

Minutes are Subject to Correction and Approval

The Marquette County Board of Commissioners held their Regular Meeting on Tuesday, June 17, 2008, at 6:00 P.M., in Room 231 of the Henry A. Skewis Annex, 234 West Baraga Avenue, Marquette, Michigan.

Chairperson Corkin called the meeting to order. Present: Comm. Arsenault, Comm. Bergdahl, Comm. Cihak, Comm. Heikkila, Comm. Joseph, Comm. Pellow, Comm. Struck, Comm. Wallace, and Comm. Corkin.

A Salute to the Flag was given followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the minutes of the County Board of Commissioners Regular meeting held on June 3, 2008 be approved.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Pellow, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the agenda be approved as presented.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment. Jim Gallant, Skandia, addressed the County Board regarding Pathways. There being no further public comment, Chairperson Corkin closed this portion of the meeting.

It was moved by Comm. Bergdahl, seconded by Comm. Struck, and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period June 7, 2008 through June 13, 2008 in the amount of \$254,951.06 be approved.

PRIVILEGED COMMENT

Dave Murray, U.P. Michigan Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative Coordinator, presented the County Board with an overview of the Michigan Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative. Mr. Murray provided the County Board with the Michigan Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative U.P. Vision Statement as adopted by the MPRI Steering Team in March of 2008. *To protect the public and reduce recidivism by enhancing, promoting, and providing community based services to promote offender accountability and their success.*

Mr. Murray named the U.P. MPRI Steering Committee Members; explained the U.P. MPRI regions by Counties, Parole Offices, Service Providers, and Resource Specialists; outlined 2007 U.P. Parole Data, and the U.P. MPRI Budget; explained the Michigan Department of Corrections 2007 Demographics:Upper Peninsula; and highlighted the Three-Phase, Seven-Decision- Point MPRI Model. The MPRI Model involves improved decision making at seven critical decision points in the three phases of the custody, release, and community supervision/discharge process. Phase One - Getting Ready; Phase 2 - Going Home; and Phase 3- Staying Home. And finally, the Transition Accountability Plan and Program Overview.

Mr. Murray introduced Greg Toutant, Executive Director of Great Lakes Recovery Center, and Bob Swanson, Resource Specialist. Bob Swanson, Resource Specialist, read the following into the record:

As a lifelong concerned citizen, a former police officer, an addiction counselor for almost twenty years, and a man who has worked in the Michigan prison system providing addiction services to inmates for the last ten years, I have come to believe that the top priority of government is to protect the public. Every year in Michigan, 11,000 people are released from prison and return to our neighborhoods with little preparation for life on the outside. It is no surprise that nearly half (48%) return to prison within two years of their release. Most return because they violate the terms of their parole by not being able to obtain employment, not attending drug treatment or missing appointments, and others return because they have committed new crimes. Either way, these ill-prepared former prisoners are putting families and communities at risk.

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We have decades of research that tells us what works to help former prisoners stay on track and not slide back to crime. Research shows that addressing employment skills; providing access to stable housing, substance abuse services, and mental health services; and strengthening the likelihood of reuniting with their families in a positive way improve the chances those former prisoners will become law-abiding, tax-paying citizens.

The Michigan Department of Corrections has implemented the Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative (MPRI) to put the research into practice in local communities throughout the state. MPRI provides a community-driven blueprint for creating safer neighborhoods and better citizens. The primary goal of the MPRI is to protect public safety by working with prisoners as they transition from prison to their communities. The vision of the MPRI is that every prisoner released to the community will have the tools needed to succeed.

Under the MPRI, corrections officials use the most accurate assessment tools available that identify prisoners' risks, needs, and strengths when they enter prison. The training and support they receive in prison is aimed at reducing their risk, addressing their needs, and finding ways to build on their strengths so that by the time they get out of prison, they are better prepared for a crime-free life.

When a prisoner is nearing his or her release, community service providers work with parole agents to develop a very specific "transition accountability plan" that details expectations, supervision, and available assistance. Every time this approach is successful, as it is proving across the state, we reduce crime. Considering that each year in prison costs taxpayers over \$30,000 per prisoner, we also save money when the MPRI succeeds. The Michigan Department of Corrections reports that preliminary data shows a significant improvement in former prisoners' success rates. Although the Department adds that it is still quite early in the program's history, even a modest 6% reduction in the failure rate can lead to a net savings of up to \$48 million in the corrections budget. That money is better spent on educating our children.

Approximately 8,000 parolees have gone through this new re-entry program. For them, recidivism rates have dropped 26%, in a report from the MDOC. If those rates continue statewide, Michigan will save \$50 million a year. Just a 2% drop in recidivism would mean one less prison every four years.

This program has now reached the Upper Peninsula. As one of many citizens across our great peninsula, I am asking you to actively support this investment and give these individuals an opportunity to get back on their feet in whatever way you can. We are not giving them a hand out, what they need is a hand up. It is good public policy.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and considering helping make a difference.

Sincerely,
Robert J. Swanson

Commissioners thanked Mr. Murray, Mr. Toutant, and Mr. Swanson for their presentation.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

There were no Informational Items for approval.

ACTION ITEMS

10a) The County Board considered a Committee of the Whole recommendation to approve the Appointment of Fred Benzie as Administrative Health Officer effective July 1, 2008, and authorize the employment agreement between Marquette County and Mr. Benzie.

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Comm. Bergdahl explained that he has received several phone calls regarding this position not being advertised, and also questioned the health department budget in relation to the salary to be paid to Mr. Benzie.

Discussion followed.

Comm. Wallace explained that it was an Administrative decision to conduct the search internally. If a qualified, eligible candidate was not found internally, the position would have been advertised.

Comm. Corkin explained that hiring from within was to save 100,000.00 plus dollars. Commissioners questioned Harley Andrews, Civil Council, as to the legality of the issue. Mr. Andrews explained that he would have to research the issue.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the County Board approve the appointment of Fred Benzie as Administrative Health Officer effective July 1, 2008, and authorize the employment agreement between Marquette County and Mr. Benzie, contingent upon legal review by Civil Council.

10b) The County Board considered a Committee of the Whole recommendation to approve the following Resolution to Accept Financial Transaction Devices:

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Bergdahl, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the County Board approve the Credit Card Acceptance Resolution allowing County Departments to accept financial transaction devices as follows:

**RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT
FINANCIAL TRANSACTION DEVICES**

WHEREAS, Public Act 280 of 1995, as amended (MCL 129.221 et seq.) allows local units of government to accept financial transaction devices; and

WHEREAS, Public Act 280 of 1995 requires the Board of Commissioners adopt a resolution to authorize the acceptance of payments by financial transaction devices, ie credit or debit cards; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Commissioners has determined that in many situations the acceptance of credit or debit cards is an acceptable means of paying for county information, services, goods, delinquent taxes, fees or charges; and

WHEREAS, The County Treasurer is responsible for determining the types of financial transaction devices which will be accepted; and

WHEREAS, The County Treasurer has drafted a written Credit Card Acceptance Policy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Marquette County Board of Commissioners authorizes the acceptance of payments by financial transaction devices, ie credit or debit cards, in accordance with the written Credit Card Acceptance Policy adopted on June 17, 2008.

Adopted this 17th day of June, 2008
Gerald O. Corkin, Chairperson
Marquette County Board of Commissioners

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10c) The County Board considered a Committee of the Whole recommendation to approve the Credit Card Acceptance Policy. The Committee of the Whole had requested information regarding exceptions to the policy. The Health Department, Perkins Park, and Big Bay Harbor currently accept credit cards without use of a third-party processor. If the Board of Commissioners adopt the policy, the Health Department would change to a third-party processor.

Staff recommends that the Board approve that Perkins Park and Big Bay Harbor continue acceptance methods. Requiring a third-party processor for the park and harbor is problematic for several reasons. The customer has the discretion of camping elsewhere. Adding a fee or a step in the reservation process could result in the loss of camping customers. For the harbor, there is no access to a computer terminal or phone (unless the boater has a phone). For both the park and harbor, the anticipated financial impact on continuing the current acceptance methods is small. Total park annual revenue is \$70,000.00. Harbor annual revenue is \$13,000.00.

The policy includes criteria for the Board of Commissioners to consider future exceptions to the third-party requirement. The parameters are financial impact to the department, customer discretion (can the same service be purchased from another provider), and access to alternative payment methods or processes. The Committee of the Whole requested review of the proposed policy by Chief Civil Council.

Harley Andrews, Civil Council, explained that he reviewed the resolution and policy proposed by the County Treasurer. As the Treasurer noted in her documentation, the acceptance of payments by local units of government, including Counties, through the use of financial transaction devices is authorized by MCL 129.211 through 129.224, provided that the local units has adopted a resolution to that effect. He also noted that the law as provides that Elected Officials - the County Clerk, Treasurer, Register of Deeds and Sheriff have independent authority to decide that they do not want to accept financial transaction devices in payment for some or all of the services they provide, even though an authorizing resolution has been adopted.

Mr. Andrews further explained that although the proposed Credit Card Acceptance Policy complies with statute, certain parts could perhaps benefit from some editorial changes to make clearer the substantive intent. He suggested the following modifications to provide more clarity to the proposed policy:

1) In its title and throughout the document the term "credit cards" is used. If the intent of the policy is to cover and allow both credit and debit cards, the term "*Financial Transaction Devices*" be used in the title and in the body of the document instead of the term "credit cards" so that it will be consistent with statute, and so that it will be clear that the policy applies to both credit and debit cards; 2) In order to make clear that elected officials have the right to opt out of the policy, the language be modified by adding "*and elected officials*" in the body of the document; and 3) modify the language so reference is made to the required *approval of the County Treasurer*.

Steve Powers, County Administrator, suggested the County Board approve the policy with Civil Council's recommended changes excluding Perkins Park and the Big Bay Harbor.

Comm. Heikkila suggested additional changes. The policy states that "Other costs such as the purchase of scanners, software, phone lines, etc. necessary to facilitate the acceptance of credit or debit cards may be included in a departmental budget request. Comm. Heikkila suggested adding "*department heads should request equipment, software, phone line expense be provided by the third party processor*".

The policy also states that "If a County Department wishes to accept credit or debit cards at point of sale, without using a third-party processor, they may do so with prior approval of the County Board of Commissioners. Comm. Heikkila suggested adding "*The department head shall first provide the County Board of Commissioners an estimate of the cost of accepting financial transaction devices.*"

Discussion followed regarding departments using the same third-party processor. Mr. Powers explained that the policy does not require that, however it will be an effort that is made by the work group and staff. There may be some reasons why they are not successful. .

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Pellow, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the County Board approve the Credit Card Acceptance Policy with the changes suggested by Civil Council and Comm. Heikkila, excluding Perkins Park and the Big Bay Harbor.

10d) The County Board considered a recommendation for Architectural/Engineering Services for the Marquette County Community Correctional Detention Facility (MCCCDC) and the Jail. The Committee of the Whole requested references and correctional experiences of Integrated Designs, Inc., and staff’s evaluation of their proposals. Steve Powers, County Administrator, explained that the three Professional References listed were all rated at average or above average. The four Correctional Facility Experience listed were all on state facilities in the Upper Peninsula and were limited to mechanical systems only. The Department of Corrections ratings were good to very good for each facility. The Department of Management and Budget rated at above average.

He explained that staff’s recommendation to award the Architectural/Engineering work to Harrison/Landmark is based on the County’s policy for the purpose of professional services, the request for proposals, and the proposals. The criteria used in the Request for Proposals are qualifications, organizational capacity, assigned staff experience and qualifications, past performance, experience on similar projects, costs, and office location. Harrison/Landmark’s extensive experience with county correctional facilities and with Marquette County specifically made the firm the recommended choice.

Comm. Corkin explained that the work of Integrated Designs, Inc. was found to be very capable of doing the job. The choice is either to award the bid to a local firm for the \$750.00 difference, or award it to a downstate firm who is also very qualified.

Comm. Pellow explained that she has received calls from very reputable contractors who have worked with Integrated Designs, Inc., and all have been very pleased with their work. Comm. Pellow is very willing to spend a few extra dollars and award the bid locally.

It was moved by Comm. Pellow, seconded by Comm. Wallace, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the County Board award the bid for Architectural/Engineering Services for the Marquette County Community Correctional Detention Facility (MCCCDC) and the Jail to Integrated Designs, Inc. in the amount of \$34,250.

10e) The County Board considered 2008 Spring 2% Distribution. Steve Powers, County Administrator, explained that the following 2% distributions have been received by Marquette County:

KBIC: \$25,430.44 (undesignated) - Sault Tribe:\$1,000.00 (G.R.E.A.T.Summer Program) - \$ 4,000.00 (R.S.V.P.)

Mr. Powers recommends the following allocations:

KBIC distribution:

G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training	\$10,020.00
R.S.V.P.	\$ 5,000.00
Superior Watershed Partnership	\$ 9,410.44

The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe distribution shall be allocated as requested by the tribal council.

The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians is not required to make any distributions to Marquette County.

Commissioners engaged in a brief discussion regarding the 2% Distributions. Comm. Wallace requested Staff inquire as to the possibility of the Iron Ore Heritage Trail Authority being eligible for 2% monies in the future.

Comm. Arsenault requested that consideration also be given to the west-end if there is ever a possibility to help with recreation.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the County Board accept the 2008 Spring 2% Distribution.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment. James Gallant, Skandia, addressed the County Board regarding Pathways. There being no further public comment, Chairperson Corkin closed this portion of the meeting.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the following information regarding the Opt-Out and Rehire Policy and Program be included in the minutes:

MEMORANDUM

To: County Board of Commissioners
From: Steve Powers
Date: June 17, 2008
Re: Opt-Out and Rehire Policy and Program

Introduction

The County of Marquette’s Rehire Policy allows older workers on the defined benefit plan who have attained the qualifications to retire (age and years of service) the ability to retire and start collecting the pensions they have earned and provide them with the ability to return to County employment and draw a salary. The policy in turn allows the County to retain experienced and valued employees that are no longer accruing (or earning) additional retirement benefits.

The Rehire Program allows Marquette County to retain experienced employees. The Rehire Program can be an effective tool for filling positions that have few qualified candidates or, in limited situations, as an incentive to retain a valuable employee who would otherwise leave.

Until fairly recently, pension rules reduced incentives for eligible retirees to remain in the workforce. Recent efforts by retirement/pension plans have made it easier for retirees to continue in public employment.

The County has chosen to provide a pension plan to its employees. There were several acts under which the County could have chosen to provide for a pension. The County has chosen to provide a plan under the “Municipal Employees Retirement Act of 1984” (MCL 38.1501 et seq.)

The Municipal Employees Retirement System (MERS) is one of those pension plans that had made it easier for retirees to remain in the workforce.

History

Prior to May 2004, if an employee retired and began receiving his or her pension, he or she could not go back to work for the same employer and earn more than \$15,000.00 per year without suffering the suspension of his or her pension money for the remainder of that calendar year.

On May 12, 2004, MERS amended its plan document in section 31(1) and eliminated the annual earnings limit of \$15,000 restriction on MERS retirees returning to work for the same MERS employer.

After May 2004 and the suspension of the annual earnings limit, the employee could be rehired and receive his or her earned pension benefits along with his or her salary. This allowed the employer the option to continue to use the services of valuable employees and allowed the employees to receive their earned pension along with their salary.

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Marquette County Action

As a result of the action taken by MERS, the Marquette County Board of Commissioners passed a “MERS Opt-Out Process” on October 20, 2004. (Attached). The program was recommended by the County Administrator to help balance the 2005 budget.

This process allowed an employee who was otherwise qualified to retire, and with the agreement of the County, Opt Out of the MERS pension program and continue full and/or part-time employment with Marquette County. This policy made it clear that an “opted out” employee would be ineligible for retirement contributions to MERS. This policy also made it clear that elected officials that were eligible to retire could also “opt out” and the employer contributions to their retirements plan would cease.

This action was taken after consultation with MERS and another county.

MERS Contribution Savings

For an employee who opted out, he/she would no longer be eligible for MERS and there would be no need to contribute a percentage of the employee’s gross salary. For 2005, Marquette County’s MERS contributions were reduced by \$135,000.

Conversely, if the employee simply retired, the County would have to pay 10 percent of wages for the new retirement plan for the replacement employee.

If an employee chose to retire and the County determined there was a need to replace the employee, the County would be paying for retiree health insurance and new employee health insurance. In 2004 when the program was adopted, two-person coverage was \$9,760 for management and \$10,579 for courthouse union members.

Who Participated

At the outset of the Opt-Out Policy, 12 employees, union, non-union and elected, chose to participate in the plan. Of the 12, ten are still employed by Marquette County. MERS continues to consider the 12 members as bona fide retirees.

MERS Clarification – 30-Day Severance

On February 2, 2005, Ann Wagner, CEO of MERS, emailed Marquette County and provided an important comment regarding the amendment to section 31(1) of the plan document. MERS was worried about its tax status. Her comment stressed that MERS is a tax qualified government plan and had to follow the Internal Revenue Code.

To that end, Wagner’s comment included the following:

“A retirant is a person who has a bona fide termination of employment in which the employer/employee relationship is completely severed . . . ; and where the person is currently receiving an accrued pension benefit payment immediately.”

Wagner, on behalf of MERS, advised that employers like Marquette County should establish a minimum period of not less than 30 days severance before any formal action takes place and before new employment occurs.

This meant that the “opt-out” process was still available to employees so long as there was a thirty (30)-day complete severance of employment.

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Because of the MERS comment regarding complete severance for 30 days, the Opt-Out Policy was revised and renamed Rehire Program to include the 30-day severance. Under the Rehire Program, any MERS retiree who is re-employed by the County is barred from further MERS membership during re-employment.

No Board action was requested on the Rehire Program because the Board had already approved the policy of allowing employees to draw a MERS pension and work for Marquette County. The Rehire Program is more restrictive than was the Opt-Out Policy.

Nine employees are working under the Rehire Policy. For further detail regarding the number of employees participating in comparison to total employees, retirements, and other severances, please see attached report from John Greenberg, Human Resources Manager.

Elected Officials

When a retiree is elected or appointed to an elective office within Marquette County, there is no pension suspension; however, MERS membership is barred for the new elected or appointed service. After the February 2, 2005, MERS email and the 30-day complete severance, Civil Counsel advises that the Rehire Program cannot apply prospectively to elected officials.

“Double-dipping?” No!

The Rehire Program is not a double-dip. The employee who is afforded the opportunity to be rehired is collecting the pension he or she earned prior to retirement. True “double-dipping” would be when an individual employee simultaneously accrues and receives full-time retirement benefits from the same retirement plan. This is not what is occurring in Marquette County.

Emotionally, people often react strongly to the somewhat novel idea that an employee can be getting his or her pension and a salary.

It is not as emotionally charged to think of an employee who retires from Marquette County and draws his/her pension and then goes to work for another employer and collects a salary for work along with his/her pension. This would not be considered a double-dip, nor should it be considered a double-dip for what Marquette County employees on the Opt-Out/Rehire Program are doing.

The emotional reaction is understood. We, however, need to reframe our understanding of retirement. Retirement can be an exciting time to enjoy the pensions earned and yet still work and contribute to society. The Rehire Program allows the person to return to work for the same employer.

Does the Rehire Program Save Money?

Prior to 2004 and institution of the Opt-Out Program, the County made an annual payment to MERS. This payment was determined by adding the “normal pension cost” and the “unfunded pension cost” to determine the percentage of the gross payroll that would be paid into MERS.

The first year of the Opt-Out Policy allowed for a budget savings by reducing the gross payroll subject to the percentage paid into MERS. The 2005 budget was reduced by \$135,000.

Marquette County’s required contribution to MERS has been increasing each year. While the Opt-Out/Rehire Programs were not the sole reason for the increase, they are a factor in the increased amount of the annual contribution to MERS. The actual impact cannot be determined without an actuarial analysis.

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For this reason, the County has judiciously allowed employees to participate in the Rehire Program. Since 2007, there has been one rehire.

For 2006 MERS made changes that negatively affected the ability to create a budget savings. Because pension eligibility for defined benefit closed in 2000 and all new employees are now on the defined contribution plan, MERS changed the manner in which it determined the County must pay into MERS.

Beginning in 2006, the County of Marquette was required to pay in a flat amount to MERS. The County no longer is allowed to pay in a percentage of salary. The flat amount is established by MERS. MERS sets this amount without any input from the County. Further, this flat amount has been greater than the percentage amount the County used to pay.

MERS has increased the amount to be paid in part because MERS actuaries make certain assumptions about when employees will retire. If employees are leaving before their projected retirement age, there could be several years of unfunded pension cost. As such, the employee is no longer making their annual contribution to MERS, which helps offset the pension costs, but more significantly, the employee is collecting for several years more than originally assumed when the cost of the retirement benefit was originally calculated.

The unfunded liability for retirees is amortized over 20 years instead of the 30-year amortization of unfunded liability for active employees.

Life expectancy, retirement age, and other variables all determine Marquette County's retirement costs and obligations. For example, MERS assumes 22% of Marquette County employees will retire at age 50.

The Rehire Policy – Employee Perspective

For an employee that has 32 years of service at the County, he or she will have reached his or her MERS 80% capped maximum. The employee, if he/she remains employed by the County, will continue to pay into MERS but will not receive anything greater than 80% of compensation when he/she actually retires. As such, the Rehire Program would be financially advantageous to the employee. The employee would be entitled to the full 80% MERS capped benefit and whatever salary paid by the County.

For employees that have not recorded 32 years of service but are otherwise eligible to retire, the employee will have to explore with their own personal financial planner as to whether or not retirement and rehiring is in their best interest.

Under the Defined Benefit Plan, employees earn 2 1/2% of their final average compensation every year. When making a decision regarding retirement, employees must be mindful of benefits they may be giving up.

CC: John Greenberg, Human Resources
Susan Vercoe, Finance
Cheryl Hill, Civil Counsel

Attachments:

1. MERS Opt Out process 10/20/04
2. Rehire Program
3. June 16, 2008 Update on Rehire Program from John Greenberg

MERS Opt Out Policy

An employee who is otherwise qualified to retire may, with the agreement of the county, opt out of the MERS pension program and continue full or part-time employment with Marquette County. Employees who elect to opt out are eligible to receive their MERS pension without limitation related to their earnings as an employee of the county.

An employee choosing to opt out of MERS will:

- 1) be paid for unused vacation, personal leave, and comp time per union contract and/or personnel policy. Such payment will be computed in the employee's earnings for the calculation of final average compensation;
- 2) receive 40 hours of personal leave annually and accrue vacation at the same rate as prior to the opt out. Vacation may be accumulated to a maximum of 120 hours. Personal leave and vacation accruals for part-time employees will be prorated based on hours worked. Additional unpaid leave may be taken with the approval of the employee's supervisor;
- 3) retain accumulated sick leave to be used during the term of employment, with any remaining balance paid to the employee upon termination per union contract and/or personnel policy. Following the opt-out, sick leave will be accrued per union contract and/or personnel policy;
- 4) not be eligible for retirement contributions;
- 5) continue in the active employees health insurance plan. Employees who opt out will pay the same prorated share of the health insurance premium as they were paying before opting out. Any changes to the active employees health insurance plan, including employees paying a share of premium, will apply to employees who opt out;
- 6) be covered by all other provisions of the union contract and/or personnel policy.

Elected officials who are participating in the defined benefit plan and are eligible to retire may simply opt out of the MERS pension program. Contributions to their retirement plan would cease. Elected officials are paid on a salary basis and that relationship would continue.

Rehire Program

Employees who are rehired following retirement are eligible to receive MERS retirement benefits without limitation related to their earnings as a rehired employee.

A retiree who is rehired by the county:

1. Must have completely severed employment with the county for a minimum of thirty (30) days.
2. If rehired to perform the same duties as they were performing prior to retirement, will be compensated at the same hourly rate they were receiving prior to retirement and subject to increases affecting their employee group. Employees rehired to a different position than the one they held at retirement will be compensated per bargaining agreement and/or section 103.1 of the Personnel Policy.
3. Will accrue personal leave, vacation, and sick leave at the same rate as prior to retirement, prorated based on the normal scheduled work week. The accrual of sick leave will be capped at a maximum of 104 hours.
4. Will continue to be covered by the retiree health plan and subject to any changes to that plan.
5. Will not be eligible for any further retirement contributions. Other benefits, including deferred compensation and the Section 125 plans, will be available in accordance with IRS regulations.

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- 6. Will otherwise be subject to the Personnel Policy or bargaining agreement applicable to the position they are filling.

8/16/05

MEMORANDUM:

TO: Steve Powers
 FROM: John Greenberg
 RE: Update on Rehire Program
 DATE: June 16, 2008

The original opt-out program was approved in late 2004 as a means to help balance the 2005 budget. Twelve of our employees participated in that program prior to MERS adding a requirement that there be a total separation from employment for a minimum of 30 days. Over the next year or so the program evolved into our current rehire program. As has been explained to the employees' union representatives and to our department managers, the rehire program is not an entitlement for the employees but rather a tool to be used at the discretion of the employer.

Over the past seven years, whenever an opening was created through attrition, it has been our practice to review the position and the department involved to determine if a reorganization, reassignment of duties, and/or reduction in hours would be appropriate. In some cases we believe that an experienced and knowledgeable person may be able to perform the necessary job functions in fewer than 40 hours per week. The economics of each individual situation are also considered.

Out of 238 regular County positions we currently have 9 employees working for the County as rehires, four of them on a part-time basis. During the period in which they were rehired we have had 25 resignation/terminations and 32 retirements for a total of 57 regular (as opposed to irregular, temporary, or seasonal) job openings. We have filled 49 of those positions and six positions were eliminated using the process discussed above (two remain open). We have hired 40 new employees to regular positions over that 3½ year period.

The rehire program can be an effective method for filling positions that have few if any qualified external applicants or internal promotion candidates.

JG

Comm. Corkin announced that he attended Road Commission Meetings regarding the 581 Bridge. A final decision has been made and the project will proceed.

Comm. Wallace hopes Mr. Adamimi receives the information regarding the Opt-Out and Rehire Policy and does what he said he would do.

There being no further business to come before the County Board, the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:15 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Connie M. Branam
 Marquette County Clerk