



# ***GREEN LAKE COUNTY***

*571 County Road A, Green Lake, WI 54941*

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**Original Post Date: 12/01/15**

**Amended\* Post Date:**

**The following documents are included in the packet for the Property and Insurance Committee on December 1, 2015:**

- 1) Agenda
- 2) DRAFT Schenck Report



# GREEN LAKE COUNTY OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Margaret R. Bostelmann, WCPM  
County Clerk

Office: 920-294-4005  
FAX: 920-294-4009

## *Administrative Committee Special Meeting Notice*

*Date: November 30, 2015 Time: 5:30 PM*

*Green Lake County Government Center,  
County Board Room, 571 County Rd A, Green Lake WI*

### AGENDA

#### **Committee Members**

*Jack Meyers,  
Chairman  
David Richter,  
Vice -Chair  
Harley Reabe  
Michael Starshak  
Paul Schwandt*

*Margaret R  
.Bostelmann,  
Secretary*

1. Call to Order
2. Certification of Open Meeting Law
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Agenda
5. Public Comments (3 Min. Limit)
6. Correspondence
7. Discussion and Action on Organizational Assessment– Deb Pagel, Schenck
8. Request from Schenck for additional funding for Organizational Assessment due to additional accommodating Green Lake County employees' schedules
9. Committee Discussion
  - Future Meeting. Dates: February 1, 2016
  - Future Agenda items for action & discussion
10. Adjourn

Kindly arrange to be present, if unable to do so, please notify our office. Sincerely, Margaret R. Bostelmann

**Please note: Meeting area is accessible to the physically disabled. Anyone planning to attend who needs visual or audio assistance, should contact the County Clerk's Office, 294-4005, not later than 3 days before date Of the meeting.**



November 23, 2015

Jack Meyers- Board Chair  
Green Lake County  
571 County Road A  
PO Box 3188  
Green Lake, WI 54941

Dear Jack,

Schenck SC appreciated the opportunity to provide professional services to Green Lake County. The objective of our engagement was to perform an Organizational Assessment for your County. The purpose of the assessment was to gain an understanding of your current Human Resources practices within each of the departments in the County. Utilizing that information, we will assist the County in determining the most effective way to handle the Human Resources functions.

#### **Approach and Scope**

##### **Organizational Assessment**

Our services were to closely and objectively examine how the organization is currently handling the human resources function within all the departments of Green Lake County. To accomplish this we conducted on-site assessments of your current processes within each of the departments in the County and to gather information from them on their current practices. We interviewed all of the department heads, several unit managers, division administrators and staff during the course of our assessment.

We looked for inconsistent procedures and practices in the administration of the departments human resources practices.

We prepared the following report with our findings and recommendations. Please note that these recommendations are not meant to be all inclusive due to the limited amount time spent with staff.

**Debra Pagel**  
Director of Human Resource Consulting  
311 Financial Way, STE 100  
Wausau, WI 54401-2624  
715-261-4701 (direct)  
[debra.pagel@schencksc.com](mailto:debra.pagel@schencksc.com)



## COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS FROM INTERVIEWS

### Health and Human Services Department

The first group that I met with was the Health and Human Services (HHS) Department. In discussion with the unit managers they followed the same protocols when replacing staff. They would notify the Director and the Deputy Director to let them know of the opening and would then begin the process of reviewing the job description to ensure it was current and up-to-date. The information would then be passed on to the personnel committee for their approval. The information would then be given to Human Resources (HR) to be posted internally prior to being posted externally. Resumes received were forwarded to the Director and he decided who was going to be interviewed. In some cases the unit manager was part of the interview but this was not consistent with all unit managers. The Director would make the final determination on who was being interviewed and would then arrange the interviews with the candidates. From there the candidate pool would be narrowed down and an interview would be conducted by the Director, the personnel committee or representative and the unit manager. It was clear in discussion with the unit managers that they did not have the final say in who was hired. In most cases that decision was made by the personnel committee. While they were part of the initial screening and interviewing process, they were not part of the final decision making process. This was frustrating for them because often times they did not get the most qualified candidate because the ultimate decision was made by the board committee. They also indicated that the process can take several months to complete and in the meantime, they are left with not enough staff to do the work required within the department.

The same issue surfaced when it came to disciplinary action for staff. Often times the unit manager needed to bring the issue to the Director before they could take action. There were times that several weeks would pass before action could be taken which made it difficult to sit down with the employee after so much time had passed.

All of the unit managers felt that when the current Director was the Deputy Director they filled that role well. They were available to them, they dealt with discipline issues, and human resources related issues were handled. When promoted into the role of Director and a new Deputy Director was hired, things changed significantly. Many of the unit managers don't feel that the Deputy Director understands the dynamics of what is happening in their departments. They also felt the Deputy Director is choosing not to gain an understanding of what they do. When the unit managers have gone to the Deputy Director with issues things rarely get done. As a result, many have stopped going to the Deputy Director for human resources related issues and are handling them as best they can, working together as unit managers along with Human Resources. They feel that the Deputy Director focuses the majority of his time trying to develop new programs and little if any time on personnel matters as described in the job description.

Overall the morale in the department from the unit managers' perspective is very low. They feel that they and the staff were voiceless in what happened over the last year leading up to the unit manager of Clinical Services being placed on leave. There is a lack of clarity on what the Directors role is and what

the Deputy Directors role is. Prior to the Deputy Director assuming the role as Director, they felt as though the roles of both positions were clearly defined and the department ran very well. Once the change occurred things started to change significantly.

The unit managers would involve the Administrative Coordinator in personnel related matters however, because that position didn't have the authority over the Director, the Administrative Coordinator could only provide guidance and make recommendations on what should be done and could not require action to be taken. There is a lack of clarity with the unit managers on exactly what the role of the Administrative Coordinator is and what level of authority that position has.

The one thing that all of the unit managers did say is that as a result of them having to assume more of the day-to-day employee relations issues, they have become closer as a group and feel that they work well together. They would like to see this continue as they feel it has made them stronger and more effective leaders.

#### **Other Departments**

In my discussion with department heads outside of HHS, the process for recruiting is similar. They go through the process of updating the job description, getting the position approved through the personnel committee and getting it posted both internally and externally. They receive the resumes to review and select the candidates they want to interview. They typically arranged the interviews and many involved Human Resources in the interview process along with either a committee member or the committee depending on the department. Who has the final decision making authority was again a bit unclear and varied by department. In some cases, the committee made the final decision and in others, the leader of the department had the authority to make that decision. There were also inconsistencies in the next steps of the process from checking references, to making the offer and sending out the offer letter to the candidate; it doesn't appear that there is a standard offer letter that goes out as part of the process. In some cases the department head is responsible for writing the offer and sending it out and in others they rely on the HR Department to put the offer letter together.

Protocols for onboarding a new person are pretty well established. There is a process for the new employee to meet with the Human Resources Department to cover all of the new hire information. Each of the departments then has their procedures in place for continued onboarding of a new employee.

#### **Change with ACT 10**

The passing of Act 10 also had an impact on County employees. Most individuals I spoke with mentioned dissatisfaction with the impact the changes had. Historically the Labor Unions addressed many of the employee issues and with the decertification there is confusion on who to go to get their concerns addressed. The Administrative Coordinator can facilitate discussions to resolve issues and make recommendations to Department Managers but does not have the authority to require action be taken to find a resolution. All of these changes have had an impact on morale within the County. There is also a lack of trust felt by employees. Part of that is driven by the changes that have happened over the last several years and part is driven by the perceived lack of participation of some County Board Supervisors.

I heard things such as “there are members on the committee that are making policy, hiring and budget decisions that affect us that have never been in our department and don’t even know who we are and what we do”. They were not suggesting that the County Board Supervisor’s on their committee become more involved in the day-to-day operations, merely that they gain a better understanding of what people do and who people are so they can make better informed decisions. Now most of the information about the department and staff is occurring only through the interaction with the department heads.

### **Lack of Consistency among Departments**

I also heard that some departments are very policy driven and follow the established procedures in the policies and procedures manual and other departments are less structured so there is inconsistent administration of those policies. The perception by some is that some staff is allowed to behave in a manner that is not consistent with established policies. The area many talked about was under the “Respectful Workplace” where it indicates that Green Lake County prohibits any behavior that is discourteous or demeaning to other employees. One bullet point in this section reads “Repeated negative comments about others, either verbally or in writing and gossiping about another individual” is identified as disrespectful behavior. However, this behavior appears to be common in some of the department’s within the County and is tolerated with no action being taken to enforce the established policy. I also heard that in some department’s people are allowed to come in late or leave early without consequence and in other departments that are more policy driven and require compliance they are not allowed to do either. People feel there is a lot of inconsistency in the administration of HR related policies and procedures. They don’t feel as though there is a lot of collaboration between the departments. While there are regular department head meetings they are not always attended by everyone and may not be as effective as they could be.

Many individuals felt that when there was a designated HR professional on staff several years ago there was more consistency in the administration of human resources policies and procedures. While that position was only part time the individual in that role worked closely with the department heads to assist them.

During my discussions with staff there were also some things discussed that were not directly related to the effectiveness of how human resources functions within all the departments are being handled they warrant acknowledgement to help the County continue to improve on their overall effectiveness.

### **Summary Comments and Observations**

Concern was expressed that there is no strategic plan in place for the County. Each of the Departments and their committees function independent of one another; their main focus is on the immediate needs of that department. This silo type of approach doesn’t typically foster the process of looking outside of the department to assess how decisions being made impact the county as a whole current state as well as future state. The lack of clear direction on where the County wants to be in the future and the current silo approach to managing the departments creates a risk for the future success of the county. It was obvious that each of the Department Heads takes pride in what they do and the services their

department provides for the residents of the County. There isn't currently a position in the County that creates that bridging strategy to create interdependency of the departments. This creates a lack of accountability of the Department Heads. While the Department Heads report to their committee, information provided to that committee is through the Department Head, and they share what they feel appropriate. Committee's may not always have all of the information they need to make the best decision not only for that department but for the County. Currently the Department heads focus tends to be more tactical with a focus on the day-to-day operations. There is a risk that continued focus on day-to-day operations will prevent the County from long range strategic goals and objectives.

The current role of the County Clerk includes the role of Administrative Coordinator as well as responsibility for the Accounting/Deputy Clerk which was created to oversee the financial management of the County. Going forward it may not be in the best interest of the County for the new County Clerk to have those additional responsibilities.

There is also duplication of services throughout the County. Decentralization of HR as well as Finance creates inefficiencies. Although the County presently has an Accountant/Deputy Clerk on staff in the County Clerk's office, the county's departmental organizational structure does not clearly indicate the accountant's responsibilities and authority pertaining to departmental accounting matters. As a result, at the present time management has less assurance that departmental accounting decisions and changes are being implemented in an effective manner, partly because many employees involved in the accounting process generally do not have formal accounting backgrounds and are only focused on systems and procedures as they affect their department.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall our recommendations are not intended to be all inclusive and are based on a limited amount of time meeting with staff in Green Lake County.

### **1. Clear and Shared Vision for Green Lake County**

First and foremost we recommend the County consider creating a Strategic Plan. This plan will help validate the current mission and develop a future vision for Green Lake County. The plan will provide the road map to establish long term goals and objectives for the County and its employees. As with any elected positions there is turnover at the Board level as well as with elected officials. That longer term strategy helps ensure that even with that transition the County is successful in the future.

It was clear in discussion with everyone we spoke with that there is a need for a position with overall decision making authority within the County. The current structure of County Clerk having the title of Administrative Coordinator, does not give the authority required to be effective. With the Administrative Coordinator's upcoming retirement all of the responsibilities performed that are outside the scope of what is done as an elected official will need to be evaluated closely. Several of the counties we currently work with are moving or have moved towards creating a County Administrator position with the appropriate infrastructure to support that position. We highly recommend Green Lake County

consider evaluating this as an option. This position would Coordinate and direct all administrative and management functions of the County. This person would work closely with the County Board of Supervisors to establish and execute the goals and objectives of the County.

Approaches to consider when evaluating the County Administrator position will be dependent on the County Board of Supervisors desired outcomes. Ideally the individual that would fill this role would have a financial and operations background to provide oversight for all of the administrative functions in the County in addition to the various departments.

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

Additionally with some of the changes that have occurred in the Health and Human Services Department we recommend evaluating the roles and responsibilities of the Director and Deputy Director positions. Historically the role of the Deputy Director was on the day-to-day operations of the department and working closely with the Unit Managers on their human resources related issues. In discussion with staff and Unit Managers many of those responsibilities have transitioned to the Unit Managers over the last year. As expressed earlier the Unit Managers feel as though it has made them much stronger leaders. The current role of the Deputy Director is unclear.

The position should be defined and evaluated to assess whether or not the human resources oversight it provided formerly to HHS could be done for all of the departments to create consistency in the administration of policies and procedures. Considering this as an option would not add to the overall head-count of the County and would create leadership and oversight for human resources throughout the organization.

Having a position that worked with all of the departments to establish protocols of what should be done by the department and what should be done by human resources would create efficiencies within the departments especially as it relates to recruitments and selections and administration of policies and procedures. Part of establishing the protocol is defining Board involvement. The role of the Board is critical in providing oversight to the departments within the county but in a recruitment I would question whether making the hiring decision for open positions is too involved in the day-to-day operations instead of providing oversight. We are not suggesting that the committees aren't involved but recommending that the final decision making authority be given to the hiring leader. While this does happen with some of the departments we recommend it be consistent throughout the county. Like the County Administrator, this position would be looking at HR related things from a County perspective. It will also be critical that if this position is created the individual in the role have the necessary knowledge skills and abilities to perform the essential job duties. This position would assume many of the duties currently being performed by the Administrative Coordinator.

## **3. Organizational Structure**

As the County has turn over at the leadership level within the various offices and departments we recommend an evaluation be done to assess the opportunity to create efficiencies and possibly consolidate and move reporting relationships to different departments. There are departments that

have an administrator or lead position that only has a few positions reporting to them. An example of this would be the Child Support Agency. We are not suggesting necessarily that the administrator position be eliminated but if vacated the structure and reporting relationships should be evaluated to assess overall operating efficiencies for the County. For efficiency purposes, opportunities to combine departments should be continually explored.

#### **4. Consider a Centralized Accounting Function**

We believe the County could be better served in the future by evaluating the current structure and considering a centralized accounting function similar to what we are recommending with Human Resources. By creating a specific department with responsibility for the entire County's financial and accounting functions you gain efficiencies and have more internal controls in place. A centralized finance department should be given clear authority over the accounting and information processing duties performed by County departments. To be effective, that department requires an accountant with formal accounting training and the ability to supervise and delegate responsibility to other employees involved with the County's accounting process. At the present time management has less assurance that departmental accounting decisions and changes are being implemented in an effective manner, partly because many employees involved in the accounting process generally do not have formal accounting backgrounds and are only focused on systems and procedures as they affect their department. To accomplish maximum efficiency, it is our belief that a centralized finance department should directly supervise all accounting and information processing duties being completed by employees in County departments. The centralized finance department would also be responsible to implement all systems changes, as well as assist in the design of new automated data processing applications and necessary internal accounting controls.

This may be difficult to accomplish since it would involve determining management responsibility for employees involved in the accounting process and the possible change of utilizing an employee in various departments of the County. We are aware of several Wisconsin Counties that have made or are considering significant changes in their organizational structures to accomplish this change.

If the individual filling the position of County Administrator has a strong financial background there may not be a need to hire a finance director because that person could provide financial oversight. If the person filling the role has a stronger operations background you may need to bring on a finance director to provide more direct oversight on the day to day operations and guidance to the Administrator.

The establishment of a centralized finance department does not necessarily require the moving of existing accounting staff to a different location. Since the accounting staff presently shares office space with the County clerk's office, there may be some benefits by remaining in the same location through cross-utilization of staff. In the future, the County may want to consider a separate location for the accounting staff if deemed beneficial.

## **5. Pending Legislation**

With the upcoming proposed changes to the overtime rules we highly recommend that an evaluation be conducted on positions currently classified as exempt to assure that they comply with the current exemption criteria and what if any change will need to be made with the proposed changes. This is an area that the Department of Workforce Development here in Wisconsin is focusing on. Misclassification of positions in the County can create exposure and have significant financial impact.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with Green Lake County in presenting our findings and recommendations. They are not meant to be all inclusive due to our limited time on site. We would be happy to assist you with the evaluation and implementation of our recommendations.

DRAFT