



State of Nevada
MERIT AWARD BOARD



“Good Government, Great Employees”

515 E. Musser Street, Room 101
Carson City, Nevada 89701-4204

Joe Lombardo
Governor



MERIT AWARD BOARD
November 14, 2024 – 1:30 PM

EICON Building
515 East Musser Street,
First Floor Conference Room
Carson City, NV 89701

and

Eureka Building
7251 Amigo Street, Room 120 Las
Vegas, NV 89101

MINUTES
Merit Award Board

Members Present:

Shayne Powell, Governor's Finance Office, Chair
Tracey Cook, Representative, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
(AFSCME) Local 4041
Carrie Hughes, DHRM, Secretary

Members Absent:

Brian Miller, Representative, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
(AFSCME) Local 4041

AGENDA

1. Call to Order, Welcome, Roll Call, Announcements:

Chair Shayne Powell called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. There was a majority of members present in order to conduct the business of the Board.

2. Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

3. Review and possible approval of award amount to Haaland McIntire

Haaland McIntire has been awarded \$700.00 as prescribed by the Good Government, Great Employees program for their resource-saving suggestion implemented by the state agency. In accordance with NRS 284.070 monetary rewards must be split into two even allotments; one in the first fiscal year and one in the second fiscal year after the state realized the reduction expenditures. However, due to the COVID 19 pandemic causing the board to be adjourned for multiple fiscal years, these payments are now considered past due, and it is the Chair's recommendation that the full amount be awarded, as the two payments to Ms. McIntire were due no later than 90 days after the end of fiscal years 2019 and 2020.

A motion was made to approve. The motion was seconded. Motion carried.

4. Employee Suggestions

A. Kevin Neff

Kevin Neff suggested implementing budgets that would roll over to the next fiscal year. The way he understood it, a lot of budgets don't roll over and if the money is not used then the money is lost. Also, if you are not using all the money then next year you receive less. This way if money is not used it can be saved for emergency expenses, projects, or to upgrade equipment.

University Police Department-Northern Command of the University of Nevada Reno responded that State funded budgets do not allow for rollover of funds as suggested. Due to the biennial legislative budgeting process in Nevada, state funds do not roll over and any unspent state funds must be returned to the State.

A motion was made to concur with the agency's decision to deny this suggestion. The motion was seconded. Motion carried.

B. Lori Rice

Lori Rice suggested a non-lethal system for prisons and jail riots. This would include installing a pepper spray system in our prisons and jails and would not only save prisoners' lives but also guards' lives in the event of a riot. If a riot broke out the guards would be able to hit a button to release the pepper spray causing the rioters to instantly stop, then once the area has been aired out the guards could go in and take care of the rioters without putting their life at risk.

The Division of Welfare and Supportive Services of the Department of Health and Human Services responded that the merit of this suggestion is referencing improvements to the Department of Corrections. Since the Department of Health and Human Services does not oversee the Department of Corrections the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services does not have the ability to estimate cost savings for this suggestion. The division could not implement the suggestion at another department.

A motion was made and seconded to table Agenda Item 4B. Motion carried.

C. Hilary Kinney

Hilary Kinney suggested switching from a 5-day work week to a 4-day work week. The 4-day work week has been shown to improve mental and physical health as well as boost company productivity and save money. Production would be improved as well as mental health and would reduce waste on the environment.

Great Basin College responded that alternate schedules are offered over the summer months. It is also the expectation of Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) that campuses remain open 5 days a week. Leadership has not approved this approach during the academic year and does not intend to do so.

A motion was made to concur with the agency's decision to deny this suggestion. The motion was seconded. Motion carried.

D. Heather Hill

Heather Hill suggested switching from a 5-day work week to a 4-day work week. This would give employees the option to work 4 10-hour shifts or 4 8-hour shifts. The 4 8-hour shifts would save on wage costs and the 4 10-hour shifts would enable agencies to stay open after 5pm and save on heating and energy costs.

Great Basin College (GBC) from the Winnemucca Center responded that GBC offers an alternate schedule over the summer for staff. It is the expectation of NSHE that campuses remain open 5 days a week and leadership has not approved this approach during the academic year and does not intend to do so.

A motion was made to concur with the agency's decision to deny this suggestion. The motion was seconded. Motion carried.

E. Amber Peters

Amber Peters suggested implementing an automatic staffing system such as KRONOS (currently being used at High Desert Prison) or Telestaff type system. There is a staffing department with 5 staff members that are in charge of staffing Stein Forensic Hospital which is expanding rapidly. They keep track of all annual leave, sick leave, overtime requests and fairly divide up overtime. This often fails and leaves the State open to grievances. It takes 5 people to do the job of one staffing system like KRONOS.

The Division of Public and Behavioral Health responded that prior to this suggestion Stein Forensic Hospital had been actively exploring software solutions to enhance staffing processes. There is tangible proof of active consideration before the date of the submission.

A motion was made to concur with the agency's decision to deny this suggestion. The motion was seconded. Motion carried.

F. Rhonda Thompson

Rhonda Thompson suggested utilizing appropriate codes per provider type to capture billing, changing certain procedures to avoid unnecessary costs. Mobile Crisis currently uses "in office" for

all psychotherapy services rendered despite in fact that the program offers “in home” therapy and renders much of its psychotherapy services in the home. Mobile Crisis could use the code for “in home” appointments.

The Division of Child and Family Services responded that this suggestion was based on services billed to and reimbursed by Nevada Medicaid only. MCRT serves all youth, regardless of insurance coverage. Nevada Medicaid is currently awaiting approval from CMS for the addition of the provider type for crisis services. Codes for crisis services are being reviewed. Also, you cannot bill for two different services for the same child for the same period of time. PCWs could not be billed for BST while in the home for an appointment while the clinician was providing therapy

A motion was made to concur with the agency’s decision to deny this suggestion. The motion was seconded. Motion carried.

G. Phillip Moralez

Phillip Moralez suggested introducing a new business practice for the vetting of contractors/vendors within the Department of Public Safety. The proposition would be to have the Assistant Terminal Agency Coordinator conduct the vendor/ contractor backgrounds for each of their divisions instead of going to the Backgrounds Investigation Unit. The Backgrounds Investigation Unit typically takes one to two weeks to complete one of these backgrounds and they have four employees that complete this task.

The Department of Public Safety advised that the suggestion from Phillip Moralez is being implemented. This would save time in the background unit to concentrate on backgrounds for permanent employees, which takes quite a bit longer. The Department of Public Safety later followed up indicating that there were no cost savings, so the work is still being done by another division. The division will have the ability to prioritize their own sworn applicants’ background over temp staff. The background unit will have some of their time free up so they will be able to prioritize sworn applicants, which is their highest priority.

A motion was made and seconded to table Agenda Item 4G. Motion carried

H. Audrey Shapiro

Audrey Shapiro suggested updating Access Nevada online applications to reduce extra work. This would require at least one household member if under the age of 18 or a reported pregnancy in order to apply for TANF online. This would save employees time by not having to create flexible letters for those who aren’t eligible for cash assistance. It would also save customers time traveling to an in-person appointment that might not be needed.

The Division of Welfare and Supportive Services indicated that the suggestion is merely proposing that an existing policy or procedure be followed correctly.

A motion was made to concur with the agency’s decision to deny this suggestion. The motion was seconded. Motion carried.

I. Paulla Hart

Paulla Hart suggested creating a mid-service survey with the Planning and Evaluation Unit for the In-

Home Clinical Team program to utilize. This mid-service survey will maximize family participation because it will be provided by their assigned treatment team.

The Division of Child and Family Services indicated they were looking into existing staff to determine if a budget enhancement would be needed. However, there would be no cost savings with implementation.

A motion was made to concur with the agency's decision to deny this suggestion. The motion was seconded. Motion carried.

J. Estela Ochoa

Estela Ochoa suggested adding a new schedule for employees of 3 12-hour shifts. This gives employees 4 days off. Schedule 6am- 7pm with 1 hour lunch. The benefit will be working 12-hour shifts, more employees will be available to work non-lobby cases and catch up on backlog. Also, overtime wouldn't need to be offered so that would save money.

The Division of Welfare and Supportive Services indicated that this would reduce the quality or quantity of services that are provided by the division/ department.

A motion was made to concur with the agency's decision to deny this suggestion. The motion was seconded. Motion carried.

K. Jone't Young

Jone't Young suggested self-defense classes for all field workers who investigate allegations of abuse, neglect, isolation, etc. Self-defense classes where all Adult Protective Services (APS) field workers participate and learn the skills necessary to defend themselves if a situation arises and running is not an option.

The Aging and Disability Services Division as Adult Protective Services (APS) offers several statewide trainings to staff but self-defense is not one of them. The training suggested is only available in Las Vegas. The program has been exploring additional safety policy and safety training but not as a result of this recommendation.

A motion was made to concur with the agency's decision to deny this suggestion. The motion was seconded. Motion carried.

L. John Henry

John Henry's suggestion was to improve the cell service at the Reno DMV by putting a cell tower on the back side of the employee parking lot. It has shown to be very difficult for customers to email us proof of insurance, or SR 22's and other needed documents while at the DMV not to mention the texts to let them know they are being called to a window.

The Department of Motor Vehicles stated they would not be adopting this request as there are a total of 238 towers within a 3-mile radius. The suggestion was valued but at this time the cellular providers have no interest in expanding.

A motion was made to concur with the agency's decision to deny this suggestion. The motion was seconded. Motion carried.

M. Pamela Brooks

Pamela Brooks suggested including common constituent resources onto the Attorney General's website and encourage them to see the resource list before submitting their complaint. The backlog is clogged with duplicate complaints, which adds to the extended delay. It is her belief that if we had a list of resources available to our constituents, they could receive the immediate assistance they need, instead of having to wait several months down the line for the office to respond with those same resources.

The Office of the Attorney General responded that although they agree it is a part of a much larger website redesign. This project was being worked on before the suggestion was submitted.

A motion was made to concur with the agency's decision to deny this suggestion. The motion was seconded. Motion carried.

5. Discussion of Date of Upcoming Meetings:

6. Board Comments:

There were no comments from the Board.

7. Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

8. Adjournment:

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned.