COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: **Personnel Review Committee**
CHAIRPERSON:
DATE/TIME: **January 11, 2018 @ 9:08 a.m.**

PRESENT:

☐ RJ Winkelhake	☐ Bruce Habel	☒ Sharon Wand
☒ Brandon Behlke	☒ Joe Kratcha	☒ Eric Tison
☐ Steve Allendorf	☒ Jean Dimke	☐ Craig Ketelsen
☒ Bill Bingham	☒ Angie Kaiser	☒ Donna Berlage
☒ Dan Reimer	☒ Steve Keeffer	
☒ Melisa Hammer	☒ John Lang	

Others: John Hay

Brandon Behlke called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. Roll call, a quorum was present.

1. **Melisa Hammer made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 26, 2016 Personnel Review Committee meeting. Seconded by Steve Keeffer and motion passed.**
2. **Citizens' Comments**
3. **New Business**
   a) **Review Jo Daviess County Position Classification and Compensation Plan.**
   Dan Reimer reviewed the history and background of Jo Daviess County Position Classification and Compensation Plan. The current Plan was adopted on November 20, 2012. The Plan replaced an older similar type plan that was outdated. In 2012 the County Board appointed a compensation committee consisting of five County Board Members and five Department Heads. The committee sent out an RFP, interviewed consultants, recommended and worked with Carlson Dettmann Consulting (CDC) to develop the Plan. Some of the goals of the Plan were to create internal equity within the organization, be competitive in regard to pay, benefits, working conditions, consider total compensation, support performance management and be affordable, legal, and understandable. Due to the financial condition of the County at the time the Plan compensation was established at 90% of market. The Personnel Review Committee was established in 2013 to work with CDC, recommend policies and oversee implementation of the Plan. This committee has recommended several policies including the Employee Performance Evaluation Policy and the Performance Management Performance Evaluations/Merit Pay Policy (PM/PE/MPP). Reimer reviewed an implementation timeline that included the policies associated with the Plan and all the classification and reclassification requests that have been submitted to CDC and the results of each request. Reimer discussed that there seems to be dissatisfaction from many of the Departments with the current Plan and the associated policies. One of the County Board retreat items referred to the Personnel Review Committee was: revise non-union job classification schedule.

   Brandon Behlke suggested that we go around the room and let each Committee member discuss some of their issues or concerns that they have with the Plan. Joe Kratcha discussed that he feels the current policy has been stretched, manipulated and lost its integrity. Kratcha questioned the comparable areas that were used for the market study, competition goes across the river and these areas were not part of the study. Kratcha discussed the pay grade schedule, the control point, Step 6 is 90% of market, Step 1 is 76% of market, this makes it difficult to hire qualified new employees unless you request an advance step hire. Kratcha also discussed the lack of reward associated with an

approved reclassification request and gave examples that occurred with his staff. In one case there was a pay grade increase but the annual pay only increased $15, in another case there was a pay grade increase, the employee was in merit pay and stayed in merit pay in the new pay grade, but the employee did not receive a pay increase because the policy did not address it.

Sharon Wand discussed that she was upset when the Plan first came out because not all the deputy clerks from the different departments were in the same pay grade; this created hard feelings between departments. Her deputies have since been reclassified to a higher pay grade but it took a long time. Wand suggested that all deputy clerks in the County be in the same pay grade. Steve Keeffer agreed with Kratcha and was not sure if we should try to do something with the current plan or start over. Keeffer questioned some of the recent actions of the County Board including allowing the Health Department to be removed from the Plan and the recent advanced Step 6 hire of the new custodian. Keeffer expressed concerns with the lack of incentive associated with reclassification of an experienced employee who has taken on increased duties and responsibilities, currently the employee may receive very little or nothing in the way of a pay increase. This may have been over looked and should be changed if we keep the current Plan. Keeffer also felt the labor market needs to be looked at.

John Hay clarified that the County Board has no authority to set the pay scale for the Health Department employees; the Health Department Board has absolute authority to set the pay scale for the Health Department. Hay also has some concerns with the comparables that were used to establish the pay grade scale. The firm used, no fault of their own, has experience with Wisconsin Counties but not much experience with Illinois Counties, which are completely different. Hay suggested that if we decide to go with a different Plan we should look for a firm that has experience with Illinois counties. Hay commented that the pay scale has not been changed since it was adopted five years ago. Donna Berlage agreed that the comparable market area should be looked at and should include Dubuque. Berlage agrees that all deputy clerks in all county departments should be classified the same. Berlage questioned the County Board's faith in the pay structure when they allowed the Health Department to be removed from the Plan. Melisa Hammer discussed concerns with the Health Department leaving the Plan, as an elected official she could also choose not to follow the Plan, but we have all agreed to participate which indicates we work together as a team not individually. Hammer has concerns with having to come to the County Board for changes and reclassifications because they are publicized and this causes hard feelings. Hammer has concerns with the evaluation process, if an employee is in the steps there is no incentive for doing a superior job as the increase is the same, there should be more latitude for department heads to work with their employees. The Committee discussed that once an employee reaches merit pay, annual pay increases are more dependent on performance. The Committee discussed advanced step hire and the need to take a look at the process to make it better. Maybe a new hire starts at step 1 and moves up after successfully completing their probationary period.

Kaiser commented that we have been discussing two separate issues, first we have the pay grade scale itself and the numbers on the scale which the County Board is in charge of and the other issue is the process. Kaiser gave some examples of how a department head who wants to give their employee more money can write a new overstated JDQ and job description and have it sent it to Carlson Dettmann Consulting (CDC) for reclassification. CDC reviews the request but they are not actually here, so they rely on information in the JDQ and what the department head tells them. This creates a situation of hard feelings,

when the results come back. Kaiser suggested that to improve the process that a Committee, maybe the Personnel Review Committee should be involved in the review and verification of information before a classification or reclassification request is submitted to CDC. Kaiser discussed exempt versus non-exempt positions and what distinguishes the difference. Kaiser discussed other exceptions that she feels the Committee should take a look at.

Jean Dimke agreed that the Plan needs to be updated and suggested some changes including establishing a minimum pay increase for an employee who has their position reclassified to a higher pay grade. Dimke agreed that some have stretched the policy, as an elected official she feels it is important to work together as county employees. She feels Committee review of requests is a very good suggestion. County Board education on the Plan is also important. Eric Tison discussed that he is relatively new to the organization and has worked in the collar counties DuPage, Lake and Cook but understands the frustrations of the appointed and elected officials. Eric noted that his wife works for the City of Beloit and Wisconsin has a different framework than Illinois. Eric likes the idea that there is an opportunity for everybody to work together to make changes and find solutions. John Lang discussed his past experiences and likes the idea of a formal uniform policy and the idea of this Committee reviewing requests. Brandon Behlke discussed that he has concerns since the plan was adopted in 2012 when the County Board changed. Behlke has concerns with the process of having an outside consultant reviewing requests and making recommendations versus a County Committee making decisions. Moving forward we should decide if we want to go with a new plan or make changes to the current plan. Reimer discussed the current classification/reclassification process and agrees with the idea of adding a Committee review of the JDQ before a request is submitted to CDC.

Kaiser commented that it appears everyone is frustrated with the process and right now there is no incentive to play by the rules. Kaiser questioned whether we need CDC to tell us where a position should be classified or would it be better if we did it in house. Keeffer discussed that as a group we may be able to establish an in house process and be more satisfied with the results. Bingham discussed that it might be too early to make those decisions, but there may be some advantages, you are being impacted by the decisions and you would be blamed if things are not correct and might have to come back for adjustments, there would be ownership of the decisions. Lang discussed that one of the concerns is the finances of the County, this year we have a deficit budge and resources are limited. Lang is surprised that the starting wages are so much less than market value and would like to see if there is a way to start new employees closer to market. Reimer reviewed the results of the 2015 market analysis and the comparable Illinois counties used in the update. The 2018 UCCI salary survey for Illinois Counties should be available in April. Kaiser stated again there are two different issues, the numbers on the scale which are in the County Boards hands; the problem is the process which is the majority of the concerns that have been expressed. Equitable and fair treatment of all employees goes a long way, people will understand if money is not in the budget, but the process has to fair and equitable.

Behlke agreed that the process needs to be changed. Behlke asked about the contract with CDC and if and when it could be terminated. After discussion Behlke suggested that we review each policy one at a time at future meetings. John Lang suggested a hold harmless if someone is over classified. Sharon Wand asked what can legally be done if an employee is classified too high. John Hay discussed that the Committee needs to be aware that making decisions regarding individual employees could open the Committee up to claims

if a request is denied. That is a reason for having an independent consultant making recommendations. Kaiser discussed the need to review the pay scale as it relates to exempt versus non-exempt and 35 hours versus 40 hour employees. Behlke asked how the committee would like to proceed. The committee discussed the need for a new market analysis and how to go about doing it. Kaiser suggested we fix what we already have, maybe it is too complicated and it should be simplified. Bingham suggested that we develop a plan that includes a market analysis and formation of a process both can be very complex, we should break them down into components. Bingham discussed we should not leave thinking we are going to eliminate CDC. We have a system in place and it is not a good solution to eliminate CDC early in the process. Lang stated he thought we will need a consultant for a market analysis.

b) Review, discussion and possible action on the Jo Daviess County New Position Classification/Reclassification review Process.

The consensus of the committee was to start with reviewing and updating the Plan policies. Reimer discussed two policies that were included in the meeting packet, the Performance Management/Performance Evaluations/Employee Merit Pay Policy and the new Position Classification/Reclassification Review Policy. Behlke asked the Committee how often they would like to meet. Behlke would like to have something in place in time for the 2018 budget process. **Melisa Hammer made a motion that Department Heads review the New Position Classification/ Reclassification Review Policy and the Performance Management Performance Evaluations/Employee Merit Pay Policy and forward any recommendations to Angie Kaiser and Dan Reimer for collection and consideration at the February 20th meeting. Seconded by John Lang and motion passed 12-0.**

c) Review, discussion and possible action on the Jo Daviess County Performance Management/Performance Evaluations/Employee Merit Pay Policy.

d) Review, discussion and possible action on other items including procedures, forms and documents associated with the JDC Position Classification System Plan.

e) Review, discussion and possible action associated with the part-time clerical work force pool. Kaiser discussed that this item was left on the agenda in case the wage needs to be adjusted for part-time clerical pool workers. Currently the wage is $10.65 per hour which is pay grade 2, step 6. Clerical pool workers are temporary employees who work on as need bases for various departments and do not receive an annual review. This item can be reviewed again in the future.

4. **Establish future meeting date –** the next Personnel Review Committee meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, February 20, 2018 @ 9:00 a.m.

5. **Citizens' Comments**

6. **Adjourn**
   Joe Kratcha made a motion to adjourn at 10:55 am, seconded by Jean Dimke and motion passed.