

**ST. LOUIS COUNTY
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

Court House
Duluth, Minnesota

The St. Louis County Civil Service Commission met on Monday, March 13, 2023 at 1:30 P.M. in HR Conference Room 2, Ground Floor, Courthouse, Duluth, MN.

Members present: Mr. Kenneth Butler, Chair
Ms. Lindsay Snustad, Member

Others present: James Gottschald, Director, Human Resources and Administration
Megan Haworth, Human Resources Advisor
Colleen Effinger, Human Resources Manager

1. Kenneth Butler, Chair, called the meeting to order.
2. A motion was made by Lindsay Snustad and seconded by Kenneth Butler to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2023, meeting as submitted.
3. The next item on the agenda under new business was consideration of the revised class specification for Supervising Deputy Sheriff. Jason Akerson, Undersheriff of the Sheriff's Department, proposed revising the Supervising Deputy Sheriff class title to Deputy Sheriff – Division Commander to provide a more updated, standard title for the class. The title change is consistent with those used in other counties and organizations with a similar rank in their deputy sheriff classification series. The class spec was last revised in 2019, and since no new duties were being assigned and there have not been appreciable changes in the work performed, the title was the only proposed revision to the class spec. A motion was made by Kenneth Butler, seconded Lindsay Snustad, and was unanimously approved.
4. The next item on the agenda was consideration of St. Louis County Civil Service Rule 4.3 update. Director Gottschald reminded the Commission that

in the Summer of 2022, the Apprentice job class description was approved. He stated the County has been working in cooperation with labor partners regarding how to operationalize the Apprentice job class. Director Gottschald further reported that, typically, when a new job class is created, the salary is negotiated with the bargaining units. He stated the Apprentice job class differs from other classes, as it can be utilized in many ways, by many different classes and departments. He stated it was neither fair nor equitable to establish a single hourly pay rate with advancement through the range that would fit all the possible applications for Apprentice. Some of those uses could include positions in building services, public works, health and human services among other lines of county business.

Given the difficulty in establishing a single pay grade which would serve all the possible uses for the Apprentice class, Director Gottschald stated that based on research of what typically happens within other employment sectors, it is being recommended that starting salary be established in civil service rules. The proposed Civil Service Rule 4.3 modification states:

“Salary grade assignment of employees hired into the Apprentice class are set at the applicable pay plan salary grade where Step 1 of the grade is equal to 80 percent of Step 1 of the salary grade for the job class which the employee is apprenticed to.”

Director Gottschald stated this new method should work in all applications and for all job classes being apprenticed. When 80 percent of Step 1 does not land on an exact number, the pay grade will be rounded up to the next highest grade. Director Gottschald stated this update was first communicated to the County’s labor groups last Fall and again in February 2023. He reported that the update was also published on the St. Louis County website and the proposal has not been met with any criticism.

Director Gottschald informed the Commission that in addition to the Apprentice job class, another change was made to add a fourth category that could qualify an employee to start above the minimum salary of a pay grade. Director Gottschald explained that currently when a candidate is offered a position at Step 1 of the applicable range and the candidate declines that offer, the hiring authority may request Human Resources to evaluate the candidates’

education or experience qualifications to see if they qualify for starting at a higher step (excluding longevity steps). Current job market conditions can also be considered. Director Gottschald stated the additional proposed criteria to be added, which is consistent with the County's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiative, is to also recognize relevant lived experiences. Director Gottschald reiterated that in the spirit of diversity, equity and inclusion work, and the tight labor market, the County is allowing for more flexibility in order to be competitive with job offers. Director Gottschald went on to mention a few other housekeeping updates, such as the date the rule change is approved, page numbering on the index and reference to the rule change update.

Commission Chair Butler remarked that an apprenticeship was long overdue, but inquired as to who makes the determination of what is considered relevant lived experience. Director Gottschald responded that the same process would be followed as today for education, experience and labor market conditions, and the determination would be made by Human Resources. He stated due to the new criteria, the department will be cautious and thorough when verifying candidates' lived experiences. Commissioner Butler further asked if it was believed that the County is setting a precedent and putting itself at risk if the process does not work for all situations. Director Gottschald responded that the County currently runs that same risk since the process is already in place, and there is always some risk.

A motion was made by Lindsay Snustad, seconded by Kenneth Butler, and the proposed revisions to the civil service rules were unanimously approved.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

- Director Gottschald updated the Commission regarding the current labor negotiations. He stated Colleen Effinger, Human Resources Manager, and Susan Hansen, Labor Negotiator, continue to meet with bargaining units and informed the Commission that two contracts have been approved by the County Board. Director Gottschald stated the contracts will be fully ratified once all county signatures are obtained and the contracts could possibly be implemented by March 31. He stated an additional contract will be going to

the County Board on March 14 and will have its second pass at the last board meeting in March. Director Gottschald reported the County has received notification from AFSCME that another contract has been voted and once the redline strike out copies are received, it will be the fourth labor contract ready to go before the County Board. He stated the remaining units are all in various stages of the bargaining process; from having already met, some that have filed for mediation and others that have yet to meet.

- Director Gottschald informed the Commission that the County continues to monitor the various legislative bills that could potentially impact employment. He stated the Minnesota Legislature has reached its first deadline that bills were required to be passed through at least one committee. Director Gottschald remarked out of the thousands of bills that are moving through various stages of legislature, Human Resources is paying particularly close attention to bills related to Paid Family and Medical Leave, Sick and Safe Time Leave and PELRA modifications.
- Finally, Director Gottschald updated the Commission regarding the staffing changes within the Human Resources Department. He stated the new Human Resources Advisor/Business Partner position has been filled by an employee who promoted within the department. Director Gottschald added that the employee's previous position has been interviewed for, and a current County employee has lateral transferred to fill that open position within Human Resources. Director Gottschald stated while the learning curve for both positions is long and it may take some time before the employees are fully self-sufficient, he is pleased to have both positions filled.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James R. Gottschald". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

James R. Gottschald
Director of Human Resources and Administration