

Personnel Task Force Recommendations

(Editor's Note: Oregon's civil service system will undergo a major change July 1 as the result of Senate Bill 232, passed by the 1969 Legislature and signed by Gov. Tom McCall. Under its provisions, the functions of the Civil Service Commission will be split into two separate parts.

One, the Personnel Division, will have responsibility for the state's personnel management functions. It will be headed by an administrator appointed by the governor. The Personnel Division will be one of 11 new divisions which will make up the new Executive Department created by the bill.

The other will be the present Civil Service Commission renamed the Public Employee Relations Board. It will retain its quasi-judicial employee protection functions.

The bill gives the Personnel Division the responsibility of writing personnel rules, maintaining a continuing salary survey program, developing a compensation plan, adopting a classification plan, allocating positions in the classified service, preparing competitive examinations and eligible lists and certifying appointments, among other things.

Duties given to the board include approving the personnel rules written by the division, reviewing personnel actions and hearing employee appeals. The board is given the authority to overturn any rule or personnel action found to be "arbitrary, improper or contrary to law." As it is under the present system, any employee who is reduced, dismissed, suspended or demoted has the right to appeal to the board.

Upon passage of SB 232, Gov. McCall appointed a Task Force composed of nine executives from Oregon's business community, a representative from state government and an OSEA staff member to study the state's personnel system and recommend practices and procedures for the new Personnel Division.

Members of the Task Force are J.T. Brattain, chairman, Pacific Northwest Personnel Management Association; Bal Gibson, Fred Meyers, Inc.; Carl Mays Jr., U. S. National Bank; William Ladders, Jantzen, Inc.; Marcia Lang, ARCOA; Guy Frazier, Tektronix, Inc.; Fred DeChant, Georgia-Pacific Corp.; William Zimmerman, Pacific Coast Association of Pulp and Paper Manufacturers Association; Harold Gowing, ESCO Corp.; Milo Harris, Department of Finance, and Everett Stiles, OSEA staff member.

Recommendations of the Task Force were submitted in a report to Gov. Tom McCall on June 4. Excerpts from the report appear on the following four pages.)

Context of Recommendations

The recommendations contained in this report are made within the general context of the objective to make the statewide personnel management function more responsive to the needs of operating management, employees and state government generally. The greater emphasis to be placed on professional personnel management should result in more challenging and rewarding opportunities for employees of the state, more effective utilization of existing skills, training for new skills required and, as a consequence, better service to the people of the State of Oregon. It is particularly important that these efforts be successful so that the example of Oregon can lead the way for other states to achieve improvements in their management competence.

Areas of Responsibility

The task force was charged with these areas of responsibility:

- (1) Make recommendations as to an effective organization structure for the new Personnel Division.
- (2) Make recommendations as to meaningful objectives for the new Personnel Division.
- (3) Make recommendations as to the personnel policies needed to support those objectives.

(4) Make recommendations as to staffing requirements of the new organizational structure.

(5) Define the role of the personnel function both in the central Personnel Division and within other agencies of State government.

(6) Make recommendations with respect to effective manpower planning (forecasting, recruiting, promotion, transfer and training and development).

Limited Time for Job

Considering the limited time available to the task force, it was decided to first identify broad problem areas and then to outline recommended general objectives and programs designed to offer solutions. The industrial experience represented by members of the task force was given perspective by members of Governor McCall's staff and by representatives of the Oregon State Employees Association. A series of meetings were held at which a number of knowledgeable persons from within state government gave valuable testimony.

OSEA Staff Member Thanked

The committee wants to express its appreciation to those members of the state staff and Everett Stiles of OSEA who have been of inestimable help in our deliberations. This includes, particularly Milo Harris, who has given much time and the benefit of his knowledge of state government as it applies to personnel administration.

As specific actions are taken and programs developed to implement any of these recommendations, we strongly urge that consideration be given to involving both the professional personnel staff members in the Personnel Division and individual agencies. They are the ones who are in tune with what may be needed to make specific approaches most effective. If we as individuals or as a task force can be of continued service in implementing changes, we would be most happy to do so.

Implementation Considerations

The task force recommends the following implementation sequence, procedures and actions:

- (1) Appoint and announce Personnel Division Administrator.
- (2) Establish State Personnel Policy Advisory Committee to include the Personnel Division

Administrator and representatives of state government and private business.

- (3) Adopt and promulgate a broad statement of personnel policy at the earliest possible time.
- (4) Establish a time schedule for the completion of the organization structure and staffing of the Personnel Division.

(5) Establish a time schedule to implement the other recommendations in this report that are approved.

(6) Develop open lines of communications with agency heads and personnel officers to assure the attainment of the state's personnel objectives. (Personal contact between the administrator and agency heads is essential.)

Organization Structure

Situation:

There is no organization plan for the new Personnel Division created by Senate Bill 232.

Problems:

There are negative attitudes about the "people function" to overcome, i.e., employee protection; the personnel function is basically just record keeping.

There is a lack of oneness of purpose, and little or no organization of structure to lead or encourage personnel people in the entire state government to work together toward proper utilization of employee talents.

There is a lack of adequate coordinated planning for employee development, recruitment, classification, employee communications, salary administration, collective bargaining, etc.

Personnel officers in some agencies fear that the new Personnel Division will dominate them, and that they will be in the position of serving two masters—their own agency head and the state Personnel Administrator.

Objective:

To develop a Personnel Division plan of organization that will encourage positive personnel management to achieve the state's objectives, clarify working relationships between the Personnel Division and operating agencies and encourage coordination of employee relations efforts throughout the state.

Recommendations:

- (1) There should be four major result areas accountable to the Personnel Administrator as follows:
 - (a) Employee development and training.

- (b) Employee pay and classification.
- (c) Employee and labor relations.
- (d) Employee records and office services.

Each of these four result areas would be headed up by a manager who is a professional specialist in his respective function. Each manager/specialist would develop, recommend and audit personnel policies, programs and procedures in his respective area for use by state agencies. Each manager will perform his special services for any state agency upon request of the agency head or personnel office.

- (2) Agency personnel officers will continue to report directly to their respective agency heads, under the policies established by the Personnel Division. An agency head will be responsible for his agency working within the policies set up by the Personnel Director.