

LIVERMORE AREA RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**Monday, March 11, 2024**

**2:00 p.m.**

**Robert Livermore Community Center  
4444 East Avenue, Livermore, CA 94550-5053  
West Wing Conference Room**

**Committee Members Present:** Jan Palajac, David Furst

**Staff Present:** Mat Fuzie, David Weisgerber, Jill Kirk,  
Michelle Kleman, Amber Maugeri, Linda VanBuskirk,  
Kendahl Hettick, Patrick Lucky

**Members of the Public Present:** None

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** Committee Chair Palajac called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.
- 2. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Chair Palajac opened the Public Comment period. There were no speakers, and the public comment period was closed.
- 3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 12, 2024:** The minutes of the Personnel Committee held on February 12, 2024 were approved unanimously as submitted.
- 4. COMPENSATION PHILOSOPHIES:** General Manager (GM) Mat Fuzie reported that a compensation study was conducted by a consultant, with extensive back-and-forth discussions between staff and the consultant to align on assumptions. Before finalizing the study, Senior Human Resources Analyst (SHRA) Amber Maugeri emphasized the need for a compensation philosophy to ensure alignment with the District's values and objectives. GM Fuzie advised that the Board Budget Workshop scheduled for Wednesday (March 13<sup>th</sup>) will facilitate discussions on various budget-related topics, including the FY23-24 Mid-Year Budget Overview, and Board philosophies regarding investment strategy, service delivery, fee schedules, and employee compensation.

The Personnel Committee received a presentation from Human Resources Manager (HRM) Michelle Kleman and SHRA Maugeri (see Attachment 1 to these minutes). The presentation outlined the importance of a compensation philosophy, highlighting its impact on equity, market trends, hiring, retention, and legal compliance. HRM Kleman highlighted benchmarking data indicating that LARPD is generally 10% below the average of medians compared to other organizations. GM Fuzie discussed the District's approach to staffing during and post-COVID, emphasizing a strategy focused on aligning staffing levels with service delivery needs while considering revenue, taxes, and deferred maintenance concerns.

The philosophy prioritizes maintaining competitive compensation while recognizing the unique offerings and contributions of LARPD to the community.

**Committee Comments and Questions:**

- a) Chair Palajac asked for examples of compensation philosophies from other agencies for perspective. [*HRM Kleman noted some agencies aim to pay the median market rate or a percentage of the benefit package. The focus is on fair pay, work/life balance, and adjusting for market trends.*]
- b) Chair Palajac raised a potential controversy regarding which agencies our employees are being compared to. [*HRM Kleman and SHRA Maugeri clarified that the comparison included cities and sister special districts, advised by consultants. LARPD maintains a low turnover rate.*]
- c) There is concern about being low on some positions, especially with potential minimum wage increases. [*HRM Kleman and SHRA Maugeri discussed potential cascading effects and the need to salvage data amidst changing job families.*]
- d) Discussion ensued about the impact of moving people up to the median, emphasizing the goal of compensating staff adequately rather than aiming for median pay. [*HRM Kleman discussed a flexible compensation structure based on performance, market rates, and organizational value.*]
- e) Member Furst stressed that it is not just about meeting specific numbers; instead, he suggested looking at the overall appeal of the job by raising salaries and benefits to make it more attractive.
- f) Member Furst advocated for a comprehensive approach to job desirability, including unofficial benefits of job flexibility, time flexibility, a positive work environment, compensation, and benefits, rather than solely focusing on salary raises and structures.
- g) The committee discussed strategies to attract more applicants for challenging positions, acknowledging the significance of competitive salaries.
- h) The suggestion was made not to use “mean” in the context of discussions.

GM Fuzie emphasized the importance of competitive wages to maintain service levels. HRM Kleman highlighted the need for a forward-looking structure and suggested exploring alternate approaches, such as exempt employees being evaluated based on market analysis rather than a grade system, to address structural issues transparently.

**ACTION:**

- The Committee suggested this item be presented to the Board for discussion at its upcoming Budget Workshop.
- The Committee suggested staff focus on the Strategic Plan objective for HR “The District is at all times prepared to maintain the staffing needed to effectively carry out all planned District services.”

**5. POTENTIAL STAFFING NEEDS RE: CEQA:**

Member Furst expressed concern about potential staffing needs for handling trail issues, grant writing, and CEQA. He highlighted the challenge of balancing existing staff capacity with the increasing workload. He mentioned the Altamont Landfill Open Space committee has \$20+ million to buy land to keep as open space, yet they receive virtually no grant requests. The District might acquire new parcels requiring CEQA evaluations and trail development as a result of the city of Livermore obtaining certain parcels, should some of the land be given to

LARPD. GM Fuzie mentioned the city's assistance with some tasks and suggested considering a part-time hire, potentially a retired expert. The recent hire of a Natural Resources Technician was discussed as well. LARPD could collaborate with external CEQA firms to manage costs. GM Fuzie provided cost estimates for previous CEQA work on the Patterson Ranch Trail and mentioned partnerships with organizations like the Tri-Valley Conservancy and the City for assistance.

**ACTION:** This was a discussion only; no Committee action was taken.

## **6. DRAFTING A DISTRICT POLICY ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

Chair Palajac initiated the discussion on drafting a district policy on artificial intelligence (AI), mentioning the recent drafting of a similar policy by the County of Santa Cruz as a potential example for consideration. The Committee deliberated on the practical applications of AI within the District, emphasizing the need for policies to ensure responsible usage and human review in content creation and decision-making processes.

### **Committee Comments/Questions:**

- a) When and how do District employees use AI, and is there a need or want for a policy regarding that? [*HRM Kleman and Community Outreach Supervisor (COS) Weisgerber provided insights, indicating AI's utilization for initiating drafts and outlines, with subsequent human review for refinement. COS Weisgerber emphasized the responsibility of the District for any content released, underscoring the role of AI as a useful tool rather than a decision-making entity.*]
- b) Committee members expressed concern over the possibility of an employee generating an entire staff report solely through AI, leading to potential public document issues.

### **ACTION:**

- Chair Palajac will provide staff with a sample of the policy created by County of Santa Cruz, approved on 8/9/18/2023 by its Board of Supervisors, for reference.
- The Committee suggested this topic be presented to the full Board for discussion and direction.

## **7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS / MATTERS INITIATED / ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- a) Chair Palajac raised concerns about the increasing presence of people riding non street-legal motorized bikes and causing damage to our parks and the surrounding land near the Arroyo Mocho Trail. Zone 7 staff recently smoothed out some of the trail damage there. Apart from informing individuals about Ordinance 8 and urging them to contact the non-emergency police phone number, there are limited actions we can take. Chair Palajac also reached out to Mike Ralph regarding the possibility of utilizing the pump track for these individuals, but it was determined that they cannot use it. There is a pressing need for these individuals to have a designated area for their activities. GM Fuzie responded that currently, there are no suitable locations identified, aside from the BMX track, which poses significant risks due to the speed capabilities of these motorized bikes exceeding its design limits. Collaboration with the city and police department is ongoing to address these issues.
- b) GM Fuzie reported that California Water met with staff today. They want to build a well in Sunset Park within their own parcel footprint. They do not think it would impact park users, however, Fuzie suggested they define and enclose their boundary more clearly.

**ACTION:**

- The Committee recommended that the issue of non street-legal motorized bikes go to the next Intergovernmental Liaison Committee agenda.

**8. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

/Lvb