why they should go ahead and approve any position that is requested from a commissioned account that is fully funded. JP Stephenson stated that it is the responsibility of the Quorum Court to determine the number of employees, regardless of whether they have any control over the account. JP Tharp stated that just because a department is fully funded and can afford 10 people, if they only need 6, that is what they should approve. He said that they should adjust the fees in order to aid the public in affording the services. JP Stephenson stated that it does cost the county 10%. The Committee turned in their ranking sheets and the scores were totaled by Benefits Administrator Thomas Dunlap.

## **OTHER BUSINESS:**

### **1. Update on Insurance Issues**

Barbara Ludwig stated that the Employee Health Fund has repaid the \$450,000 loan from County General. She stated that the new health insurance deductible policy is showing some better results as far as what they were paying out last year at this time. She said a major problem that they and other companies are dealing with is that Northwest Hospital is requiring the full deductible amount, plus the 20% co-pay up front for all procedures. She said it is an issue because sometimes an employee may have already met part of their deductible from a doctor's bill and the deductible has not been applied yet, and Northwest will keep that money until all of the bills have been cleared. She said they have had two employees on the verge of being turned over to collection, but they had a positive balance in their account because they had not been able to watch all of the costs associated with that patient. She said they have met with the CEO and CFO of Northwest Hospital, and proposed setting up payroll deductions, but Northwest would not agree. She said she had explained to them that an employee making \$24,000 a year cannot usually afford \$4,000 up front for a procedure, or \$1500 for an MRI. She said they asked if Northwest could provide a statement with all of the costs associated with a patient on one bill, and they were told that they could not do that either. She said they had explained that if they continued this practice, then the employees would probably choose to go elsewhere. JP Allen stated that Northwest should be told that the county will not do business with them any longer. He said that they should be in business to help people. JP Stephenson stated that they were in business to make money. JP Allen stated that they advertise differently, and that Wal-Mart's goal is not to make money, but to take care of the customer and make money while they are doing it and they have been pretty successful. JP Stephenson stated that he has been a board member of the hospital in Siloam Springs for 13 years, and the slogan is self-pay is no-pay and that is pretty much the truth, although some people pay. He said that deductibles are extremely difficult to collect, but that they should tell Northwest that if they cannot cooperate, they will take their business somewhere else. Barbara Ludwig stated that they were more than willing

to work with Northwest to minimize their risk up front, but they just kept saying no. She said if other companies have the same reaction, then Northwest will have to change their policies. She added that everyone is going to higher deductibles because they have to, but at least our employees have the opportunity to lower theirs through meeting certain goals.

Barbara Ludwig listed the results of the personnel request rankings which are included in this report. JP Allen made motion to accept the rankings as tabulated and forward them to the August 1, 2006 Finance Committee meeting, seconded by JP Wolf. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

After motion and second the meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

The following represents the priority order for <b>Commissioned Accounts</b> , approved by the Personnel Committee on July 25, 2006.			
<b>Fund</b>	<b>Dept</b>	<b>Position Title</b>	<b>Rank</b>
060	6	<b>Asst. Bookkeeper I</b>	<b>1</b>
070	7	<b>Business/Personal Property Supervisor Appraiser</b>	<b>2</b>
070	7	<b>Business and Personal Property Appraisers</b>	<b>3</b>
070	7	<b>Business and Personal Property Appraisers</b>	<b>4</b>
070	7	<b>Business and Personal Property Appraisers</b>	<b>5</b>

The following represents the priority order for **General Fund** Departments, approved by the Personnel Committee on July 25, 2006.

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Dept</b>	<b>Position Title</b>	<b>Rank</b>
010	20	Juvenile Probation Officer	1
010	67	Transport Deputy	2
010	5	Crime Property Technician	3
010	5	Captain- Administration	4
010	2	Deputy Clerk II	5-Tie
010	50	Deputy Public Defender	5-Tie
010	67	Transport Deputy	6
010	67	Work Detail Deputy	7
010	67	Transport Deputy	8 Tie
010	67	Transport Deputy	8 Tie