

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

MEETING MINUTES – December 3, 2020

Members Present:

Members present on the Webex for the meeting were: Commissioner-Chair Dekhasta Becton Rozier, Commissioner Ross Beamon, Commissioner Meredith Benjamin, Commissioner John Eller, Commissioner Martin Falls, Commissioner Emily Jones, Commissioner April Page, and Commissioner Phillip Strach.

Other Attendees

Other attendees present were: Barbara Gibson, Director, Glenda Farrell, Chief Deputy, and Twanetta Lytle Alston, Deputy Director, Office of State Human Resources; Lars Nance and Christine Ryan, Legal Division, Office of State Human Resources; Denise Mazza, State Human Resources Commission Administrator, Office of State Human Resources; Nancy Astrike, Carol Battle, Susie Beasley, Ryan Bower, Andrea Clinkscales, Dominick D’Erasmus, Scarlett Gardner, Joseph Gilroy, Joel Jordan, Jill Lucas, John Massey, Paige Pavlik, Kristin Siemek, and Vanessa Voight of the Office of State Human Resources; and Flint Benson and Laresha Fortson, Lobbyists for the State Employees Association of NC.

Opening

The Commission convened its open meeting at 9:02 a.m. via Webex Teleconference due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency.

The State Human Resources Commission (SHRC) last convened on October 1, 2020. Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute Chapter 138A and the North Carolina Ethics Act, Chair Dekhasta Becton 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. Commissioners Eller and Benjamin reported potential conflicts of interest with agenda item C, Diversity and Workforce Services Division; Local Government: Annual Local Salary Plans.

There were no additions or corrections to the agenda for the December 3, 2020 meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Approval of the minutes for the October 1, 2020 State Human Resources Commission Meeting.

Motion: Commissioner Beamon made a motion to recommend approval of the October 1, 2020 meeting minutes.

Second: Commissioner Eller seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission recommended approval of the October 1, 2020 minutes.

Motion carried.

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

Deputy Director Twanetta Lytle Alston presented an overview of new exceptions granted by Director Gibson under 25 NCAC 01A .0104 due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency since the October 1, 2020 State Human Resources Meeting.

Business Session Public Comment

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

State Human Resources Director’s Report

Director Barbara Gibson greeted the Commissioners and welcomed all and on behalf of everyone at the Office of State Human Resources, and human resources partners across all of the agencies, thanked the Commission for its support during this very busy and unprecedented year, noting it as demonstrative of their great care and concern for the well-being of our state workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Detailing some of the items OSHR had been working on, she identified a top priority at the OSHR continued to be the safety and well-being of the dedicated workforce, stressing the importance of the 3 Ws: Wear a cloth face mask, Wait six feet from others, and Wash hands frequently, and compliance with Governor Cooper’s Executive Orders directing workers who could to telework to the greatest extent possible. In support of the latter, OSHR’s Safety, Health and Workers’ Compensation Division had launched an online North Carolina State Employee COVID-19 Symptom Screening Tool for Employees when reporting Onsite which was currently being used by eight Cabinet agencies. Additionally, State Safety & Health Manager Eddie Johnson had provided a total of 120 onsite and virtual safety consultations to improve safety at facilities and reduce the risk of virus spread and infection. These safety consultations had been especially important at facilities with public-facing services, as well as museums and other facilities that have reopened to the public. The Safety section was also finalizing a significant update to its original Safe Return to Worksites guidance document for state agencies. Now titled “Pandemic Safety for State Worksites,” it includes the latest updates from DHHS and CDC guidelines and Executive Orders and directs users to key resources for the most current information in this continually evolving pandemic.

Another important undertaking was OSHR’s collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services to create an online training module entitled “Safe Practices for the Pandemic

Workplace.” While required only for Cabinet agency employees, several non-Cabinet agencies had opted in as well. Assigned to about 65,000 employees, the course details work safety, work-related safety expectations, how agencies will manage notification if an employee reports a COVID-19 positive test result or potential close-contact exposure, and general guidance that could be shared with family and friends. To date, nearly two-thirds of all training assignments have been completed.

Before concluding her remarks, Director Gibson recognized OSHR employee Ronnie Condrey as the recipient of the Spirit of North Carolina Award - for extraordinary contributions over his more than 46 years of service - at the first every virtual Governor’s Awards for Excellence Ceremony. Only given twice since 1982, the award is given based on the follow criteria:

- Exemplified the state motto *Esse quam videri* - “To be, rather than to seem;”
- Mentored others in the pursuit of excellence;
- Served as an ambassador for the State of North Carolina; and
- This special award is reserved for exceptional circumstances and for accomplishments and achievements of the highest caliber.

Major Gen. Greg Lusk, who retired last year as Adjutant General of the North Carolina National Guard and is now serving as a special advisor to Secretary Hooks at the Department of Public Safety, also was honored with the Spirit of North Carolina Award this year. Additionally, 11 state employees from eight agencies were honored this year with other Governor’s Awards for Excellence for their remarkable contributions – going above and beyond the scope of their job duties to serve the people of North Carolina. The hourlong virtual ceremony can be found on the OSHR website. Director Gibson then recognized members of the OSHR team who made the virtual ceremony possible - Carol Battle, Kristin Siemek, Ryan Bower – who filmed Ronnie’s tribute video as well as the sections featuring our wonderful emcee Bill Leslie – Jill Lucas, with special thanks to Al Inman, longtime OSHR partner at the Department of Transportation, who pulled together all of the video clips into one wonderful virtual program.

In closing, the Director first shared how proud she was that OSHR employees were involved in a canned food drive to benefit the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina to help families across our state are experiencing unprecedented hardships and then wished everyone a joyful and restful holiday season noting that OSHR employees would gather virtually for an Employee Meeting and some holiday merriment that afternoon.

Dominick D’Erasmus - Diversity and Workforce Services: Local Government: Annual Local Salary Plans

Local Government Manager Dominick D’Erasmus presented the Annual Local Salary Plans which are required to be filed with OSHR pursuant to the State Human Resources Act and the Local Administrative Code. All supporting documentation had been provided to the Commission prior to the meeting. The salary plan package consist of 2 major components: the reporting form which contains all of the county information, population numbers, certifying

questions, and the signature lines and all of the classification titles broken down by occupational groupings along with salary grades, ranges and average salary paid. The salary plans were reviewed according to the Administrative Rules and established practices at OSHR. D'Erasmus recommended the approval of these Annual Local Salary Plans as listed on page 2 of the summary.

In response to a request for clarification from Commissioner Falls, D'Erasmus explained that legislation in 2012 allowed counties to consolidate, thus essentially removing their employees from coverage under the State Human Resources Act and nullifying those counties' requirement to file an annual local salary plan. With that clarification, it was determined that neither Mecklenburg nor Buncombe Counties were required to file annual local salary plans, thus removing any potential conflict of interest for Commissioners Eller and Benjamin so that neither needed to recuse themselves from voting on the recommendation for the Annual Local Salary Plans as submitted.

Chair: There being no further discussion or questions, the Chair called for a motion to recommend approval of Annual Local Salary Plans as presented.

Motion: Commissioner Eller so moved.

Second: Commission Falls seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission agreed to recommend the approval of the Annual Local Salary Plans as submitted.

Motion carried.

Nancy Astrike – Diversity and Workforce Services: Reasonable Accommodations

Division Head Nancy Astrike greeted the Commission and presented revisions to the statewide Reasonable Accommodations Policy. Astrike noted that the revisions were focused on two primary areas – 1) providing additional examples of possible, reasonable accommodations that could be provided by state agencies and 2) a new section detailing the requirements to provide pregnancy accommodations. The latter was provided in accordance with the Governor Cooper's Executive Order 82 signed on December 2018 that provided employee protection to state workers who are pregnant. Astrike stated that this policy was consistent with federal law and the Executive Order. In addition, she noted that general clean up was done to the policy to add clarity; the Purpose statement was redesignated within the policy statement for consistency with the order convention in our State Polices now; examples of Reasonable Accommodations were added to help understand the policy; and a short definition that Reasonable Accommodations of pregnancy or impairment may be covered under the ADA with examples was also added.

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

Motion: Commissioner Benjamin so moved.

Second: Commission Page seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission agreed to recommend the approval of the proposed Reasonable Accommodations Policy as submitted.

Motion carried.

Andrea Clinkscales – Total Rewards-Salary Administration: Position Management Policy

Total Rewards Division Head Andrea Clinkscales presented the Position Management Policy to the Commission with a few proposed substantive changes along with a few other minor changes to improve readability and add clarity. Noting that the last time this policy was revised was in 1980, she summarized that the proposed changes were meant to align the policy with current terminology used in industry. One example of this was the job evaluation factors used in OSHR training now reflected in the policy and the addition of definitions for some key terms that are used in position management but were never included in the policy such as “job position,” “job family” and “branch.” Additionally, the definitions for a few other key terms were updated, the outdated definition for the Classification Standard was removed and, lastly, some verbiage was added to outline the responsibility of the agency HR Directors with regard to maintaining classification plans.

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

Motion: Commissioner Beamon so moved.

Second: Commission Benjamin seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission agreed to recommend the approval of the proposed Position Management Policy as submitted.

Motion carried.

Christine Ryan - Legal, Commission, & Policy: 2020 NC OSHR Policies Review Project

Assistant General Counsel Christine Ryan presented the non-substantive policies reviewed pursuant to the 2020 NC OSHR Policies Review Project. They included the Reduction-in-Force Policy, HB1090, Unemployment Insurance Policy, Priority Reemployment Policy, Promotional Priority Policy, Secondary Employment and the General Leave Policy, Leave Offsetting. Ryan explained these policies were reviewed by subject matter experts and executive leadership with only small clerical, grammatical or formatting changes being made.

Reduction in Force Policy was edited to correct statutory reference and the reference to a 35-mile limit; HB 1090 was removed from the OSHR website because it is a Bill and not a policy; Unemployment Insurance Policy was edited to remove the list of specific employees that were not covered because they were part of a statute that was repealed in 2013; Priority Reemployment for Exempt Employees Policy was edited to align the formatting with the current formatting for policies and update the date; Promotional Priority Policy was edited to make the language in the appeals section, consistent with 7.1e and the rest of the Employee Grievance Policy; Secondary Employment was reformatted to make it easier to read and updated a couple of the other sections; and General Leave Policies, Leave Offsetting was edited to align the formatting with the current formatting for policies and update the date.

Chair: There being no further discussion or questions, the Chair called for a motion to recommend approval of the revisions to the 2020 NC OSHR Policies Review Project for the Reduction-in-Force Policy, HB1090, Unemployment Insurance Policy, Priority Reemployment Policy, Promotional Priority Policy, Secondary Employment and the General Leave Policy, Leave Offsetting.

Motion: Commissioner Falls so moved.

Second: Commission Eller seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission agreed to recommend the approval of these revisions to the 2020 NC OSHR Policies Review Project for the Reduction-in-Force Policy, HB1090, Unemployment Insurance Policy, Priority Reemployment Policy, Promotional Priority Policy, Secondary Employment and the General Leave Policy, Leave Offsetting.

Motion carried.

Vanessa Voight – Total Rewards: Classification and Compensation: 2 New, 7 Revised and 3 Abolished Classification Specs

Vanessa Voight, State Classification and Compensation Consultant, presented the 2 new, 7 revised and 3 abolished classification specs due to the absence of Joe Marro, State Classification and Compensation Manager. The two new specs were Public Health Laboratory Manager I and II at the request of the State Laboratory at Public Health Leadership to add the new classifications to the Public Health Laboratory Management series. Specifically, Public Health Laboratory Manager I and Public Health Laboratory Manager II classifications were created to establish a career progression reflective of work performed and to aid recruitment efforts by expanding the E&E to be more reflective of the work done in microbiology, clinical chemistry or related biological or environmental field and not solely chemistry as well as clarifying the roles and retention. The expectation is that these will alleviate recruiting difficulties currently experienced, attract better quality candidates, and align more advantageously with comparable

goals. The first of the 7 revised spec was the Agricultural Program Technician I. This classification was being revised to update outdated education and experience requirements for the Nematology role and to bring the E&E in alignment with the analysis role. One KSA was also corrected to be consistent with OSHR standard language. For the Agricultural Program Specialist III, a meat and poultry inspection role was added to address a gap in the career progression; the Agricultural Program Specialist III, like all agricultural program specs, is a consolidation of roles of similar complexities in various divisions of the agency and have historically been used in the meat and poultry inspection division. The Department of Agriculture has been using the agricultural related activities to encompass this work, but determined this role is needed to better align with OSHR's classifications in the meat and poultry inspection division and provide a better career progression; the Agricultural Program Director I, was changed to revise the class concepts, KSAs, and to remove Agronomics Director as that role is more appropriately recognized at the Agricultural Director II level; the Agricultural Director II, primarily was changed to update the concepts, KSAs and E&Es to move the Agronomic Director from the Agricultural Inspector I spec level; and the Agricultural Director I and II jobs are both directors of programs and after reviewing peer positions at the I and II levels, it was determined that the Agronomics Director better aligns with roles at the II level and the Agricultural Program role was added to allow the agency to use the spec to develop new programs in the future; and the Forensic Pathologist, a class utilized by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and Public Health, at the request of division management, the class spec E&E was slightly modified to allow conditional employment offers to any candidate who cannot currently be credentialed by the NC Board of Medicine. A candidate would be advised of the requirement to obtain a North Carolina Medical License and appropriate certifications prior to starting employment with the division. The revision was intended to allow flexibility for recruitment of candidates from outside North Carolina who may not currently have State Licensure but could subsequently obtain it prior to starting employment. The Veterinarian Laboratory Assistant Director spec as utilized by the Vet Lab, updated the E&E to add flexibility for recruitment purposes such as infectious disease and microbiology as they are more clearly related to the position activity than solely Veterinarian medicine since the primary focus of this position is laboratory diagnostics and clinical laboratory experience was also added to the minimum E&E because skill sets from the clinical lab will also transfer into position. The Veterinarian Specialist, a class currently utilized by both the Department of Agriculture in the Vet Lab and the DNCR at the NC Zoo, was revised in the class concept and the E&E to clearly differentiate zoo pathology from lab pathology in order to streamline and facilitate recruiting for each organization. The abolished class specs, were the Alcohol and Law Enforcement Branch Head, abolished by the 2019 session of the General Assembly; and the Food Compliance Officer I and II specs as these classes were merged into Agricultural Compliance Officer I and II in 2016 so they were no longer needed.

Chair: There being no further discussion or questions, the Chair called for a motion to recommend approval of the 2 New and 7 Revised Classification Specifications and the Abolishment of 3 Classification Specs for the New Class and Compensation System.

Motion: Commissioner Jones so moved.

Second: Commissioners Benjamin and Beamon seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission agreed to recommend approval of the 2 New and 7 Revised Classification Specifications and the Abolishment of 3 Classification Specs for the New Class and Compensation System.

Motion carried.

Vanessa Voight – Total Rewards: Classification and Compensation: 2020 Compensation and Benefit Report Preview)

Vanessa Voight, State Classification and Compensation Consultant, introduced the preview of the 2020 Annual Compensation and Benefits Report as required by N.C. General Statute 126-7.2. She explained that this document seeks to guide the Governor and General Assembly in making funding appropriations for State employees' salary increases and salary structure adjustments while addressing current economic and labor market conditions and setting the stage for strategic planning. The Report is presented to the Appropriations Committee of the House and Senate no later than 2 weeks after the convening of the Legislature in the odd years and no later than May 1 of even years.

Chair: There being no further discussion or questions, the Chair called for a motion to recommend approval of the 2020 Compensation and Benefits Report per the preview provided to the Commission.

Motion: Commissioner Eller so moved.

Second: Commissioners Page seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission agreed to recommend approval of the 2020 Compensation and Benefits Report per the preview provided to the Commission.

Adjournment

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

Motion: Commissioner Falls so moved.

Second: Commission Page seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission agreed to adjournment.

Minutes of the December 3, 2020 State Human Resources Commission Meeting

Motion carried. The Commission adjourned at 9:56 a.m.

Executive Session

The State Human Resources Commission did not have an executive session at its December 3, 2020 meeting.

Minutes submitted by:

Denise H. Mazza,
State Human Resources Commission Administrator