

**CLERK'S SUMMARY AND OFFICIAL MINUTES  
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS REVIEW AD HOC COMMITTEE  
December 13, 2012**

**I. Call to Order & Opening Statement**

The Compensation and Benefits Review Ad Hoc Committee (CBRAHC) convened a meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Rooms 3 & 4 of the Stephen P. Clark Government Center (SPCGC) on December 13, 2012, at 12:20 p.m. County Commissioner Barbara J. Jordan, Chairwoman, and Commissioners Esteban L. Bovo, Jr., Jose "Pepe" Diaz and Jean Monestime were present. Also present were Assistant County Attorney Eric Rodriguez; Deputy Mayor Ed Marquez; Internal Services Department Assistant Director Mary Lou Rizzo, Division Director Arleene Cuellar, Division Director Michael Snyder; Commission Auditor Charles Anderson; and Deputy Clerk Alan Eisenberg.

Chairwoman Jordan noted this was the final Committee meeting to collectively discuss recommendations which will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC).

**II. Approval of Summary Minutes**

It was moved by Commissioner Monestime that the December 6, 2012 Compensation and Benefits Review Ad Hoc Committee meeting minutes be approved. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Bovo, and upon being put to a vote, passed by a vote of 3-0; (Commissioner Diaz was absent).

**III. Review of follow-up items from last meeting**

Ms. Mary Lou Rizzo, Assistant Director, Internal Affairs Department, presented follow-up items from the December 6, 2012 meeting.

- **Final Retirement Benefit Calculation**

Ms. Rizzo noted County employees received retirement benefits pursuant to State Statute and they participated in the Florida Retirement System (FRS). She referred to a handout entitled "Florida Retirement System Average Final Compensation Calculation," which stated that the basis for retirement benefit calculation was the average of the five highest years earned during employment for employees enrolled in the FRS before July 1, 2011. Ms. Rizzo noted the FRS permitted the payout of up to 500 hours of annual leave which was also the annual leave payout cap used by the County. She said that sick leave was not included in the average final compensation and was not credited toward retirement benefits. Mr. Rizzo noted retirement benefits for employees enrolled in the FRS after July 1, 2011 was determined by using the eight highest years earned.

Commissioner Bovo inquired whether changes to the County's retirement calculation would need to be adopted by the State of Florida. He also asked for clarification as to whether retirement benefits and annual leave policies were dictated by the State.

Ms. Rizzo confirmed that State legislation impacting all FRS members would need to be enacted before changing the County's retirement calculations. She explained that the number of hours payable to the FRS (up to 500 hours) for retirement benefits was dictated by the State and the County adopted a policy that mirrored the State payout level.

- **Tuition Refund Program**

Ms. Rizzo noted the Tuition Refund Program was adopted in 1963. She said that at that time it was not required for employees to remain with the County following completion of their study or to reimburse the County for tuition assistance. Ms. Rizzo said the Administrative Order (AO) governing the program was modified in 1978 to require a two-year employment obligation and a minimum passing grade of C for undergraduate study and B for graduate study to remain eligible for benefits. The employment obligation was reduced to one year and the grade requirement was reduced to a C grade for graduate study in 1995, said Ms. Rizzo. She noted another minor change was made in 2003 which did not impact the number of years or passing grade requirement. Ms. Rizzo explained that in 2007 the Administration was unsuccessful in negotiating with collective bargaining units a per-credit-hour, calendar year reimbursement cap and a requirement for three years continued employment; however, a requirement for the course of study to be reasonably related to the employee's career path was adopted.

Ms. Rizzo indicated that 571 employees participated in the Tuition Refund Program in Fiscal Year (FY) 2011-12, noting \$1,396 million were distributed in refunds, with the average refund per employee being \$2,500. She explained that the County refunded 50 percent of the accredited institution's per credit rate. Ms. Rizzo noted the County Commission previously discussed the option of tying the refund value to the public institution tuition rate.

- **Regular, Part-Time Status**

Ms. Rizzo noted regular, part-time employees who qualify for career employment will be given preference to fill full-time positions provided that they were not the subject of disciplinary action and had a good attendance record, pursuant to the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), General Employees, Local 199 Union.

#### **IV. Committee Recommendations**

Chairwoman Jordan inquired whether Task Force recommendations would be subject to the concurrence of collective bargaining units.

Assistant County Attorney Eric Rodriguez advised that the recommendations proposed at the December 6, 2012 Task Force meeting would be the subject of collective bargaining negotiations.

Chairwoman Jordan asked whether the County Commission's recommended changes would not go into effect if the collective bargaining units did not agree with these changes.

Assistant County Attorney Rodriguez said the impasse process would be invoked in the event that collective bargaining unit agreement was not reached. He noted all collective bargaining and administrative concessions would be evaluated by the County Commission and the status of the Task Force's recommendations would be unknown until the impasse process was resolved.

Chairwoman Jordan said that it would appear as if the County Commission members would not be objective as they would be ruling on their own recommendations.

Assistant County Attorney Rodriguez noted the impasse process was set up for the County Commission to make the final decision and whether or not previous recommendations were made by the Task Force would not cause a problem as long as the Commission conducted itself with neutrality and fairly evaluated competing proposals that were at impasse.

Commissioner Monestime pointed out that the County Commission would be ruling on the entire contract and not on the specific recommendations.

Commissioner Bovo suggested that instead of recommendations, a menu of items discussed by the Task Force with possible solutions be forwarded to the County Commission.

Assistant County Attorney Rodriguez noted the County Commission would ultimately provide the Administration with parameters to use in collective bargaining negotiations. He said that it would not matter whether the Task Force presented the Commission with specific recommendations or a menu of items.

Commissioner Bovo noted Task Force members could ultimately vote against the Task Force recommendations when considered by the County Commission.

Ms. Rizzo clarified that the Task Force members were addressing items that they considered needed to be changed prospectively; however, at the time the final collective bargaining contracts were presented to the County Commission a quid quo pro would be evaluated and the Commission would be dealing with a new set of circumstances with additional information.

Chairwoman Jordan suggested that any item receiving a majority vote (3 votes) of Task Force members would be considered a recommendation while any other suggestions that did not receive a majority vote would be presented as menu items. She asked staff to highlight throughout the discussion any constraints that would prevent a recommendation from ultimately being implemented.

Pursuant to Chairwoman Jordan's question as to whether the Administration had any specific recommendations, Ms. Rizzo noted a cap on the value of a combined merit and COLA increase would be a viable recommendation. In addition, she recommended that consideration be given to a reduction in employee benefits with a smaller package for newly-hired employees, while preserving benefits for existing employees.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### **1) Reduce the number of job classifications/positions on automatic pay steps**

Commissioner Diaz observed that numerous job classifications existed allowing some employees to receive pay for more than one classification at the same time, while others did not.

Chairwoman Jordan said that the Fox Lawson Report suggested reductions to the number of job classifications and pay ranges. She also noted reductions to the number of job classifications would provide a more open pay structure by eliminating the pay steps.

Ms. Rizzo noted an open pay range would contribute toward flexibility in salary increases directly aligning to job performance as well as a cost of living adjustment (COLA) cap. She said that approximately fifty percent of the workforce consisted of classified employees while the other fifty percent were exempt employees. Ms. Rizzo noted a unified classification structure existed and many positions aligned to a job title; however, specialized classes often emerged due to specific education and experience requirements.

Chairwoman Jordan pointed out that she was aware of other governmental entities that had reduced the number of classifications while keeping open pay ranges.

Ms. Rizzo explained that different classifications could be aligned to the same pay range, thereby creating a more sustainable pay plan that promotes cost containment. She indicated that a countywide classification review was warranted considering the recent organizational restructuring, noting this review was already included in the Internal Services Department's current business plan.

This foregoing proposed recommendation passed by a vote of 4-0.

### **2) Cap salary increases to a total of five percent annually, to include both the cost of living adjustment (COLA) and merit**

Commissioner Diaz noted only a satisfactory review was needed for employees to receive a full pay step increase of five percent. He said that the manager should have the discretion to give up to a maximum five-percent increase, based upon performance.

Chairwoman Jordan stressed that the five percent salary increase should include both the COLA and merit.

Commissioner Diaz explained that he did not support an automatic merit increase, noting it should be directly related to the quality of an employee's performance.

Commissioner Bovo noted he concurred as long as the amount did not exceed five percent.

This foregoing proposed recommendation passed by a vote of 4-0.

**3) Limit sick leave to a maximum of 600 hours for new hires and calculate the payout rate at an average of employee's earnings, rather than at the rate earned at separation**

Commissioner Bovo proposed reducing sick leave from 1,000 to 600 hours. He also suggested that both sick and annual leave be calculated and paid out at retirement at an average of employees' earnings, rather than earnings at the time of separation.

Commissioner Bovo inquired whether the changes to the 500-hour annual leave cap would conflict with Florida Retirement System (FRS) requirements.

Ms. Rizzo clarified that sick leave payout did not impact the FRS; however, annual leave would. She indicated that annual leave over 500 hours was not reported to the FRS as average final compensation; that any hours in excess of 500 could not be paid to the employee; and that any unused hours would be forfeited.

Commissioner Bovo withdrew his suggestion that annual leave payout be calculated over an average of employees' earnings due to the legislative change that would be required.

Chairwoman Jordan observed that an employee with a critical illness often needed more than 600 hours, commenting that employees could donate sick leave hours to another employee in certain instances.

Commissioner Bovo said that he would certainly protect an employee's job in such a situation.

Chairwoman Jordan noted employees would be in an out-of-pay status if they used up all of their available leave time.

Ms. Rizzo clarified that employees could accrue hours indefinitely; however, they were limited in the number that could be paid out. She noted an employee with less than 30 years of service was eligible for up to a 1,000-hour sick leave payout. Ms. Rizzo asked Commissioner Bovo whether his proposed 600 hours was the maximum number of hours accrued or eligible for payout at the time of termination.

Commissioner Bovo clarified that his proposal was for a 600-hour maximum sick leave payout for newly-hired employees only.

In response to Chairwoman Jordan's request, Ms. Rizzo explained that employees with more than 30 years of service currently received all sick leave accrued in excess of 1,000 hours and up to a maximum of 500 hours annual leave. Ms. Rizzo clarified that the number of hours an employee was eligible for payout aligned with the number of years of service.

This foregoing proposed recommendation passed by a vote of 3-0; (Commissioner Diaz was absent).

**4) Evaluate long-term, part-time employees on an annual basis to determine whether a full-time position would be more cost effective, unless otherwise prohibited by collective bargaining agreement**

Commissioner Monestime suggested a review of part-time employees with more than one year of service to determine the nature of their job and whether they qualified for full-time employment status.

Ms. Rizzo recommended that the phrase "unless otherwise prohibited by collective bargaining agreement" be added.

Commissioner Monestime noted the decision should be based upon the sustainability of the position's funding source.

This foregoing proposed recommendation passed by a vote of 3-0; (Commissioners Diaz was absent).

**5) Restructure the pay plan with open pay ranges in lieu of pay steps**

Chairwoman Jordan suggested that open ranges should be adopted in lieu of pay steps, noting this would provide hiring managers with the flexibility to hire within the range rather than at the beginning step.

This foregoing proposed recommendation passed by a vote of 3-0; (Commissioners Diaz was absent).

**6) Reduce the new hire rate by approximately 9-10 percent, thus implementing a two-tiered pay plan**

Chairwoman Jordan suggested developing a new pay plan for newly-hired employees with pay steps beginning two steps lower than the present rate. She observed that open pay ranges would satisfy this requirement.

Ms. Rizzo pointed out that Chairwoman Jordan's proposal with regard to implementing open pay ranges and reducing the in hire rate by approximately 9-10 percent for new employees would result in a two-tiered pay plan.

Chairwoman Jordan noted over the years it would eventually become one pay plan.

Commissioner Monestime inquired whether Chairwoman Jordan was proposing that newly-hired employees start at a lower rate than they would today.

Chairwoman Jordan clarified that newly-hired employees would begin at a rate approximately ten percent lower. She noted her recommendation was designed to prevent asking employees to give up a portion of their salary in the future. Chairwoman Jordan suggested adopting a similar philosophy to when newly-hired employees began four steps lower. She said her recommendation was for newly-hired employees to begin two steps lower than the current rate; pay steps would be eliminated; and there would be a ten-percent open range giving the hiring manager the flexibility to determine the hiring rate based upon an employees' experience.

Commissioner Monestime noted lowering the starting salary would impact the County's competitiveness in the marketplace and the quality of life for its employees.

This foregoing proposed recommendation passed by a vote of 2-1; (Commissioner Monestime voted "No"); (Commissioner Diaz was absent).

#### **MENU ITEMS:**

##### **1) Reduce bankable annual leave for new hires to between 300 – 500 hours**

Commissioner Diaz suggested the cap on annual leave be reduced from 500 to 300 hours.

Chairwoman Jordan noted this could result in unintended consequences whereby employees would use up excess annual leave time before terminating employment if not paid for that time.

Pursuant to Commissioner Diaz' inquiry, Ms. Arlene Cuellar, Division Director, Internal Services Department, explained that three hours of annual leave accrued for 24 pay periods and four hours accrued for the two remaining pay periods.

Commissioner Diaz pointed out that he believed the City of Miami allowed its employees to sell a portion of their time to other employees instead of being paid for that time, noting this policy could be considered by the County.

Chairwoman Jordan noted County employees could contribute annual leave to other employees only through sick leave pools. She clarified that the existing policy was to either use up excess annual leave over 500 hours or it would be forfeited. Chairwoman Jordan said that reducing the number of bankable hours would only increase the number of hours employees would take off work

Assistant County Attorney Rodriguez clarified that employees would take more vacation time if the annual leave cap was reduced. He noted a policy choice was needed as to whether to pay out the time at the end of employees' careers or during their tenure.

Commissioner Monestime inquired about the procedures currently implemented when an employee exceeded the 500-hour cap. He expressed concern that encouraging employees to use all of their annual leave would impact current operations.

Chairwoman Jordan clarified that employees were notified annually that their accumulated hours would be lost if not taken prior to reaching the 500-hour cap.

Commissioner Diaz expressed concern that payouts at retirement were accrued at a higher rate of pay.

Assistant County Attorney Rodriguez asked whether the current discussion of reducing bankable annual leave was for all County employees or just newly-hired employees.

Commissioners Monestime and Bovo indicated that the proposed discussion was for newly-hired employees.

Commissioner Diaz suggested that this proposal as well as the five percent salary cap recommendation should apply to existing employees

Chairwoman Jordan noted the County adopted the 500-hour annual leave cap to mirror the State of Florida. She said that employees would take more time off in the event the cap was reduced. Chairwoman Jordan noted a 300-hour cap was setting the County up for frequent fliers.

Commissioner Monestime inquired whether an estimate of the number of employees with more than 500 hours annual leave was available.

Ms. Rizzo clarified that employees were provided notification whether they would exceed the 500-hour annual leave cap prior to their anniversary date and any time in excess of 500 hours would be forfeited. She said that she did not currently have an estimate on the number of employees with annual leave exceeding the 500-hour cap as requested by Commissioner Monestime. Ms. Rizzo noted employees were often unable to take vacation time due to operational demands; the County should proactively encourage work-life balance as a good nurturing employer; and the 500-hour limit provided a cushion for employees in high operational demand areas to bank time.

Commissioner Monestime noted he agreed with Chairwoman Jordan that reducing the bankable hours to 300 would result in more employees requesting vacation time.

Chairwoman Jordan asked whether employees could receive pay checks in advance and whether a policy could be adopted whereby employees could be paid in lieu of taking a vacation.



Ms. Rizzo clarified that advance pay checks were provided only in emergency situations, noting that paying employees for vacation time would result in additional costs.

Commissioner Diaz asked that the recommendation be presented to the County Commission for discussion pending receipt of additional data requested by Commissioner Monestime.

This foregoing proposed recommendation was forwarded as a menu item by a vote of 4-0.

**2) Provide employees with a one-time bonus once the maximum rate of the pay plan was reached, in lieu of a COLA and/or merit increase**

Commissioner Diaz suggested providing employees a lump sum payment merit increase once the salary cap was reached in order to avoid increasing the pay range, similar to the federal government.

Chairwoman Jordan suggested granting a one time bonus for merit and COLA, capped at three percent, during a budget crisis only. She noted the bonus would be in lieu of merit and COLA; would not be added to base pay; and would prevent the base pay from growing.

Commissioner Diaz said that positions should have salary caps in order for levels to be clearly delineated; however, employees should receive a bonus as an incentive for their hard work.

Commissioner Monestime noted he was unaware how Commissioner Diaz' proposal could be implemented without bumping civil servants from the system. He said a retraining program would be needed to move employees into another pay scale or area. Commissioner Monestime noted civil servants wanted to serve, yet wanted remuneration as well. He said a plan to transition employees to other areas once they reached the maximum of their pay range was needed.

Commissioner Diaz noted employees advanced to other positions once they reached the maximum of their pay range, thus opening a position for someone else to advance. He said that he did not want to hurt employees at the top of their pay range with a salary cap.

Commissioner Bovo observed that a key factor was how quickly an employee reached the cap.

Chairwoman Jordan noted the salary cap was the top of the pay range and this discussion was confusing salary caps with merit increase and COLA.

Commissioner Diaz noted a merit increase and COLA impacted the base pay and would consequently increase the salary cap.

Ms. Rizzo clarified that each classification had a minimum start rate which could go up to the maximum rate over time for the job classification due to merit increases. She said that employees were no longer eligible for merit pay once they reached the maximum rate of their job classification. Ms. Rizzo noted at that point a bonus would perhaps be an option to reward employees.

Commissioner Diaz noted he agreed with Ms. Rizzo that employees should receive a bonus after reaching their salary cap as this would not impact the maximum salary.

Deputy Mayor Ed Marquez noted the pay range would increase with any cost of living increase.

Commissioner Diaz stressed that employees should be rewarded with a bonus for outstanding work and not penalized.

Assistant County Attorney Rodriguez explained that the two percent COLA was currently applied to the top of the pay range. He clarified that Commissioner Diaz was suggesting that the two percent COLA should be paid out as a one-time payment without increasing the range.

Commissioner Monestime noted the COLA was adjusted based upon inflation and should not impact the salary cap.

Chairwoman Jordan inquired whether the cost of living should be included in the annual salary amount.

Commissioner Monestime noted the gap between the minimum and maximum salaries within a job classification was too wide. He said he believed that employees should continue receiving the COLA, without consideration of the maximum salary because of increases in the cost of living.

Commissioner Diaz pointed out that the COLA should be considered a one time bonus and should not affect the cap; otherwise, it would increase the salary beyond the cap.

Chairwoman Jordan asked staff to provide the County Commission with research on Social Security cost of living increases when the Task Force's recommendations were presented, noting the additional cost was added to annual benefits because of inflation.

Ms. Rizzo noted a one-time bonus would not increase an employee's base earnings used for the determination of retirement benefits. She indicated that the pay plan structure which predicts a competitive pay range in the marketplace sometimes needed to be adjusted due to changes in market conditions, demand, and cost of living.

Commissioner Monestime said he supported finding a method to reduce the gap between an employee's minimum and maximum salaries, while remaining competitive. He

stressed that he did not support maximizing what an employee could be paid as the cost of living continued to increase without adjusting the salary to sustain the increased costs.

This foregoing proposed recommendation was forwarded as a menu item by a vote of 2-2; (Chairwoman Jordan and Commissioner Monestime voted “No”); (Commissioners Bovo and Diaz voted “Yes”).

Following the vote, Commissioner Monestime pointed out that the bonus could be greater than the COLA. He questioned whether the bonus was considered in the determination of retirement benefits.

Ms. Rizzo indicated that according to the Florida Retirement System (FRS) the bonus would be considered as non-recurring and therefore would not be included in an employee’s average final compensation. She noted, on the other hand, the COLA was applied to the pay plan rates and therefore included in the average final compensation.

Commissioner Bovo clarified that once an employee reached the maximum of the pay range he/she would receive an annual bonus rather than a COLA. He questioned whether a cap would be placed on the classification.

Ms. Rizzo inquired whether the proposal was for the COLA to be applied to an employee’s base rate before he/she reached the maximum rate.

Chairwoman Jordan clarified that she believed the COLA would be applied to the base rate once an employee reached the maximum rate.

Ms. Rizzo explained that the COLA would not be applied to an employee’s base pay once he/she reached longevity pay step 12 and would then be received as a bonus; however, an employee at pay step 11 would receive the COLA applied to his/her base pay. She said that gradually the distinction between pay steps 11 and 12 would disappear because the salary at pay step 12 would remain constant while the salary at pay step 11 would increase incrementally with each COLA.

Commissioner Bovo reiterated that the Administration should provide to the commissioners information relating to how quickly employees starting at the minimum of their pay classification climbed the ladder until they reached the maximum salary. At that point, he said he would assume that the employee would seek to move to a higher classification within the County.

In response to Commissioner Monestime’s comment that the gap could be closed sooner since not all employees started at the same pay level, Ms. Rizzo clarified that classified service employees began at the entry pay step unless a recruitment difficulty with the job class was demonstrated. She explained that employees advanced one pay step annually following a satisfactory performance review, and that classified employees could not advance multiple pay steps at one time.

Commissioner Monestime noted he supported closing the gap between the minimum and maximum salaries within a job classification and allowing for COLA and other incentives based upon performance after reaching the maximum salary.

**3) Negotiate changes to the current layoff policy to provide civil service credit for exempt service**

Commissioner Monestime suggested adopting a policy providing that civil service credit be given to employees who did not accrue credit because of the funding source of the County agencies for which they worked, but who would otherwise qualify if they worked for any other County department, unless prohibited by collective bargaining.

Chairwoman Jordan suggested that the number of years of service be grandfathered in.

Ms. Rizzo noted certain exemptions to classified service were listed in Section 2-41 of the County Code and questioned the impact of Commissioner Monestime's suggestion on these exemptions.

Assistant County Attorney Rodriguez advised that an ordinance change would be needed.

Chairwoman Jordan noted the Community Action Agency (CAA) and the Department of Human Services received mostly federal funding and their employees were exempt. She said the Administration recently recommended that those employees become civil service employees granting only one-year service resulting in potential layoffs of 1,000 people.

Assistant County Attorney Rodriguez advised that perhaps a modification to the layoff manual for seniority purposes should be considered.

Chairwoman Jordan noted she did not understand how changing the layoff process would make a difference.

Assistant County Attorney Rodriguez clarified that employees would be impacted if seniority in the classified service was one of the main criteria for determining layoffs. He advised that this could address the concern about exemption/non-exemption and seniority in exemption toward the layoff process.

Chairwoman Jordan noted under the current exemption process layoffs in classified service did not impact the CAA and vice versa.

Ms. Rizzo clarified that because of the employee's exempt status during a countywide layoff a classified social worker from another department could not bump a CAA employee.

Chairwoman Jordan pointed out that a classified social worker could formally relinquish his/her civil service status.

Commissioner Monestime questioned whether the decision was based upon costs associated with grandfathering in the number of years of service.

Deputy Mayor Ed Marquez stated that the County had a number of exempt employees who should remain in exempt status because of managerial concerns. He noted the issue that was being considered was what would happen if a group of exempt employees wanted to bump employees from General Funded departments once their funding source disappeared. Deputy Mayor Marquez pointed out that the main concern was what would happen during the layoff process.

Assistant County Attorney Rodriguez noted a classified social worker from a County department with twenty years of service would probably remain employed after a layoff over an exempt social worker from CAA with twenty five years of service. He said he believed Chairwoman Jordan's concern was that all employees should be treated equally when layoff decisions were made. Assistant County Attorney Rodriguez advised that changing the County Code with regard to who was or who was not an exempt employee was not required because this was a broader solution than necessary to address Commissioner Jordan's concern which was limited to the layoff process.

Ms. Rizzo noted it would be dangerous to create a third workforce category. She said the goal was to find a way to merge exempt employees and those affected by organizational restructuring into classified service. Ms. Rizzo noted she did not believe an entire review of exempt service was necessary, particularly since specific managerial reasons existed as to why departments/positions were exempted from classified service. She stated that if a review of exempt service was undertaken, the Administration would negotiate with the unions regarding the impact of merging exempt employees into classified service and the degree of credit that would be given for exempt service. Ms. Rizzo noted procedurally exempt time was not credited to classified service and historically only one year was credited during previous exempt service mergers.

Chairwoman Jordan pointed out that Ms. Rizzo's reply did not address her concerns, because the Administration would be negotiating the amount of time that would be credited, which would feed into seniority; therefore, the negotiation would only address the exempt employees and not the classified employees. She said that if employees were performing the same jobs, had worked for the same amount of time and the only difference between them was the funding source, it would be unfair to only credit them a few years in terms of seniority.

Deputy Mayor Marquez asked Assistant County Attorney Rodriguez whether it would be possible to resolve this concern without collective bargaining negotiations.

Chairwoman Jordan asked Assistant County Attorney Rodriguez for clarification of his previous layoff policy recommendation.

Assistant County Attorney Rodriguez advised that a change to the layoff policy should be negotiated to give credit for exempt service, to avoid a wholesale examination of exemptions provided in the Code.

Commissioner Monestime noted although he was sensitive to the General Fund impact, he believed that parity was needed and that longevity decisions should not be based upon where the employee worked.

Chairwoman Jordan said that the funding source should not be the determining factor since some exempt employees were being paid from the General Fund.

Ms. Rizzo noted during the 1970s exempt service merger, the County Commission decided that the funding source should not predict whether or not an employee was in the classified service.

Chairwoman Jordan explained that the Equal Opportunity Program Inc. (EOPI) was taken over by the County and renamed CAA when Florida Governor Claude Kirk withheld pay from the federal government. She said that employees did not start at the same level as regular County employees because of classifications and job descriptions needing to be verified; therefore, the employees were made exempt.

This foregoing proposed recommendation was forwarded as a menu item by a vote of 3-0; (Commissioners Diaz was absent).

## **V. Other Discussion/Suggestions**

Commissioner Bovo suggested employees be provided the option to shop for their own healthcare insurance, noting relief was needed in instances where both husband and wife worked for the County or an employee's spouse worked outside County government and had insurance.

Assistant County Manager Marquez clarified that any employee could choose to be included on their spouse's healthcare insurance and did not need to enroll in the County's plan. He noted the Administration previously negotiated first 5, then 10, and then an additional 5 percent healthcare contribution with collective bargaining units instead of adjusting employees' gross salaries for retirement purposes, providing the County with budgetary relief by not paying this to employees. Assistant County Manager Marquez said that the contribution was presently five percent for all employees with the exception of the Deputy Mayors who pay 10 percent.

Commissioner Bovo withdrew the suggestion.

Commissioner Monestime suggested that the Administration review the pay plan and compensation packages of governments of comparable size and scope to Miami-Dade County every three years prior to collective bargaining negotiations in order to remain competitive.

Chairwoman Jordan noted she would not pursue an increase in the number of years an employee was required to remain in County service from one to three before being requested to reimburse the County for funds received through this program.

## **VI. Next Steps**

Chairwoman Jordan asked Ms. Rizzo to provide the County Commission with information pertaining to other government entities with open pay ranges at the time when the Task Force recommendations were presented.

Commission Auditor Charles Anderson provided a summary of recommendations/menu items.

Chairwoman Jordan asked Assistant County Attorney Rodriguez to clarify the proper procedure to present the Task Force Committee recommendations to the County Commission.

Assistant County Attorney Rodriguez explained that a report from the Committee Chairperson summarizing the Committee's work could be presented. He indicated that a resolution recommending action items was needed if requesting that a specific action be taken. Assistant County Attorney Rodriguez suggested that a report be presented for the entire County Commission for discussion.

Chairwoman Jordan said that she would present a report with Committee recommendations/menu items and a resolution would be prepared later based upon the outcome of the County Commission's discussion.

Chairwoman Jordan commended staff for an excellent job assisting this Committee.

## **V. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the Compensation & Benefits Review Ad Hoc Committee adjourned at 11:12 a.m.

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Barbara J. Jordan, Chair