



# LANE COUNTY

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W. G. A.

## AGENDA COVER MEMORANDUM

**AGENDA DATE:** February , 2006

**PRESENTED TO:** Board of County Commissioners

**PRESENTED BY:** Greta Utecht, Human Resources Manager

**AGENDA TITLE:** **IN THE MATTER OF PROVIDING A STATUS REPORT REGARDING THE WORK OF THE VACANCY REVIEW COMMITTEE, AND REQUESTING DIRECTION AS TO ITS FUTURE SCOPE**

### I. ISSUE

The Vacancy Review Committee (VRC) has been in place for three years. It was established as a result of work done in conjunction with the County's Strategic Plan implementation, and is one of the management tools approved by the Leadership team in December 2002. After three (3) years of reviewing vacancies, with almost no questions or concerns arising from the review, the committee requests further direction from the Board as to whether the committee should continue.

### II. DISCUSSION

#### A. Background

The VRC first started reviewing positions in December 2002. At the same time, personnel analysts began checking with every department to clarify the status of vacancies listed in the budget as funded positions. Because BRASS (the County's budget projection system) and PeopleSoft (our personnel and payroll tracking system) were not in agreement as to which positions were truly vacant, Human Resources and Information Services staff worked together to create new reports that accurately list the number of current budgeted vacancies in each department. The new reports also track eliminated positions.

In summary, the formation of the VRC was the catalyst for several system improvements, and HR and budget staff now has much more accurate information with which to make sure that budget authority and position management are in alignment.

As of November 2005, Human Resources (HR) had tracked more than 630 vacant positions. Of those, 38 were approved directly by the Board of Commissioners so did not go before the VRC. In order for the committee to make a determination on a vacancy, the department is asked to complete the vacancy review checklist (attached), which asks about the position's funding and status. For the 38 positions not reviewed by the VRC, a checklist was still completed.

The checklist also asks whether the department has engaged in process improvement, streamlining or reorganization analysis prior to deciding to post the vacancy. Of the more than 630 positions reviewed, more than 245 were the result of some form of process improvement or reorganization. In several cases where the manager checked "no" to the question asking whether process improvement had taken place, a comment was added indicating that reorganization or process improvement would be welcome if he or she had more information as to how to go about it.

Over the past 18-24 months, the VRC has reviewed positions electronically in order to avoid a physical meeting each week. This has worked well for the members of the committee, since most of the "in person" meetings were over in less than 20 minutes, while travel time to get to them took longer for many members. However, maintaining the electronic process and tracking the positions has been quite time consuming for HR staff.

## **B. Analysis**

The committee has yet to veto any request, although in several cases the hiring managers were asked to clarify information presented. In two cases, regular positions were changed to temporary status directly as a result of the VRC's feedback. The major issue the VRC has had is in approving part-time positions, particularly AFSCME positions that fall below 30 hours. This is because AFSCME regular part-time positions (unlike non-represented, Public Works Local 626 and Public Works Admin-Pro positions) accrue full health insurance benefits. With the other groups listed above, a regular part-time employee receives health benefits for themselves only, not for spouses and dependents. The VRC has consistently questioned the need to establish part-time positions that on a per/hour total compensation basis cost the County more than their full-time counterpart.

During the VRC's initial year, 65 positions were either eliminated or had their funding de-authorized. Because of the foresight and planning in the affected departments, to date no employees who were laid off remain out of work. Whenever budget reductions were likely, departments held vacancies and did not request that they be refilled.

Also, because the checklist is so detailed and comprehensive, and because it requires department director approval before submittal to the VRC, positions have gone through a rigorous analysis within the departments before ever getting to the VRC. Managers don't take positions to the VRC until they have reviewed them thoroughly and can justify their posting.

It is because of this rigorous analysis and the fact that the Board has already approved many of the positions coming before the VRC that the committee has not found cause to deny any position. In addition to the factors listed above, a position's funding source has a major influence in the level of scrutiny it receives. If a position is funded by a dedicated revenue source (e.g., road fund, waste fund) that is currently stable and has a stable forecast, the need for vacancy review is mitigated. Finally, given that the Board has gone through a rigorous process to prioritize general fund services as part of the budget process, the question arises as to whether the VRC is needed any longer.

**C. Alternatives/Options**

1. Disband the Vacancy Review Committee;
2. Disband the Vacancy Review Committee but continue to require that departments submit the Vacancy Review Checklist to Human Resources before posting a vacancy. HR will continue to track vacancy information and provide annual reports to the board regarding vacancy status.
3. Continue the Vacancy Review Committee.

**D. Recommendation**

Approve Option 2. This will allow HR to continue gathering information while considerably shortening the posting process timeline, and reducing the administrative overhead that attending, staffing and managing the committee review process involves.

**IV. IMPLEMENTATION/FOLLOW-UP**

Following Board action, members of the VRC will be notified that the committee no longer needs to meet or review vacancies; supervisors and managers will be informed about the amended process.

**V. ATTACHMENT**

Vacancy Review Checklist



# PROCESS FOR REVIEWING POSITION VACANCIES

"When vacancies occur, it is in the best interest of the County and its citizens to review work processes and to determine whether the vacant positions and associated resources can be better utilized."

Adopted Lane County Strategic Plan, A4(c)

Answers to questions should be described or justified fully. For example; if the service delivery will be impacted, please explain how on a separate attachment/sheet.

REQUESTED DATE FOR REVIEW: \_\_\_\_\_

Position Title/Classification: \_\_\_\_\_ Position #: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Time  \*Part Time  \*If Part Time - Number of hours scheduled per week \_\_\_\_\_

How long vacant? \_\_\_\_\_

Dept./Division: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept Contact & Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Position vacated due to: Retirement  Termination  Resignation  Other  \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Group Designation: \_\_\_\_\_ Will someone attend the VRC to discuss? YES  NO

If so, who? \_\_\_\_\_ **NOTE:** Meetings are held every Tuesday in the Cheryl McCawley Training Room from 3-4 p.m.

### 1. POSITION FUNDING

1a. Is the position in the General Fund? YES  NO

1b. Is the position funded through the General Fund and other funds? YES  NO   
If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

1c. Is the position funded through Grants, Contracts, and/or Enterprise Funds? YES  NO   
If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

1d. What is the full cost of this position (include benefit and indirect charges)? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. SERVICE NECESSITY

2a. Is the position key to service being delivered? YES  NO   
If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

2b. Is the service mandated or core? YES  NO   
If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

{Step 1. NOTE: Strategic Plan, B3, Funding Priorities - immediate and critical life and health safety needs; 2. Direct response to broad County goals such as personal safety, property safety, infrastructure safety, health safety, basic needs, serving youth; 3. Other mandated services with demonstrated cost-effectiveness and broad-public support; 4. Contributes to the attainment of broad County goals and there are sound fiscal reasons to continue}

2c. Will there be unintended negative impacts if not filled? YES  NO   
If yes, what impacts? \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. POSITION REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

3a. Can the work be done differently or combined with other positions (RPI type analysis)? YES  NO   
If not, why not? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, what is the plan? \_\_\_\_\_ (If yes, go on to #4).

3b. Is the service supported by the Strategic Plan's funding priorities (section B3)? YES  NO   
If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

3c. How will service delivery be impacted if done differently or reorganized? \_\_\_\_\_

3d. Is it reasonable to review consolidation options?  
If not, why? YES  NO

3e. Is this a one of a kind position and/or function? YES  NO

**4. ORGANIZATIONAL REDESIGN**  
4a(1). Use of positions funding for a limited time? YES  NO   
4b(2). Are technology investments involved?  
If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_ YES  NO   
4c(3). Will there be or are there process improvements underway? YES  NO   
Please provide some description of PI or explanation of why not: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. NATURE OF THE POSITION**  
5a. Is it a limited duration position:  
(1) not technically a temp position? TEMP  NOT TEMP   
(2) what is the length of funding? \_\_\_\_\_  
(3) what is the funding source (e.g. grant, one-time \$, foundation)? \_\_\_\_\_  
5b. If left vacant for now, could this position provide a place for an employee otherwise likely to be laid off?  
YES  NO   
If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
5c. Are there likely to be labor relations issues created if this position is held vacant or eliminated?  
YES  NO   
If yes, what are they likely to be? \_\_\_\_\_

**6. CLASSIFICATION OF THE POSITION**  
6a. Does this create a "learning" or apprenticeship" position? A career ladder?  
YES  NO   
6b. Is the classification too broad or narrow or no longer representative of what is needed?  
YES  NO   
6c. Do classification specifications accurately reflect tasks and functions (e.g. changes in technology)?  
YES  NO   
If no, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Department Director

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***REMINDER: Please email an electronic copy to LC HR Vacancy Review. The signed hard copy should be forwarded to your HR Analyst.***

-----STOP HERE-----

**PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA**  
***For Vacancy Review Committee and Human Resources Use Only***

**7. OUTCOME OF REVIEW**  
 Position Eliminated  
 Authorized for Internal Posting  
 Authorized for External Posting  
 Return to Department for Additional Analysis  
 Hold for Potential Layoffs

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair/Vice-Chair VRC