



State of Nevada
MERIT AWARD BOARD



“Good Government, Great Employees”

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

Brian Sandoval
Governor



STATE OF NEVADA
MERIT AWARD BOARD
October 28, 2014 – 10:00 a.m.

Blasdel Building, 209 E. Musser Street,
1st Floor, Room 105
Carson City, Nevada 89701

And

Grant Sawyer State Building
555 East Washington Avenue
Room 1400
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101

The sites will be connected by videoconference. The public is invited to attend at either location.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Merit Award Board

Members

Present: Chairperson Rosa Mendez - Chairperson and Representative, Governor's Office
Angelica Gonzalez – Representative, Division of Human Resource Management (DHRM) and Secretary to the Merit Award Board
Lesley Henrie – Representative, Dept. of Administration, Budget Division

Members

Absent: Neil Lake – Representative, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
Harry Schiffman – Representative, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairperson Mendez – She called the meeting to order.

II. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Discussion of Employee Suggestions: William Strong (DHHS), Robert Geraldo (NDOC) and Theron Huntamer (DHHS)

Chairperson Mendez: Asked to unite the suggestions of Mr. Strong and Mr. Geraldo for discussion. **Lesley Henrie:** Had no objections. **Angelica Gonzalez:** Had no objections.

William Strong (DHHS) and Robert Geraldo (NDOC)

Chairperson Mendez: Stated that she forwarded to the membership information that was forwarded to her and received input from both Mr. Strong, Mr. Geraldo and other individuals regarding Mr. Geraldo's role in the suggestion. She asked for any comments or questions regarding that information.

Lesley Henrie: Asked for clarification whether their submission to the board was to present the facts or to support the award being given to just one recipient instead of two. **Chairperson Mendez:** Responded that approximately 99 percent of the data received was factual information, including information about Mr. Geraldo's definition and a detailed explanation of Mr. Geraldo's role in the suggestion, going back to 2013 and including his immediate supervisor and past system chief. The majority of the information was to confirm Mr. Geraldo's involvement in the suggestion and provide examples of time and place. Mr. Strong also submitted information. Both acknowledged each other's participation. Neither has made a claim as to a percentage of what they believe is their entitlement. Chairperson Mendez believes both individuals want recognition and both believe they should be provided an award. The June 13, 2014, minutes should confirm that the decision was for a joint award. **Lesley Henrie:** Confirmed the decision of a joint award.

Chairperson Mendez: Noted that she received input from the former director of DHHS regarding this suggestion. The former director confirmed a meeting in July 2013 involving all the directors, as stated in the backup information provided to the membership from Mr. Geraldo and Mr. Strong, and all directors present agreed on a joint award. Based on that, she believes the decision of June 13, 2014, will stand and no motion is required.

Lesley Henrie: Agreed that no motion is necessary. She noted that the motion for the joint award was pending verification of actual savings. **Chairperson Mendez:** Asked if she had that verification. **Lesley Henrie:** Confirmed receipt of a project summary from April 2013 through December 2013 that provided the number of cases closed and the associated cost avoidance. She believes this is strong data and that the efforts of these two gentlemen have closed cases that should not have been open and therefore were an actual cost savings to the state. She asked if they need to get a memo from the agency. **Chairperson Mendez:** Confirmed receipt of a memo dated October 9 from Mr. Steve H. Fisher. The final total cost avoidance is listed as \$2,677,578. **Lesley Henrie:** Asked what date range that number includes. **Chairperson Mendez:** Responded that the figure is through July 2014, which includes two fiscal years. She stated she will provide copies of the memo to the members.

Lesley Henrie: Stated that it is her belief that if the program was verified to have started in 2013, the installment payments set forth in the statute would be past due, resulting in a full payout. The agency would have to fund it out of the current year versus the previous years. She noted this is a situation similar to that of Theron Huntamer. Budget analysts are currently working to identify

the process for that. She raised a question about whether the statute clarifies what happens when payments are made for activity that happened two years prior and wondered if this was an issue for the agency. She noted that an agency such as Corrections often doesn't have as much latitude to pay stale claims. This might be discussed in the future. **Chairperson Mendez:** Stated this might be a major point to discuss.

Theron Huntamer (DHHS)

Chairperson Mendez: Stated that the memo from the department agency was dated September 23, 2014, as far as what was required of the agency. **Lesley Henrie:** Confirmed. **Chairperson Mendez:** Asked about the status of the final cost savings verification. **Lesley Henrie:** Confirmed receipt of a memo verifying actual implementation in fiscal year 2014, and the program was completed in fiscal year 2014, although there may more moving forward. The cost savings was \$266,710.36. She stated that the award is \$25,000 or 10 percent, whichever is less, and because the resulting \$25,000 payment to Theron Huntamer is larger than \$5,000 per year, they have moved forward to go to the Interim Finance Committee (IFC) to request approval according to the statute.

Angelica Gonzalez: Commented on the memo submitted by DHHS regarding Mr. Huntamer's award. On Paragraph 3 of the first page, it states that this figure was determined based upon one Administrative Assistant I at the rate of \$18.43 an hour. But according to the compensation schedule, the rate of pay for an Administrative Assistant I is \$13.36 per hour. She asked about this discrepancy. **Lesley Henrie:** Stated that she noticed this discrepancy, as well, but made an assumption that the higher figure included fringe benefit costs. It is not noted one way or the other. **Angelica Gonzalez:** Stated that she also believed they rolled all costs together into that rate. **Lesley Henrie:** Stated that one other option would be to hire temporary staff, which is at a higher rate. She stated she believes that the total costs of employment are fairly comparable between temporary and permanent staff.

Lesley Henrie: Gave a status update. She said the agency verified the savings amount, and the board has voted to move forward. A memo is being reviewed currently by the Budget Office to be submitted to IFC. That should happen in approximately a week. They are looking into matters such as how the payment is going to be allocated in budget, since the fiscal year 2014 is closed. Because the award hits the \$25,000 cap, it will be paid in two installments according to statute, which is half at the end of the fiscal year when it was implemented and the second half at the end of the subsequent fiscal year. Upon IFC approval, the request is for \$12,500 to be paid immediately and \$12,500 to be paid at the end of fiscal year 2015, no later than July 30, 2015. This is the first time a payment request has required IFC approval. This will be an action item before IFC likely requiring testimony, and she requested that the board be present to address any questions or concerns. The agency will also likely need to be present to answer questions about analysis, about cost savings, about the payment allocation in the budget and the like. She recommended that any time they need to go before IFC the board members be made available to answer questions, as well as the agency that is paying the award. This is on target to go to the IFC in December, possibly December 13. Upon verification that this has been officially submitted, she will forward the meeting information to the members. **Chairperson Mendez:** Asked that the date be provided as soon as possible for scheduling purposes. **Lesley Henrie:** Said she will forward the date of the meeting today.

B. Suggestion of Matrix for Website

Chairperson Mendez: Asked for input on additions or corrections. **Lesley Henrie:** Stated this is a good way for people to know what suggestions have been submitted. She recommends that this be available in Excel format to facilitate sorting. **Chairperson Mendez:** Asked whether a

secure file would be preferable. **Lesley Henrie:** Suggested perhaps a PDF with a search function to look for keywords. **Chairperson Mendez:** Asked whether there was any value with the division direction. She believes this is a good reference point but wondered if it should be changed or deleted. **Angelica Gonzalez:** Suggested that may not be necessary because people move around. **Lesley Henrie:** Suggested just the name of the agency. **Angelica Gonzalez:** Agreed. **Lesley Henrie:** Stated that they will have all records for reference.

Lesley Henrie: Discussed the column that addressed whether the suggestion was put into place. She stated that while that is information a user might want to know, there has been no follow-up on most of these suggestions, and the clear reasoning behind that lack of follow-up makes the topic too complex for one column. She agreed that this column should not be included. **Angelica Gonzalez:** Agreed. **Lesley Henrie:** Again stated that further reference material is available if required.

Chairperson Mendez: Asked whether move to approve with revisions or wait for input from the absent members. **Lesley Henrie:** Suggested that since all members have seen this information and had an opportunity to comment, a motion would be fine.

MOTION: Move to approve posting the Merit Award Board Suggestion Log on the website with revisions as discussed at the meeting today.
BY: Lesley Henrie
SECOND: Anglica Gonzalez
VOTE: The motion passed.

Angelica Gonzalez: Asked to comment on the matrix suggestion log following the motion regarding the same. She noted that there is a column addressing whether legislation is required and wondered whether this would be unnecessarily confusing for employees unfamiliar with the law. She wondered whether this column is necessary. **Lesley Henrie:** Stated that is a good point.

C. Merit Award Program FAQs

Chairperson Mendez: Stated that the document includes her determination of the most frequently asked questions about the program and asked for additions or revisions. She stated that she wanted to keep the document relatively short, such as where to find program information, the process of awards and the members of the board. **Lesley Henrie:** Stated that when she reviewed the document, she noted that it covered areas of potential confusion. She liked that it was short and sweet with plain language. She stated that this can be a starting point and can be updated as needed. She noted the last paragraph of the section addressing what happens after the board receives a suggestion, specifically the statement that an award may not be made for an employee's suggestion until the state has realized a reduction, elimination or avoidance of expenditures. She suggested putting that information in bold, as misunderstanding potentially affects an employee more and could lead to the employee getting upset. **Chairperson Mendez:** Reiterated that this document can be revised pending feedback from website users. **Lesley Henrie:** Thanked Chairperson Mendez for putting together the document.

MOTION: Move to approve Merit Award Program FAQs with cited revision.
BY: Chairperson Mendez
SECOND: Anglica Gonzalez
VOTE: The motion passed.

III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FOR APRIL 21, 2014

Chairperson Mendez: Asked for comments or questions.

Lesley Henrie: Had no comments.

Angelica Gonzalez: Had no comments.

MOTION: Move to approve board minutes for April 21, 2014

BY: Lesley Henrie

SECOND: Anglica Gonzalez

VOTE: The motion passed.

IV. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FOR JUNE 13, 2014

Chairperson Mendez: Asked for comments or questions. **Lesley Henrie:** Had no comments or questions. **Angelica Gonzalez:** Had no comments or questions.

Chairperson Mendez: Asked whether, under the section concerning William Strong (DHHS), the acronym HHS should be amended to DHHS. **Lesley Henrie:** Said that the acronym as written (HHS) is accurate but could be changed for consistency. **Lesley Henrie:** Noted that the Motion to approve Theron Huntamer's suggestion should be pending verification of actual savings.

MOTION: Move to approve board minutes for June 13, 2014, pending correction to change HHS to DHHS and to change wording on the motion to read: MOTION: Move to approve Theron Huntamer's suggestion pending verification of actual savings.

BY: Chairperson Mendez

SECOND: Lesley Henrie

VOTE: The motion passed.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT – (Note: No vote or action may be taken upon a matter raised during public comment until the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an item upon which action may be taken. Comments will be limited to five minutes per person and persons making comment will be asked to begin by stating their names for the record.)

Angelica Gonzalez: Noted there was no public comment.

Angelica Gonzalez: Noted that Item 5 should be item 6 in the agenda.

Chairperson Mendez: Asked for clarification of whether the program had a feedback form similar to the form used DHHS. **Angelica Gonzalez:** Confirmed that there was no formal form. DHHS developed a form after receipt of a large number of suggestions.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Motion to adjourn

BY: Chairman Mendez

SECOND: Angelica Gonzalez

VOTE: The vote was unanimous by motion

The meeting was adjourned.