

**Organizational Synergy & Human Resources Committee
September 27, 2005 Meeting**

Minutes

Members Present: Steve Cassano, Committee Chairman
Mark Cooper
Jim Francis

CRRA Staff Present: Tom Kirk, President
Jim Bolduc, Chief Financial Officer
Laurie Hunt, Director of Legal Services
Kristen Greig, Secretary to the Board/Paralegal

Also present: Miguel Escalera, Esq. of Kainen, Escalera & McHale

Chairman Cassano called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and noted that there was a quorum.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MAY 26, 2005 ORGANIZATIONAL SYNERGY & HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

Chairman Cassano requested a motion to accept the minutes of the May 26, 2005 Organizational Synergy & Human Resources Committee meeting. The motion made by Director Francis was seconded by Director Cooper.

The minutes were approved unanimously.

2. REVIEW AND RECOMMEND CREATION OF A GOVERNMENT RELATIONS LIAISON POSITION

Chairman Cassano requested a motion regarding the above-captioned matter. Director Francis made the following motion:

RESOLVED: That the Board of Directors authorizes hiring a full-time Government Relations Liaison as approved by the CRRA Organizational Synergy & Human Resources Committee.

Director Cooper seconded the motion.

Mr. Kirk explained that the idea of creating the Government Relations Liaison position initially came out of an Executive Committee meeting where it was suggested that CRRA should consider how it might benefit from hiring an individual to fill this role. Mr. Kirk said that the position would be full-time with a major objective being educating and coordinating with the legislature.

Mr. Kirk informed the Committee that CRRA met with other quasi-publics who have full-time government liaisons and spent several hours with the legislative liaison of the DPUC, which was very helpful. Mr. Kirk said that he initially did not doubt the benefits that this position could bring to CRRA, but after talking to the gentleman at DPUC, he was convinced that the benefits of a full-time employee to the organization are significant. Mr. Kirk said that an employee Government Relations Liaison is much different than a contract lobbyist. Mr. Kirk said that the employee would have the ability to work with the legislators in their legislative offices, beyond the barrier at the legislature. A public employee has much more access than a typical lobbyist would have, but more importantly, CRRA's employee would have the credibility and stature of a single-focused representative of a public agency. Mr. Kirk said that there would be no competing interests that a lobbyist might have, which is looked upon favorably by the legislators. Mr. Kirk said that the individual in this position would put CRRA in a better position to avoid some of the last minute saves that CRRA saw this last session. Mr. Kirk said that management thinks very highly of this opportunity.

Mr. Kirk explained that this is not a budgeted position, but in looking at the budget situation, funding this position at the recommended range from favorable variances in other areas is not an issue for this budget cycle. Mr. Kirk stated that the creation of this position would change Mr. Nonnenmacher's job description, which is complementary of management's desire to get Mr. Nonnenmacher more involved in customer relations and customer service. Mr. Kirk added that it was management's intent to carve the customer service portion out of the Operations Manager, Customer Care position. Mr. Kirk said that he thinks that will be an increase in the total responsibility for Mr. Nonnenmacher, but said that Mr. Nonnenmacher is well-suited for the responsibility with his background and experience in communications. Mr. Kirk said that he did not think Mr. Nonnenmacher would be disconnected from government relations, but with a full-time liaison, Mr. Nonnenmacher would be needed more for communication than the day-to-day interaction with the legislators. Mr. Kirk said that the vacant Operations Manager position would get a new job description which would be heavily weighted toward development and operations, which is a better fit to support the operations staff. Mr. Kirk said that he feels these changes will better serve the organization and allow a full-time presence in the legislature.

Chairman Cassano stated that he found the responsibility listed as "Educate self on member town issues in conjunction with the state's legislature" intriguing and asked what would be expected of this responsibility. Mr. Kirk responded that he understands that the individual filling this position would have to be well aware of the issues that member towns have with respect to the solid waste issues at the legislature. Mr. Kirk said that one of the advantages of having someone at the legislature on a full-time basis is that CRRA can have an awareness and knowledge of issues and be able to help its friends. Chairman Cassano asked where CRRA would stand if the issue was not a solid waste issue. Mr. Kirk said that he would not like to see CRRA involved in issues that are not related to solid waste. Chairman Cassano said that should be better defined in the responsibility section of the job description so CRRA does not look like an adjunct of CCM. Mr. Kirk said the responsibility could be changed to read, "Educate self on member town waste and CRRA-related issues in conjunction with the state's legislature." Chairman Cassano also recommended that the job responsibilities include working with Mr. Nonnenmacher's position to develop awareness of municipal issues relative to solid waste.

Director Francis asked what management sees this position's responsibilities being when the legislature is not in session. Mr. Kirk stated that he spent a lot of time asking the DPUC legislative liaison questions on that matter. Mr. Kirk said that the DPUC legislative liaison has no problem staying busy and added that the most effective use of his time is when the legislature is not actively considering bills. Mr. Kirk said that, particularly in the first couple of years, developing and maintaining relationships with legislators will be a full-time job. Mr. Kirk added that, to the extent there is free time, there is no shortage of customer outreach, non-legislative issues to be dealt with. Mr. Kirk said that with the Solid Waste Management Plan being developed, the closure of the Hartford landfill, and the development of a new landfill, he thinks this individual will be very busy.

Chairman Cassano said that there are 186 elected members of the legislature and this individual's greatest task would be to meet with each one of them individually when they are out of session. Chairman Cassano said that the personal meetings in the legislator's home towns, during the downtime of the legislature, are invaluable. Chairman Cassano noted that there are a lot of barriers that need to be broken down.

Chairman Cassano pointed out the salary range for the position. Mr. Kirk said that, through research of similar positions at the state and other quasi-public organizations, that was the range that was being proposed. Director Francis said that he felt both proposed ranges were too high, stating that he is not a fan of pricing to the external market when the external market is wrong. Director Francis stated that the salary ranges for this kind of position could invite many more editorials. Mr. Kirk referred the Committee to the salary ranges for comparable positions at CDA, CHFA, CI and the state and asked the Committee what range they felt would be appropriate. Chairman Cassano stated that he would like the range to start at \$78,978, the P25 rate for Pricing Range 2, and have the high range go to \$106,250, the P50 rate for Pricing Range 1. Chairman Cassano said that he would not go below \$78,978 because there are people in the business that are already making that amount and CRRRA will want to offer enough to entice them to apply for the position. Chairman Cassano said he did not want to lose that opportunity. Mr. Kirk said that the range could be adjusted to a range of \$78,978 to \$106,250. Mr. Kirk said that if CRRRA cannot find the right person at that range, he does not want to hire a staff member whose experience will not further the goals of the organization. Mr. Kirk said that the starting salary would be determined by the person and the experience he or she brings. Director Francis pointed out that at the hiring range of this salary, this position would be getting paid more than the chief elected officials of member towns. Director Francis said he would support Chairman Cassano's suggested range.

The motion previously made and seconded was approved unanimously.

3. REVIEW REPORT AND MANDATORY MINIMUM PROCEDURES FOR COMPENSATION AND BENEFIT MANAGEMENT AT CONNECTICUT'S QUASI-PUBLIC AGENCIES

Chairman Cassano requested a motion regarding the above-captioned matter. Director Cooper made the following motion:

RESOLVED: That the Board of Directors directs the CRRA Organizational Synergy & Human Resources Committee and management to adopt changes as appropriate for CRRA with respect to the Report and Mandatory Minimum Procedures for Compensation and Benefit Management at Connecticut's Quasi-Public Agencies.

Director Francis seconded the motion.

Chairman Cassano noted that, in reading the report, it seemed as though CRRA has enacted nearly every recommendation in the last two years.

Mr. Kirk said that management found three areas in which CRRA is not in exact compliance with the recommendations. This first is compensatory time for senior management, the second is availability of documentation, and Committee oversight of annual performance reviews of senior management.

Mr. Kirk said that, in regard to the compensation plan, it will be made available to all employees. Mr. Kirk said that the plan has been treated as a semi-confidential document in the past. It was made available to employees but employees were asked not to make copies of the document. Mr. Kirk said the intent was not to keep employees uninformed, because the plan would be reviewed at least once a year, but the intent was to prevent "powerhouse lawyers" from finding ways to make salary administration difficult.

Mr. Kirk said that the annual reviews of senior management's performance are a practice, that although not written in the policy, have been the done with this Committee. Mr. Kirk said CRRA will commit to that practice in writing.

Mr. Kirk said that the significant change will be to the Compensatory Time Policy. Mr. Kirk said that senior management would include the President and his direct reports (including the Chief Financial Officer, Director of Legal Services, Director of Operations, and the Director of Environmental Affairs and Development). Mr. Kirk said that, in looking at other state agencies and quasi-publics, there are managers who have compensatory time so CRRA felt that drawing the line at the "Director" level was appropriate. Mr. Kirk said that, even though it is rarely used, if CRRA were to eliminate compensatory time without any trade off, it would not be well received.

Director Francis stated that how compensatory time is used in the organization makes a difference and said that he agreed that the elimination of compensatory time should not go below the senior management level. Director Francis stated that, in West Hartford, if a salaried senior management employee worked 50-60 hours in a week and had to leave for a doctor's appointment, it is not an issue. Attorney Escalera stated that is also consistent with wage and hour law, since the employee is salaried – exempt, if someone attempted to dock them for a partial day's absence, the employee loses the exempt status and the employee could be owed overtime for the last two years. Attorney Escalera said that exempt employees have to be allowed to leave if they have met their hourly obligation.

Mr. Bolduc said that Mr. Hyfield is reviewing the timekeeping software to enable senior management to account for time off without the time being charged to the Projects. Mr. Kirk said that CRRA is comfortable with senior management surrendering its comp time benefit. Mr. Kirk asked the Committee to keep in mind that comp time is not extensively utilized and that he has to personally sign off on every request for comp time.

Mr. Bolduc informed the Committee that Mr. Hyfield was putting together a summary schedule to ensure CRRA was complying with all of the requirements put forth in the report.

Mr. Kirk pointed out that Chairman Pace would like to address this matter at the Board meeting to let the public know that CRRA is addressing the Governor's recommendations. Director Francis stated that the Board should also know that CRRA provided a significant amount of direction at the meetings between the Governor's office and the other quasi-public agencies.

The motion previously made and seconded was approved unanimously.

4. INFORMATIONAL ADJUSTMENTS TO THE SALARY RANGES TO ACCOUNT FOR RISE IN CPI

Chairman Cassano requested a motion regarding the above-captioned matter. Director Cooper made the following motion:

RESOLVED: That the Board of Directors directs the CRRA Organizational Synergy & Human Resources Committee and management to adopt changes as appropriate for CRRA with respect to the Report and Mandatory Minimum Procedures for Compensation and Benefit Management at Connecticut's Quasi-Public Agencies.

Director Francis seconded the motion.

Mr. Kirk informed the Committee that CRRA did not do a CPI adjustment to salary ranges last year because the ranges were established mid-year. Mr. Kirk explained that the Compensation Plan calls for salary ranges to be adjusted by the appropriate local CPI each year. Mr. Kirk stated that CRRA would make a 4% adjustment using the Boston-Brock-Nashua Index. Mr. Kirk recognized that 4% was a large adjustment, but said that he was comfortable with that because an adjustment was not made last year. Mr. Kirk stated that adjustments would be made annually going forward.

Chairman Cassano asked if that was the most appropriate index to use. Mr. Bolduc responded that there is not an index for the Hartford area and the Boston index was the closest representation of Hartford. Mr. Kirk stated that the next time a review is done, a few different indexes could be analyzed to find the one that CRRA is most comfortable with. Attorney Escalera noted that although this index is titled "Boston-Brockton-Nashua" the chart includes the states of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and Connecticut.

Chairman Cassano stated that he did not have a problem with the 4% because it represents a two-year adjustment. Mr. Kirk stated that if the Committee preferred, the Northeast Index could be used for a 3.4% adjustment for one year and CRRA could determine what the 2004 Northeast Index adjustment would be for the previous year.

Mr. Bolduc pointed out that CRRA plans to go to the market next year for surveys. Mr. Kirk also noted that the adjustment does not translate to any dollars - it only adjusts the salary ranges for employees.

Chairman Cassano stated that he would rather use the 4% adjustment and take care of the two years at one time. Director Francis suggested using the Northeast Index going forward. The Committee agreed.

5. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Cassano requested a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. The motion was made by Director Francis and seconded by Director Cooper. The motion previously made and seconded was approved unanimously. Chairman Cassano requested that the following people remain for the Executive Session, in addition to the Committee members:

Tom Kirk
Jim Bolduc
Laurie Hunt, Esq.
Miguel Escalera, Esq

The Executive Session commenced at 1:47 p.m. and concluded at 2:40 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 2:40 p.m. and Chairman Cassano noted that no votes were taken.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Cassano requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion made by Director Francis and seconded by Director Cooper was passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen B. Greig
Secretary to the Board/Paralegal