

W. T. A.

AGENDA COVER MEMO

Memorandum Date: February 20, 2008

TO: Board of County Commissioners
DEPARTMENT: Board of County Commissioners
PRESENTED BY: Faye Stewart
AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Discussion of Employee Recognition

I. MOTION

DISCUSSION ITEM ONLY, NO ACTION TO BE TAKEN.

II. AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

The purpose of this work session is to discuss the possibility of implementing a formal program for recognizing outstanding employees.

III. BACKGROUND/IMPLICATIONS OF ACTION

A. Board Action and Other History

The County's Administrative Procedures Manual (Chapter 3, Section 49) contains a procedure adopted in 1998 for the implementation of a program that recognizes and financially rewards employees for their exceptional performance and ranges from one percent to nine percent of the employee's regular hourly rate. That program is called the Conspicuous Achievement Support Honorarium (CASH) Program, and is directed at non-represented, exempt employees to recognize them for performance of a major, additional effort-intensive duty (e.g. preparing for Y2K). The award has to be authorized by the department director, and then the Human Resources (HR) director, and the budget for granting the award (one-half percent of the personal services appropriation for members of employee groups 07, 10, 11 and 12) for the ensuing year is to be added to the budget of the applicable departments. Should the budget Committee fail to fund the program causes its de facto suspension in the ensuing fiscal year for lack of appropriations.

According to the Human Resources director, the CASH program has not been funded since 2000.

Other than the CASH program, the only County-wide formal employee recognition effort has been during the annual "State of the County"

meetings, when the Board has recognized outstanding Lane County employees and citizens. Departments have developed various methods to recognize exceptional performance, including formal award ceremonies (Sheriff's Office), all-staff team-building sessions, and the use of training opportunities.

B. Policy Issues

The Administrative Procedures Manual (APM) still references the suspended CASH program referenced above. Should the Board adopt a new employee recognition program, The Board may also want to address whether the procedure should remain in the APM. In addition, staff recommends that new procedures be written and adopted to establish criteria and procedures for any new employee recognition program.

C. Board Goals

The County's Guiding Principles specifically reference valuing employees and recognizing their contributions. A formal employee recognition program is a tangible way to demonstrate that principle. .

D. Financial and/or Resource Considerations

In reviewing the number of ways that the Board might reward those being recognized, the concept of awarding additional Time Management (TM) hours was discussed with the department directors. Because the County's TM program is already very generous, the directors felt that other methods of reward would be more appropriate. Subsequently, HR staff did some research into what might be appreciated. By buying in bulk at wholesale prices, staff found several items costing \$25-35 dollars each that, when personalized with Lane County's logo, would make very nice honorariums. If 27 employees are recognized each year, the total annual cost of the program would run between \$675 and \$810. Photographs of some of the ideas are shown on Attachment A.

E. Analysis

In thinking about how the program might work, several ideas have been considered. There are 14 departments in the County, plus the Justice Courts, with considerable differences in the number of employees. If the number of awards granted (one, two or three) per department is based on that department's relative size within the organization, the following distribution might be used:

Health & Human Services, Public Works, Sheriff's Office:	Three employees from each department
Assessment & Taxation District Attorney's Office Information Services Management Services Workforce Partnership Youth Services	Two employees from each department
Children & Families County Administration County Counsel's Office Fairboard Human Resources Justice Courts	One employee from each department

The following is a list of possible guidelines that could be considered in determining whether an employee merits special recognition:

1. The department director nominates an employee from her or his department by submitting a clear, factual statement of the considerations used in determining the justification for recognition. The justification should specify pre-established job standards, goals and objectives, and document how these have been exceeded.
2. The statement should include a brief description of the nature of the project, task and/or special assignment completed at an extraordinary level of distinction which merits recognition.
3. If the recognition is based on the result of a special project or assignment, the director should provide an estimate of the cost savings to the County and/or the department which resulted from the completion of the special assignment. In addition or as an alternate, he or she should provide an estimate of savings which will be realized in the future as a result of the work that has been accomplished.
4. Client or customer testimonials that describe the outstanding service or performance the recognition is based upon could be submitted.
5. Examples of community service that support the County's guiding principles and objectives that the employee performs in addition to regular duties could also be supporting factors for the recognition.
6. Examples of work that further the BCC's goals, e.g., diversity.

Additional recommendations/suggestions submitted by the department directors are:

7. We should make sure that there is a distinction between long-standing exceptional performance (which is the criteria for granting exceptional merit increases) versus single event or short term activities that qualify for the recognition award. The directors are concerned about setting up expectations for increased salary from this program that won't necessarily be fulfilled.
8. Directors believe that our employees would probably value personal contact from the board members. Having "bagels with the board" was an idea.
9. There was concern expressed by those who were here during the huge layoffs in the 1980's regarding how the recognition is juxtaposed with the pending layoffs we are facing this year.
10. A schedule needs to be set up of when each department will submit nominees.

F. Alternatives/Options

1. Direct staff to refine details of the program, draft new administrative procedure for program (if needed), and create a schedule for implementation.
2. Delay program until more clarity exists regarding financial future of County general fund and road fund.
3. Do not move forward with program.

IV. TIMING/IMPLEMENTATION

If approved, begin implementation immediately, with first awards given in April.

V. RECOMMENDATION

This draft proposal is initiated and recommended by the Board Chair, Faye Stewart. With the uncertainty facing the County and the declining morale, Commissioner Stewart believes it is more important than ever to recognize the contributions made by our employees.

VI. FOLLOW-UP

Commissioner Stewart and staff will return to the Board with an order that more specifically describes the program, along with a more exact implementation schedule.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

Possible Honorarium Items for Outstanding Employee Recognition Program.

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