



INTERNAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

RECORD OF ACTION FOR
July 11, 2022

Supervisor Diane Burgis, Chair
Supervisor Candace Andersen, Vice Chair

Present: Diane Burgis, Chair
Candace Andersen, Vice Chair

Staff Present: Monica Nino, County Administrator; Julie DiMaggio Enea, Staff

Attendees: Ann Elliott, Human Resources Director; Gigi Crowder; Paul Reyes, Sr. Deputy CAO; Melvin Russell, Probation Dept.; David Twa; Dawn Morrow, District III Supv Office; Jill Ray, District II Supv Office; Colleen Awad; Michael Kent, Health Services Dept.; Jo-Anne Linares, Health Services Dept.; Gail McPartland, Library Dept.; Patrice Guillory, Probation Dept. (ORJ); Brian ?; Jason Chan, Sr. Deputy CAO; Unidentified Caller 1; Diana Becton, District Attorney; Deidra Dingman, DCD; Erika Jenssen, Health Services Dept.; Lara DeLaney, Sr. Deputy CAO

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1. Introductions

Chair Burgis called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m.

2. Public comment on any item under the jurisdiction of the Committee and not on this agenda (speakers may be limited to three minutes).

No one requested to speak during the general public comment period.

3. RECEIVE and APPROVE the Record of Action for the June 16, 2022 Special IOC meeting.

The Committee approved the Record of Action from the June 16, 2022 special IOC meeting as presented.

AYE: Chair Diane Burgis
Vice Chair Candace Andersen

4. APPROVE recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to appoint Brian Oftedal to the At Large #2 seat and Susanna Thompson to the Alternate #3 seat of the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Advisory Fire Commission to four year terms ending on June 30, 2026.

Chair Burgis introduced the item and she and staff indicated that the matter was relisted from the prior meeting agenda to permit an opportunity for public comment, since technical issues may have prevented some public comment on this item at the prior meeting.

Vice Chair Andersen raised a related issue about the desired role of AFC Alternates and said she would recommend to the BOS on July 12, 2022 that the AFC Bylaws be modified to reflect that

Alternate members shall be able to fully participate in AFC discussions but will only be permitted to vote in the absence of a regular member, and on a rotating basis to be established by the AFC.

An unidentified caller commented that all of the candidates appeared to be well qualified.

The Committee unanimously approved the recommended appointments and directed staff to forward the recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

AYE: Chair Diane Burgis

Vice Chair Candace Andersen

5. RECOMMEND to the Board of Supervisors appointment of Jack Bean to the General Public Alternate seat to complete the current term that will expire on December 31, 2023 and Maureen Brennan to the Environmental Justice seat to complete the current term that will expire on December 31, 2024 on the Hazardous Materials Commission.

Chair Burgis introduced the item. Michael Kent described the outreach that was conducted to recruit applicants and also confirmed that Alternates are encouraged to fully participate in meeting discussions.

Chair Burgis encouraged prospective advisory body members to attend meetings of the advisory bodies to gain a better understanding of the commitment necessary.

An unidentified caller commented that the HazMat Commission seemed to be heavily regulated by Supervisor Gioia because of his District, and requested public disclosure if there were any connections between the applicants and the Supervisor or connections between applicants and specific political objectives.

Vice Chair Andersen thanked the HazMat Commission for vetting applicants and noted that the County's application process seeks to identify potential conflicts of interest, whether financial or familial. Michael Kent commented that HazMat Commission seats have specific eligibility requirements and applicants are reviewed closely in terms of the eligibility requirements. It is not uncommon for one or more County Supervisors to know or have interacted with prospective advisory body applicants.

The Committee unanimously approved the recommended appointments and directed staff to forward the recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

AYE: Chair Diane Burgis

Vice Chair Candace Andersen

6. PROVIDE direction to staff following Advisory Body Review of the Racial Justice Oversight Body.

Paul Reyes provided background on the RJOB and RJTF. He then identified four issues that were hindering the RJOB: (1) the existing RJOB charge is vague; (2) staff support is insufficient to the RJOB's needs; (3) RJOB subcommittees are self-forming and, therefore, not always balanced; and (4) there is high interest in participation and no term limits.

Vice Chair Andersen commented that much of the work currently undertaken by the RJOB and Probation, as support to the RJOB, is meant to be shifted to the ORESJ, once established. She said the BOS had set aside funding for the ORESJ, conducted a series of listening sessions, asked about the timeline for establishing the ORESJ, and noted that the BOS had not received a status update for a couple of years. She sees the ORESJ as bringing together the many interrelated issues that are being presently worked on in silos. She prefers to continue to define the RJOB mission broadly so as not to constrain the RJOB. She prefers to maintain a diverse range of community and County members, but said that the number of subcommittees could be limited in number, membership, and required to be balanced. She prefers not to have term limits.

She recognized the Probation Department's limited ability to compel data collection and reporting by non-County agencies -- another reason for hastening the establishment of the ORESJ.

Chair Burgis observed the importance of meeting attendance to achieve a quorum. She thought that term limits might be counterproductive since it can take years for community members to acquire the body of knowledge about the issues that County officials readily have. She likewise prefers to keep the RJOB charge broad so as not to limit public input, but suggested that the RJOB voluntarily select a few issues to focus on over the next two years -- in other words, focus its efforts within its resources and make a two-year work plan.

Patrice Guillory agreed that it would be more productive for the RJOB to prioritize and focus on a limited set of issues rather than try to work on all issues at once. She said that narrowing the charge of the RJOB, particularly at the subcommittee level, could help the RJOB prioritize its work within the resources allocated to support the work. She supports the TJTF policy recommendations but believes that the actions needed to research, analyze, develop and implement program and policy changes require more resources than are currently dedicated to the RJOB and that many such activities may be beyond the authority or jurisdiction of the RJOB and even the County. She said that some of the subcommittees are not balanced between county and community membership. She suggested that a planning consultant might help facilitate development of a strategic work plan consistent with allocated resources.

Erika Jenssen mentioned the Health Services Dept Equity Officer and the importance of the various linkages between data and programs. She is looking forward to the advent of the ORESJ as a clearinghouse for these linkages.

An unidentified caller commented that she judges people by their character rather than skin color and believes that this program isn't going to protect a certain race over other races -- and that we have a very diverse community, not just black/white. She said we need to see beyond the narrative that racial injustice is just a black/white issue. She advocates for counseling or plea deals for first offenders to give these offenders a chance to learn coping skills and self-regulate. She said Andrew Hall should not have been convicted as he was trying to protect the public welfare. She said she could support the County's ORESJ program if it was personal character-rather than race-based.

Vice Chair Andersen commented that we need to examine how help the RJOB be effective in its charge, and may need to modify the bylaws to provide better representation on the subcommittees, to modify the charge of the committee to remove mandate language (such as must and shall) if activities are beyond the authority of the RJOB and/or County. She discouraged narrowing the RJOB charge significantly because that could undermine outreach currently underway relative to the creation of the ORESJ. She sees the ORESJ being organized under the County Administrator's Office rather than under Probation. She is not inclined to set term limits but said we should monitor member participation and replace members who do not regularly participate.

Lara DeLaney reported that the BOS can expect to receive a status report on the creation of the ORESJ in September, and then staffing would need to be determined and recruitment conducted so, if fast-tracked, the ORESJ might be established in the early part of 2023. Recommendations may include more emphasis on contract consultants than County staff.

Chair Burgis suggested that we change the name of the seats designated for Criminal Justice Involved individuals to remove any stigma. The eligibility requirement can be maintained but the seat name can be modified, as we did for certain seats on the Mental Health Commission.

Paul Reyes said he will work with ORJ to modify the RJOB bylaws for IOC consideration at a future date.

7. RECEIVE presentation from the Human Resources Director about options for quickly filling key permanent staff vacancies.

Ann Elliott presented the staff report, reviewing the recent challenges the County has faced in staff attrition and hiring, contrasting the hiring experience between entry level positions and high-level positions. She said that the County has lately been seeing many people at the beginning of their careers and the end of their careers but not many in between who have the minimum requisite knowledge, skills and experience to transition to higher level roles. She also noted an increasing number of private sector candidates, which presents learning curve challenges and also a misalignment of job expectations. Overall, we are seeing a significant decrease in the number of applications received and the frequency of "ghosting", where applicants do not respond to invitations to interview for jobs. The time elapsed between application submittal and invitation to interview will vary depending on the type of recruitment, and the time period likely impacts the level of applicant response. Public sector agencies cannot be as agile as private sector agencies due to the many due process requirements applicable to public agencies. Also, for recruitments that incorporate testing in addition to interviews, it is not practical or efficient to test individually. Tests are generally conducted in batches/groups after a deadline has been set, and this may also add time between application submittal and invitation to test/interview. Time elapsed could be several weeks, during which time applicants find other employment.

Vice Chair Andersen contrasted the County's practice with the private sector, which in many instances will contact a new applicant in 2-3 days.

Ann summarized the initial recruitment steps: open/filing period, minimum qualifications review, notification to applicants, appeal period. If the initial candidate pool is too small, the filing date may be extended in an effort to enlarge the pool, which adds more time between submittal and next steps for early appliers. HR sometimes conducts continuous recruitments that can accelerate the timeline if there is no requirement for testing. She indicated that HR does send an acknowledgement upon receipt of an application but not upon determination of eligibility in terms of meeting the minimum qualifications.

Vice Chair Andersen asked if HR actively scours LinkedIn to find candidates and Ann responded that the volume of County recruitment makes such an effort infeasible. She gave an example of a recruitment that garnered over 600 applicants whose qualifications had to be reviewed by HR staff for eligibility.

Chair Burgis asked if HR did any cross recruitment of applicants, in other words, a candidate qualifications bank that might match an applicant for one job with another job. Ann explained that the only and closest mechanism the County has to matching candidates with appropriate qualifications to an array of job opportunities is the Alternative Certification process, which is subject to very specific rules. She noted that while educational degrees are reasonably easy to evaluate, qualifying experience is not reasonably easy to evaluate for specific jobs. The exam process can reveal if candidates have exaggerated skills and depth of prior training and experience.

Ann explained that County departments are already, by necessity, hiring individuals who do not have the desired knowledge, skills and experience needed for their positions but have the bare minimum qualifications. This increases the learning/training curve for these new hires and adds stress for the hiring department, which has already endured the added pressure of contending with the position vacancy for several months.

Ann reported that the County's retirement age is decreasing, with COVID contributing to that trend. The County has also experienced an uptick in short-notice separations and retirements. Chair Burgis asked if the County has a policy requiring prospective retirees to provide a minimum amount of advanced notice of their retirement in order to be considered for temporary County employment following retirement. Staff advised that PEPRA prohibits any pre-determined rehire arrangements between prospective retirees and the County.

Ann said that succession planning is a strategy to address some of these challenges and the County is working towards offering opportunities to employees to cross train (short of working out of class) and work on projects that involve higher level duties or are in areas outside of their

normal assignments. It would also behoove the County to involve prospective retirees in developing the transition plans for their job duties.

Another strategy that can be employed when enough notice of separation/retirement is provided, is advance recruitment. The risk, however, is that the departing employee may rescind his/her plans and voiding a position vacancy.

Ann described some of the tools HR has employed during the last two years to improve and accelerate the hiring process. HireVue is a talent experience platform designed to automate workflows and make hiring easier, improve how employers engage, screen and hire talent with text recruiting, assessments, and video interviewing software HireVue enables candidates to complete their interviews in a recorded session at a time most convenient for the candidate, and enables raters to view the interviews at a time convenient to the rater. HireVue has increased participation all around. HR also uses SkillSurvey, which is an automated reference check program.

HR established a Professional and Organizational Development Team to assist County employees with progressing through their career path and stay with the County rather than simply work at the County for 2-3 years as a resume builder. The Team is updating management development program and working with Departments to develop customized training and help new hires navigate the County's onboarding process.

Ann said that HR is working on a Countywide onboarding process, pre-boarding process and off-boarding (exit survey) process. Presently, HR receives only anecdotal exit information provided by departments. The Committee agreed that exit survey data is very important for employee retention and labor negotiating.

Ann discussed the impact of Remote Work or telecommuting on the County's recruitment efforts. Some positions are not suited for Remote Work but the County will need to continuously review how Remote Work can fit into its service delivery models.

Ann is very interested in receiving feedback from the IOC and BOS and considers today's discussion as the first in a series. The Committee appreciates that HR recognizes the challenges and needs of the County and the setting of realistic expectations. Vice Chair Andersen said it would be very helpful to communicate timelines to prospective candidates.

An unidentified caller expressed appreciation for the candid staff report and discussion. She asked if it would be possible to offer unpaid internships to high school seniors to expose them to government careers.

Chair Burgis confirmed that the County offers paid internship programs for students.

8. The next meeting is currently scheduled for September 12, 2022.

Chair Burgis confirmed the next meeting date of September 12, noting the cancelation of the August IOC meeting.

9. Adjourn

Chair Burgis adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

For Additional Information Contact:

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