

**LRES (LABOR RELATIONS & EMPLOYEE SERVICES) COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**County Board Room, Oneida County Courthouse**  
**April 7, 2021 9:00 a.m.**

**LRES COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ted Cushing/Chairman, Billy Fried/Vice-Chairman, Sonny Paszak and Scott Holewinski; Dave Hintz via Zoom

**ALSO PRESENT IN PERSON:** Lisa Charbarneau, Jenni Lueneburg (LRES); Dan Hess, Jill Butzlaff (Sheriff's Office); Mary Rideout, Joel Gottsacker (Social Services/ADRC), Lisa Jolin (Solid Waste)

**ALSO PRESENT VIA ZOOM:** Jason Rhodes (ITS); Linda Conlon (Public Health); Paul Fiene (Forestry); Amy Franzen (Probate); Mike Romportl (Land Information); Kyle Franson (Register of Deeds); Lindsey Kennedy (Buildings & Grounds); Darcy Smith (Finance); Steven Schreier (County Board); Rachel Perry (Lakeland Times)

**CALL TO ORDER AND CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Cushing called the LRES Committee to order at 9:00 a.m. in the County Board Room of the Oneida County Courthouse. The meeting has been properly posted in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law, and complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**APPROVAL OF AMENDED AGENDA**

Motion by Paszak to approve the amended agenda. Second by Holewinski. All Committee members voting 'Aye'. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Holewinski to approve the minutes of March 4<sup>th</sup>. Second by Cushing. All Committee members voting 'Aye'. Motion carried.

**APPROVE BILLS AND VOUCHERS**

Charbarneau submitted vouchers totaling \$21,232.13. Charbarneau summarized the vouchers submitted for pre-employment testing, consulting fees, health enhancement costs, benefit management and near-site clinic costs. Fried wants to keep an eye on the costs incurred by the near-site clinic to make sure they remain within budget. Brief discussion held. Motion by Hintz to approve the vouchers and bills. Second by Fried. All Committee members voting 'Aye'. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No comments made by attendees on Zoom or in the County Board Room.

**COUNTY WIDE (AA) AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN**

Charbarneau discussed Oneida County not having an AA Plan in place due to government agencies being exempt from this requirement. Charbarneau reassured the Committee that the AA requirements are still strictly followed by the county. Charbarneau asked the Committee if they would like her to develop a plan or continue to claim an exemption. Fried notes this topic came up due to a recent state contract requiring the county to provide their AA Plan. After discussing the requirement with the state, it was confirmed that an AA plan was not needed, but Charbarneau still wanted to check with the Committee to see if they would like a plan in place. Charbarneau says an AA plan would cover Equal Opportunity practices and hiring procedures that emphasized meeting diversity requirements. Charbarneau says some counties have an AA plan in place and many counties do not. Hintz asked if the WCA (Wisconsin Counties Association) has a recommended plan template. Charbarneau agrees to gather other county plans, check with WCA for a template, and bring a draft AA Plan back to the Committee for further review.

**ORDINANCE AMENDMENT RELATED TO ADRC/DSS ALLIANCE UPDATE TO CTY. CODE**

Rideout reviewed the amendments made to the Oneida County Code based on the new alliance created between the Social Services and ADRC (Aging Disability Resource Center) departments. Items such as board term limits and the formal combining of the ADRC into the Social Services Department were among the updates. Rideout confirms that the amendments were reviewed and approved by the Corporation Counsel’s Office and the Committee of Jurisdiction. Motion by Fried to approve the ordinance amendment resolution and forward on the County Board. Second by Paszak. All Committee members voting ‘Aye’. Motion carried.

**ADRC SPECIALIST POSITION FROM LTE TO PART-TIME STATUS: PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION AND RESOLUTION**

Charbarneau reviewed the LTE ADRC Specialist position that has been working with the ADRC for about two years. Based on the needs of the unit, Charbarneau feels this position should become a permanent part-time position. Gottsacker reviewed the state ADRC staffing requirements of 3.1-3.4 FTE (full time employees) and states at this time, Oneida County has 3.0 FTE. By making the LTE position a part-time position, this will bring Oneida County ADRC up to the required state levels. Rideout states as the aging population continues to increase in the county, the demands on these positions will continue to increase as well. There is an increased cost to move the current LTE to part-time based on the addition of PTO and other added benefits but no additional tax levy will be required to cover the increased costs. Rideout feels this change will improve retention of employees in the position. Rideout notes that in the future, if the position becomes vacant, they would then look at the potential additional costs to fill the vacancy. Charbarneau states the current LTE employee will not require retirement or health insurance benefits based on their retirement status but a future employee may need retirement and health insurance, which could add an additional \$18,000 in costs. Rideout reassured the Committee that in the event the position became vacant, they would bring the position and potential additional costs back to the Committee for review first before filling the position. Rideout verified that this request was approved by the Committee of Jurisdiction. Brief discussion held on health insurance costs and requirements for part-time employees. Motion by Cushing to approve the request for the ADRC to move the LTE position to part-time and forward the resolution to the County Board for further consideration. Second by Holewinski. All Committee members voting ‘Aye’. Motion carried.

**COVID-19 HAZARDOUS PAY FOR COUNTY EMPLOYEES**

Charbarneau says the Administration Committee has reviewed the topic of COVID-19 hazard pay and forwarded the topic onto the LRES Committee for further consideration. Charbarneau says other counties are considering offering hazard pay to their employees and amounts have varied considerably from county to county. Charbarneau discussed the \$6.9 million dollars granted to Oneida County from the COVID-19 Relief Act, noting that townships have gotten their own funding so the full \$6.9 million is all intended for county use. In-depth discussion held regarding rules for what the funding could be used for including minimum pay for workers, infrastructure and tourism advertising. The rules for the funding are still vague, with Smith noting that more guidance will be coming out soon on the funds (approximately 30 days). Cushing says he has spoken with Senator Mary Felzkowski about the funding and she feels there is a good chance that road construction may be one of the allowable funding items. Smith notes that the Department of Transportation may get their own funding to help with road construction. Hess outlined premium pay rules for the funding and notes that many other counties provided premium pay already from the CARES Act, but Oneida County did not provide any COVID-19 premium pay to their employees as of now. Fried feels employees that didn’t work from home or get furloughed during the COVID-19 quarantine should receive a stipend. Charbarneau says she has discussed the matter with several Department Heads and there are varying opinions on how to handle the funding in a fair and equitable manner. Fried provided additional input about the essential workers that were not able to stay home and had to show up for work during the quarantine, no questions asked. Further

**COVID-19 HAZARDOUS PAY FOR COUNTY EMPLOYEES (continued)**

discussion held. Hess notes that the Corrections Officers managed to keep COVID-19 out of the jail which saved the county a lot of money and other essential workers had to work extra hard during these difficult times. Charbarneau suggests forming a small committee to come up with ideas for the relief funds to bring back to this Committee for review. Holewinski notes he is not in favor of furloughed employees getting additional funds when they already received Unemployment that was higher than the wages they normally receive. Hintz provided comments about the challenges ahead in deciding how to disperse the additional funds, noting he has already received calls from several groups asking to receive some of the funds. Hintz emphasized the importance of proceeding in an informed and well thought out manner.

**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK: MECHANIC WAGES AND TOOL ALLOWANCE**

Charbarneau discussed concerns over Mechanics and Mechanic/Equipment Operator positions being placed in the same pay grade level during the last wage study. Charbarneau notes that Mechanics have to provide a large range of tools for their duties and need a higher level of mechanical knowledge for their position. Discussion held on the difficulty of recruiting mechanics and the importance of retaining mechanics at the Highway and Sheriff's Office. In order to provide additional compensation to Oneida County's Mechanic positions, Charbarneau proposes providing a \$2.00 per hour wage increase on top of the Mechanic's current wage, and provide a \$500 annual tool allowance to each Mechanic for purchase and replacement of their tools needed for their position. Holewinski inquired and Charbarneau clarified that the additional wage and tool allowance would only be offered to the two Mechanic positions at the Highway Department and the one Mechanic position at the Sheriff's Office. Discussion held on funding; Hess feel the Sheriff's Office may be able to find the additional funding for 2021 but would need additional funding added to their budget for 2021 to cover the additional costs. Charbarneau clarified that both Highway Commissioner Bruce Stefonek and Sheriff Grady Hartman are in favor of these proposed increases. Additional discussion held on funding. Motion by Holewinski to approve the Mechanic Wages and Tool Allowance as presented with the funding to come from the Highway Department budget and the Sheriff's Office to get back to the Committee on funding availability. Second by Paszak. All Committee members voting 'Aye'. Motion carried.

**TELEWORK POLICY**

Charbarneau presented the draft Telework Policy with changes highlighted. The updated policy provides Department Head discretion on managing their staff's ability to work from home, based on duties and needs of the department. Brief discussion held. Motion by Holewinski to approve the Telework Policy as presented. Second by Hintz. All Committee members voting 'Aye'. Motion carried.

**WI SUPREME COURT DECISION: STATEWIDE MASK MANDATE DETERMINED UNLAWFUL**

Charbarneau summarized the Wisconsin Supreme Court decision, determining Governor Ever's mask mandate as unlawful. Based on this decision, Charbarneau is bringing the topic to this Committee to determine a status and set a direction moving forward. Charbarneau says based on discussions with Conlon and Hintz, they feel employees should still be required to wear masks. Most county departments are encouraging public mask use but agree that enforcement is very difficult. Fugle notes that the courts are requiring masks. Conlon reviewed the CDC guidelines and Wisconsin DHS recommendations, which still suggest wearing masks indoors, along with social distancing and proper hand washing practices. Conlon notes that she requires masks at vaccine clinics and in Public Health due to staff and the public being within close proximity of each other most of the time. Fugle says the law allows Oneida County to require mask wearing by employees as a contingency of employment. Fried feels the Supreme Court ruling gives the decision to require masks back to the business or entity, rather than the government. Discussion held on whether to give individual county departments the ability to determine if their employees are required to wear masks when no other employees or public are

**WI SUPREME COURT DECISION: STATEWIDE MASK MANDATE (continued)**

present. Conlon notes that Plexiglas barriers and face shields do not provide the same protection as masks. Charbarneau notes that employees and the public are still testing positive for COVID-19 and this needs to be considered when determining how to proceed moving forward. Charbarneau says the Committee needs to decide whether to keep the mask requirement in place for the employees and public moving forward. Discussion held. Fried and Cushing feel the current policy requiring masks for the staff and public should remain in place based on Public Health recommendations. Motion by Fried to continue the mask mandate for Oneida County facilities until which time it is reviewed again. Second by Paszak. Vote taken with Fried, Paszak, Cushing and Hintz vote ‘Aye’ and Holewinski votes ‘Nay’. Motion carried.

**CLOSED SESSION**

Motion by Cushing, second by Holewinski to go into closed session pursuant to section 19.85(1)(c) for purposes of considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee. (Topic: Assistant Corporation Counsel compensation)

Roll call vote taken; all members voting in the affirmative. Motion carried. Committee went into closed session at 9:56 a.m.

Staff and others present in closed session: Charbarneau, Lueneburg, Schreier and Fugle

**RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

Motion by Fried, second by Cushing to return to open session. Roll call vote taken with all members voting in the affirmative. Motion carried. Committee returned to open session at 10:04 a.m.

No motions were made in closed session. Upon return to open session, the following motion was made:

Motion by Holewinski to add ten additional PTO days above the customary new hire PTO for the new Assistant Corporation Counsel. Second by Cushing. Roll call vote taken; all voting in the affirmative. Motion carried.

**WI SUPREME COURT DECISION: STATEWIDE MASK MANDATE DETERMINED UNLAWFUL**

Hintz requests to revisit the mask mandate topic. Hintz suggests keeping masks mandatory for employees but voluntary/encouraged for the public, with county departments having the ability to make a choice on if employees need to wear masks when only department staff are present. Fugle needed to gather statute information before proceeding. Topic put on hold until Fugle returned to the meeting.

**FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS**

- Affirmative Action Plan
- COVID-19 Relief Funds
- County Cell Phone Policy
- Stipend Policy

**FUTURE MEETING DATES**

- April 22, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.
- May 13, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.
- May 27, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

**WI SUPREME COURT DECISION: STATEWIDE MASK MANDATE DETERMINED UNLAWFUL**

Fugle returned to meeting and provided input on mask mandate. Further discussion held. Motion by Hintz to reconsider previous motion made on agenda item #12 (WI Supreme Court Decision: Statewide Mask Mandate). Second by Cushing. Brief discussion held. Motion by Hintz to require employees to continue wearing masks and to make masks recommended for the public, to place signs on the door recommending masks for the public, and to give each department discretion on how to handle the public in their office in regards to mask requirements. Second by Holewinski. Fried feels if the rule is softened, it will make the rule difficult to enforce and add confusion for the public moving forward. Vote taken with Hintz and Holewinski voting ‘Aye’ and Fried, Paszak and Cushing voting ‘Nay’. Motion denied.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No comments made by attendees on Zoom or in the County Board Room.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Cushing announced the adjournment of the LRES Committee meeting at 10:16 a.m.

/s/Ted Cushing  
Ted Cushing, LRES Committee Chairman

April 22, 2021  
Date

/s/Jenni Lueneburg  
Jenni Lueneburg, Committee Secretary

April 22, 2021  
Date