

**STATE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING  
VIA WEBEX DUE TO COVID-19 STATE OF EMERGENCY**

**MEETING MINUTES – March 3, 2022**

**Members Present:**

Members present on the Webex for the meeting were: Chair Commissioner Dekhasta Becton Rozier and Commissioner Andrea Allard, Commissioner Ross Beamon, Commissioner Courtney Cooper-Lewter, Commissioner Doug Boyette, Commissioner John Eller, Commissioner April Page, Commissioner Philip Strach and Commissioner Tracy Webb.

**Other Attendees**

Other attendees present: Barbara Gibson, Director, Glenda Farrell, Chief Deputy, and Twanetta Lytle Alston, Deputy Director, Office of State Human Resources; Blake Thomas, General Counsel, and Lockhart Taylor, Director of Governmental Affairs, Legal, Commission and Policy Division, Office of State Human Resources; Denise Mazza, State Human Resources Commission Administrator, Office of State Human Resources; Nancy Astrike, Susan Beasley, Andrea Bennett, LeAnn Biscoglio, Andrea Bennett, Felicia Bridges, Andrea Clinkscales, Lorence Crossett, Dominick D’Erasmus, Scarlett Gardner, Kimberly Irvine, Denise Johns, Jill Lucas, Stephanie McFadden, Christina Martin, Caroline Peace, Kristen Siemek, Susan Staton, Patricia Wimberly of the Office of State Human Resources; Kathy O’Neal, HR Manager, and Nick Miller, NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Beth Wood, Director, Judy Estevez, General Counsel, Keita Cannon, HR Director, Katia Bell, Donna Allen, and Katie Gleason, NC Auditor’s Office; Andrea Porterfield, HR Director, NC Department of Commerce; Shakeyia Hazell, HR Director, NC Community College System Karen Gerald, HR Director, NC Department of Health and Human Services; John Alexander, NC Department of Information Technology; Angeline Hariston, HR Director, NC Office of Administrative Hearings; Michael Dail, HR Director, Assistant Secretary Melissa Earp, Catherine Anderson of Juvenile Justice Administrative Services, Erica Zendt, Charlene Shabazz, and Davita Morant, NC Department of Public Safety; Darryl Bass, HR Director, NC Department of Transportation; Debra Thomas, HR Director, NC Office of the Treasurer; Joe Marro, HR Director, NC Secretary of State Office; and Hollie Thornton, HR Director, NC Wildlife Resources Commission.

**Opening**

The Commission convened its open meeting at 9:08 a.m. via Webex Teleconference.

The State Human Resources Commission (SHRC) last convened on December 2, 2021.

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute Chapter 138A and the North Carolina Ethics Act, Chair Rozier asked all Commissioners if there were any conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest with respect to any matters coming before the Commission. No conflicts were presented.

There were no additions or corrections to the agenda for the March 3, 2022 meeting.

**CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

**Approval of the Minutes for the March 3, 2022 State Human Resources Commission Meeting.**

Chair: There being no further discussion or questions, the Chair called for a motion to recommend approval of the Minutes for the March 3, 2022 State Human Resource Commission Meeting as provided.

Motion: Commissioner Beamon so moved.

Second: Commissioner Page seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission recommended approval of the Minutes for the December 2, 2021 State Human Resource Commission Meeting as provided.

Motion carried.

**Twanetta Lytle Alston – Exceptions Granted under 25 NCAC 01A .0104 Variances**

Deputy Director Twanetta Lytle Alston reported that there was one new exception granted by Director Gibson under 25 NCAC 01A .0104 since the December 2, 2021 State Human Resources Meeting - the Department of Public Safety's request to provide extended duty work to their behavior health clinicians at Warren and Granville correctional institutions. This will allow management to address their staffing shortages and high case loads at both facilities.

**Business Session Public Comment**

**Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**State Human Resources Director's Report**

Chief Deputy Director Glenda Farrell presented the Director's Report on behalf of Director Barbara Gibson. After thanking the Chair, the Chief Deputy reminded the Commission that state governments have not been immune from what is being called the great resignation - a wave of resignations across job types as well as skill and experienced levels from workers who say the pandemic has changed the way they view their careers. Some workplace experts have coined what has been seen as the great self evaluation because it is a job market that's wide open with opportunities with employees everywhere reflecting on what is most important to them personally.

Farrell reported that applications submitted by job seekers for jobs posted across the state had dropped by 35%, from 736,028 in 2019 to 475,834 in 2021. At the same time, the number of state job postings increased by 6.5% from 11,848 in 2019 to 12,614 in 2021. The combined

impact of more postings and fewer applicants combined with the pandemic, made the process of filling jobs with qualified workers more difficult for agency recruiters and hiring managers. As a result, OSHR, on behalf of the state agencies, and university partners, had comprehensively examined how to attract qualified job applicants. OSHR planned the introduction of a few new job specifications, revisions to a wide scope of job specifications to better reflect the education, skills and experience necessary to be successful in each role and better aligned state jobs with the private sector.

Other advances include working to improve job descriptions and even the appearance of job postings to attract a more diverse and qualified applicant pool, text messaging as a way that agencies can better communicate with job applicants in real time, and tracking these engagements through NeoGov to provide useful metrics. The Joint Initiative Ed to NC is another proposed improvement designed to strengthen the higher education to state government pipeline and build relationship between agencies and higher education institutions. On April the 6th, Ed to N.C., in partnership with the Volcker Alliance, is holding its 1st entry level career Expo to highlight entry level and internship opportunities with the state. State agencies will talk with candidates many who may be reset, or soon to be graduates about the range of entry level job types and current career opportunities available as well as the benefits of a state government career. These are just a few of the ways that HR is working to modernize our recruitment processes. Increase outreach to qualify job applicants and help agencies recruit and retain a workforce dedicated to serving the needs of the people of North Carolina.

Chief Deputy Farrell then told the Commission about Governor Cooper's decision to provide expanded opportunities for state employees to volunteer in schools to help with significant staffing shortages due to COVID-19 or illness. Introduced in January, state employees could utilize a temporary exception under the Community Service Leave Policy with their supervisor's approval and serve as substitute teachers and in other necessary positions in their local school district. This variance had been extended through April the 15th to allow state employs more time to complete any training required by the district and to work in substitute roles. Serving in a role that otherwise might have taken a teacher, or instructional assistant out of a classroom is a great benefit for that school and a boost for the children and families who depend on safe and reliable services.

Farrell closed by introducing a new member of the OSHR Executive Team, Lockhart Taylor. Taylor began his career in state government in 1993, as a Labor Market Analyst for the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina (DES). In 1997, he began working as a Government Relations Specialist for Employment Security Commission to assist in the implementation of North Carolina's welfare reform initiative. In 2005, he became Director of Government Relations for the Employment Security Commission and served as Legislative Liaison until 2017 when he was named Chief Deputy, and later, Assistant Secretary of the DES. Beginning in May 2020, he served as Senior Policy Adviser to the Department of Commerce before joining OSHR in February as Director of Governmental Relations where his initial legislative focus will be on HR, technology and data investment opportunities.

**Vaccination Incentive Pilot Program Policy: Follow Up**

In response to past questions from the Commissioners, Department of Public Safety Human Resource Director Michael Dail provided some follow up information on the results of the Vaccination Incentive Program Policy at DPS since its approval in October 2021 and its implementation. From October 27, 2021 to date, DPS has had 4 payouts for its employees beginning in November, 2021. To date, roughly 7,900 employees have been paid out in November. The November was approximately 3.9 million dollars. The majority of the 7,900 employees were already vaccinated prior to the October.

In December, there were only 9 employees eligible; in January there were 52 employees and \$24,000 was paid out; in February there were 170 employees and \$84,000 was paid out. A total of over 4 million dollars has been paid out. The program saw a 10% increase in prison staff vaccinations and a 6% increase for general justice staff vaccinations.

Commissioner Beamon noted that previously the rate of vaccination was at 56% and asked what HRD Dail thought caused the 10% increase.

Dail stated that there was a 10% increase in prison staff vaccination and asked Deputy Secretary Melissa Earp to address the question. Earp said that while it was not conclusive, she felt the 10% increase was a result of the incentive. Catherine Anderson of Juvenile Justice Administrative Services stated she believed that as well.

The program is slated to end in April.

**Classification and Compensation: 6 New, 21 Revised, 1 Abolished Classification Specs. For Statewide Compensation Plan**

Total Rewards: Classification and Compensation Consultant Felicia Bridges presented 6 new, 21 revised and 1 abolished classifications specs to the Commission. They included 13 revised specs and 1 abolished spec for the Information Technology job family to update and modernize the class specifications for all Information Technology classifications to present classifications in the IT Architecture, Contracts, and Operations job branches as well as revisions and name changes to the Information Systems Auditor and the User Documentation Specialist; 6 new and 6 revised specs for the Financial and Business Management job family adding a director level to the existing Assistant State Auditor series and creating a series of 5 classifications for Information Systems Audit to recognize the specific need for additional level of skills including auditing and IT skills, and revisions to existing classes include removing references to a division which no longer exists and to Information Systems from existing Assistant State Auditor roles as a new agency-specific series is being proposed for auditors that audit information systems; and 2 revisions to specs in the Safety and Inspection job family submitted by the Office of the State Fire Marshal to the Fire & Rescue Trainers/Inspectors I and II to consolidate the two levels and introduce a Fire & Rescue Investigator.

Chair: There being no further discussion or questions, the Chair called for a motion to recommend approval of the enclosed 6 new classifications, 21 revisions to existing classifications and abolishment of 1 classification as presented.

Motion: Commissioner Strach so moved.

Second: Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission recommended approval of the proposed 6 new classifications, 21 revisions to existing classifications and abolishment of 1 classification as presented.

Motion carried.

### **Talent Acquisition - Veterans' & National Guard Preference Policy**

Talent Acquisition Manager Kristin Siemek presented revisions to the existing Veteran's Preference Policy to align it with statutory changes from the 2021 legislative session. The statutory changes created a new section giving employment preference to current North Carolina National Guard members and former North Carolina National Guard members who were discharged under honorable conditions with the minimum of 6 years of credible service, as well as surviving spouses and dependents of North Carolina National Guard members who have died for service-related reasons.

Commissioner Allard asked if the wording was correct using "surviving spouse or dependent" instead of "surviving spouse and dependent."

Siemek confirmed that the text of the statute used "or."

Commissioner Allard also asked what was being used to verify the eligibility of the spouse and/or dependent.

Siemek noted that there were three different documents that may be used for verification and that there was a process by which they are verified.

Chair: There being no further discussion or questions, the Chair called for a motion to recommend approval of the revised Veterans and National Guard Preference Policy as presented.

Motion: Commissioner Allard so moved.

Second: Commissioner Eller seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission recommended approval of the proposed revised Veterans and National Guard Preference Policy as presented.

Motion carried.

**Legal, Commission, & Policy: Teleworking Program Policy**

General Counsel Blake Thomas proposed changes to amend the text of the Teleworking Program Policy to (1) adjust the dates listed for the pilot program, (2) adjust the date when agencies' reports on teleworking are due to OSHR, and (3) add a reference to statutory provision establishing a state goal to reduce employee vehicle mileage by using teleworking.

Commissioner Allard asked if the reduction for state employee vehicle mileage is for personal travel or is that using state vehicle travel.

Thomas stated that either interpretation is reasonable and OSHR anticipates acquiring a better understanding of how it should be used from data reports from state agencies on its use.

Chair: There being no further discussion or questions, the Chair called for a motion to recommend approval of the revised Teleworking Program Policy as presented.

Motion: Commissioner Webb so moved.

Second: Commissioner Page seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission recommended approval of the proposed revised Teleworking Program Policy as presented.

Motion carried.

**Legal, Commission, & Policy: Special Leave Awards Policy**

General Counsel Blake Thomas explained to the Commission that the Special Leave Awards Policy was developed as a result of the State Employee Suggestion Program (NC Thinks) which was repealed by the 2021 Appropriations Act, Session Law 2021-180, Section 20.13. The Special Leave Awards Policy states that employees may be granted up to 24 hours of paid leave for a suggestion adopted under the NC Thinks program and does not deal with any other topic. As a result of the repeal of the statutory authority, OSHR proposed the withdrawal of this policy.

Chair: There being no further discussion or questions, the Chair called for a motion to recommend approval of the withdrawal of the Special Leave Award Policy because the implementing program had been repealed.

Motion: Commissioner Beamon so moved.

Second: Commissioner Page seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission recommended approval of the withdrawal of the Special Leave Award Policy because the implementing program had been repealed.

Motion carried.

**Legal, Commission, & Policy: Statutory Provisions Section of State Human Resources Manual**

General Counsel Blake Thomas presented OSHR’s proposal that the Commission give the OSHR staff clear authority — and clear responsibility — to automatically update this section of the Manual when these statutes change. The revised sections would be reported to the Commission at the next meeting following the revision.

Chair: There being no further discussion or questions, the Chair called for the Commission to give OSHR staff clear authority and responsibility to automatically updated the statutory provisions section of the State Human Resources Manual when needed and reporting that update to the Commission at the next meeting following the change.

Motion: Commissioner Allard so moved.

Second: Commissioner Page seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission recommended giving OSHR staff authority to automatically updated the statutory provisions section of the State Human Resources Manual when needed and reporting that update to the Commission at the next meeting.

Motion carried.

**Diversity and Workforce Services: Local Government Revised Local Class Spec for Environmental Health Specialist**

Local Government Manager Dominick D’Erasmus presented a proposal to update the Environmental Health Specialist classification specification used by local county health departments to reflect statutory and other terminology and practice changes. This classification is part of the local government classification plan and is not found outside local health departments.

Chair: There being no further discussion or questions, the Chair called for the Commission to recommend approval of the revised local class spec for the Environmental Health Specialist.

Motion: Commissioner Beamon so moved.

Second: Commissioner Eller and Page seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission recommend approval of the revised local class spec for the Environmental Health Specialist.

Motion carried.

**Diversity and Workforce Services: Local Government Scotland County: Petition for Substantial Equivalency**

Local Government Manager Dominick D’Erasmus presented Scotland County’s request for substantial equivalency pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 126-11(b), in one program area: Classification and Compensation.

Chair: There being no further discussion or questions, the Chair called for a motion to recommend approval of Scotland County’s request for substantial equivalency pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 126-11(b), in one program area: Classification and Compensation.

Motion: Commissioner Page so moved.

Second: Commissioner Allard seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission agreed to recommend the approval of Scotland County’s request for substantial equivalency pursuant to N.C.G.S. §126-11(b), in one program area: Classification and Compensation.

Motion carried.

**Adjournment**

There being no further discussion or questions, the Chair called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Commissioner Strach so moved.

Second: Commissioner Beamon seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission agreed to adjourn the March 3, 2022 SHRC meeting.

Motion carried.

The Commission adjourned at 10:22 a.m.



**Executive Session**

The State Human Resources Commission did not have an executive session at its March 3, 2022 meeting.

**Minutes submitted by:**

Denise H. Mazza,  
State Human Resources Commission Administrator