

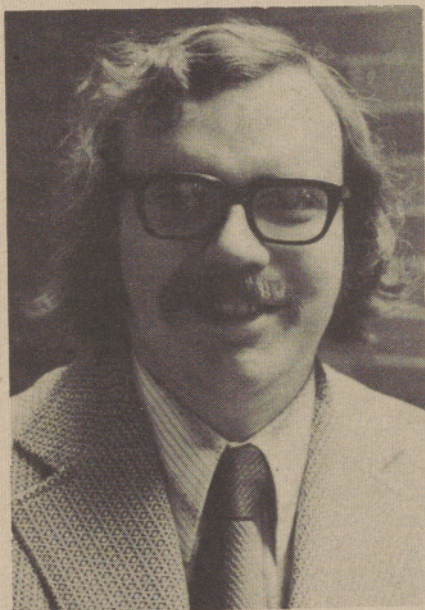
Candidate for Director of Employee Representation



EUGENE J. WATSON

Watson has served as president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer and General Council delegate of Coos Bay Chapter 65 and as president, vice-president and delegate of Chemeketa Chapter 64 in Salem. He has served as a member of OSEA's Employee Representation and Insurance Committees, and presently is a member of the Employee Representation Committee. He is a field examiner for the Bureau of Labor. Watson brings 22 years of labor-management relations experience to OSEA. Statement: "I will continue the present progressive policies of the Employee Representation Committee and work to develop a quick and effective system of work area representation for individual OSEA members."

Candidate for Director of Membership



DAVID D. SAUNDERS

Saunders has served two terms as president and delegate of Beaver Chapter 31 in Portland. He is completing his first term as assistant director of District One, and has served on various chapter and district committees. He is current chairman of the Unit Representation Committee in the Children's Services Division. Statement: "My chapter has had a net increase in members of over 30 per cent in the last year and I believe the methods I used can be applied on a statewide basis to stop our membership losses and start gaining again. It will take lots of hard work but the survival of our Association depends upon membership. We cannot continue to provide the high quality of service in the future if we don't reverse the downward trend in our membership."

Employees Seeking Reclassification Face Complex, Time-Consuming Procedures

Editor's Note: During the last six months a large number of requests for reclassification have been sent by employees to OSEA headquarters for preliminary processing. The procedures for processing reclassifications are complex and time consuming. Cheryl Williams, OSEA's research analyst, wrote the following article to describe those procedures and to advise employees of the obstacles which confront those who seek reclassification.

BY CHERYL WILLIAMS OSEA Research Analyst

"Reclassification," as defined in the Personnel Division rules, is "a change in classification of a position by raising it to a higher class, reducing it to a lower class, or moving it to another class at the same level."

The type of reclass request headquarters commonly receives is that of an employee who feels he is performing duties which greatly exceed those assigned to his classification and who, therefore, desires reclassification to a higher class and higher salary range.

Procedurally, a reclassification to a higher class must be based on a finding by the Personnel Division that the duties and responsibilities of a position have been significantly enlarged, but that the knowledges, skills and abilities needed for the position are still essentially similar to those previously required. The legal responsibility for allocation of each position in the classified service rests with the administrator of the Personnel Division in accordance with ORS 240.215 (2).

To determine if such an enlargement of duties has occurred in a position, an employee must complete Personnel Division form 122, on which the employee describes his job duties and responsibilities in as much detail as possible and estimates the amount of time he spends on each particular task.

The employee then discusses his job duties and responsibilities with his supervisor and the supervisor attaches his recommendations in support of or in opposition to the reclass request.

The next step in the procedure is submission of the request to the employee's personnel officer. He evaluates the form, compares it to the work plan and position description for the particular job and makes a recommendation.

If the personnel officer makes a positive recommendation, the request is forwarded by the agency to the Personnel Division for consideration. If a negative recommendation is made by the agency, the employee must appeal in

writing to the administrator of the Personnel Division for reconsideration of the allocation of his position.

The Personnel Division evaluates the request, performs a "desk audit" of the position, consults with the agency head and renders a decision.

If the decision is positive, it forwards the request to the Budget Division for approval of the necessary funding of the higher level salary. The request is then sent to the Emergency Board for final review. If approved, the position is reclassified.

However, if the Personnel Division rejects the reclass request, the employee has the option of pursuing the matter on appeal to the Public Employee Relations Board.

PERB's findings on reclassification appeals are legally limited to a determination of whether or not the employee is properly classified. That is, the board may find that the employee is improperly classified but does not have authority to recommend a proper classification.

If the board finds in the employee's favor (which, incidentally, seldom occurs), the Personnel Division must recommend an appropriate classification and the recommendation goes on to the Budget Division and the Emergency Board.

Obviously, the procedure outlined above is complex. It also is time-consuming. There are no time limits placed on the processing of reclass requests. It has been OSEA's experience that final resolution of reclasses may take anywhere from three months to a year and a half.

The most disturbing element in reclasses is that "final resolution" in most cases does not result in reclassification of the employee's position. There are several reasons for this:

(1) There presently exists a conflict between the statutes dealing with reclassifications and Personnel Division rules. ORS 240.215 (2) gives employees the right to appeal directly to the administrator of the Personnel Division for reconsideration of the allocation of positions. However, the division's rules require employees to process reclass requests through agency grievance procedures.

It is OSEA's contention that reclassification requests are not grievances, that the legal authority for final approval of a reclass rests with the Personnel Division administrator and that an agency grievance procedure is useless in reclassification cases because a reclass cannot legally be resolved at the agency level.

The Association currently has cases

pending before the PERB in an attempt to resolve this issue.

(2) Agencies are reluctant to recommend reclassifications to a higher level and higher salary range because of budgetary problems.

(3) The Personnel Division is concerned about the "domino effect" of reclassifications. For example, if a clerk 3 is reclassified to clerk 4, it is the feeling of the Personnel Division that other clerk 3's will similarly seek reclassification.

(4) Many classifications have obsolete and poorly written class specifications which do not properly describe the duties and responsibilities of the class.

(5) Some legislators oppose the concept of reclassification to a higher level because they feel it is simply another method whereby employees can get an additional pay increase.

(6) Reclassifications that do not have the backing of agency management have little chance of being approved by the Personnel Division.

(7) Some employees assume more responsibilities than the agency management intends them to perform. There are several reasons why employees do that. Probably the most common is to improve their chance for promotion.

The problem that nearly always arises in such cases is this: after an employee performs at a higher level for a period of time he expects to be reclassified based on the additional duties he voluntarily assumed on his own volition.

OSEA's role in processing reclassification requests has been one of candidly advising employees of the obstacles which confront them in any attempt to achieve a reclassification.

Employees who seek OSEA's help in reclass requests are asked to complete PD form 122 and provide it and a copy of their current position description to their field representative.

If there appears to be logical justification for the reclassification, OSEA will help employees submit their request through proper channels.

If there appears to be no justification for a reclass, the field representative will advise an employee that there is little chance for success.

That is done for one very valid reason: if an employee can't convince an OSEA field representative that his position should be reclassified, there is little possibility he can convince his agency or the Personnel Division that it should be reclassified.

This may appear to be an overly pessimistic view of the reclass situation in state government. Nevertheless, it is an honest one and is made to inform employees of one of the major problem areas in employment relations at the current time.

HELP OSEA HELP YOU: USE THIS FORM TO ENROLL A NEW MEMBER

ENROLLMENT FORM for OREGON STATE EMPLOYEES Association. Includes fields for NAME (LAST, FIRST, INITIAL), MAILING ADDRESS (STREET, CITY, ZIP CODE), AGENCY (UNIT, SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER), SIGNATURE, DATE, and TRANSACTION (NEW, RENEWAL, TRANSFER) and TYPE MEMBER (ACTIVE, ASSOCIATE, RETIRED). Includes a note about payroll deduction: "Pursuant to ORS 292.055, and until further notice from me in writing, I request my employer to deduct monthly from my salary, wages or other sums due me by virtue of my employment, the amount of my dues in the Oregon State Employees Association, as provided in its By-Laws, and disburse same to the Oregon State Employees Association."

COMPLETE AND MAIL TO: OSEA, 1127 25th Street SE, Salem, Oregon 97301