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[00:00:00] Well, good morning, everyone, and welcome to the June 18th, 2024 Personnel Committee meeting. We've got three presentations on the agenda today, and to be sure we get through them, I want to go ahead and get started on time.

[00:00:21] With that, I'd like to turn it over to Linnea Jablonski, Director of the Department of Human Resources, to take us through the recruitment and retention presentation. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. For the record, I am Linnea Jablonski, the Human Resources Director. Welcome.

[00:00:37] And thank you for having me. Many of you may know this is my first meeting with the Board of Supervisors, so thank you for having me. I am going to go through some of my observations that I've had over the first six months here at Fairfax County, and then I will also be giving you guys a short update on some of the recruitment and retention things that I think have been presented to the Board at the last Personnel Committee meeting in June of 2023.

[00:01:05] So with that, we will get started. And I am in charge of my own PowerPoint, so we'll see how this goes. So first of all, I just wanted to start with the listening tour that I did. I think coming into Fairfax County, I just wanted to kind of get familiar with the county and its employees.

[00:01:23] And with a county this size, it did take me about six months. So I have met about 85% of all of the department's heads. I met with them either one-on-one or some included their senior leadership or their deputies. I have met with the union leaders throughout the county multiple times at this point.

[00:01:43] I did have an all-DHR staff meeting, which was attended by, I would say, a good 90% of my staff. I have just under 100 staff, so we had a good turnout for that. It was an in-person meeting where they got to ask me questions. They had 63 questions that they gave me, so I probably answered four of them, but it was a good event.

[00:02:06] And then now I'm working on individual DHR meetings. So I'm going to try to meet with every single staff within human resources. One thing that I didn't list on here that I do plan on doing is also going out back out into the field and meeting with the human resources managers for each department.

[00:02:24] And if they don't have a manager at this point, meeting with whoever they have designated that role while they do the recruitment. So my impressions and themes. So I would really like to focus in on the recruitment process. I think you guys are very familiar with how complex that can be, especially in not only government service, but in today's job market.

[00:02:49] So I'm going to be doing a lean process overview for the DHR process for that, and then doing some pilot in a few of the different departments to see if we can make that a little bit smoother process when it comes to the collaboration between DHR and the departments.

[00:03:09] I've also looked at some of the programs that we have in DHR. One of them is the tuition assistance versus tuition reimbursement. So what we're looking through that lens with the diversity and equity initiative where it would be easier for people for us to support them getting into a tuition or paying for their tuition rather than having to be reimbursed because not everybody has the funds to pay for tuition.

[00:03:33] So we're looking at if that's an option where we could change that so that everybody, depending upon what your salary is, you could attend college and be supported by the county. I'm also reviewing the awards program. There was just a couple things that I think had been countywide for many, many years.

[00:03:49] And I'm just kind of looking at what the best practices are as far as making sure that we're inclusive in recognizing people who have been here a long time, even if they wanted to retire prior to the awards ceremonies. So that is something I have made a quick change to. So my next steps is just updating the DHR priorities and strategies to align with the countywide strategic plan and board initiatives.

[00:04:14] We have created a crosswalk of some of the most important DHR initiatives and tied those to the strategic plan. I would also like to identify new retention and recruitment opportunities, which is a slide that I've included in today's presentation.

[00:04:30] And then I'm doing an initial review of equity and diversity practices and implemented in DHR and countywide. That's something that's very, very important to me as we celebrated Pride this month. And I know the proclamation was a great step, but I would like to see what else we can do for county employees who are in some of those communities.

[00:04:52] So, and then the other thing is looking at ways to increase candidate pool and increase, in the speed of the hiring process because again when there's great candidates out there we want to make sure that we have an opportunity to get them right out of the gate so uh and then the other thing is removing

um hiring or barriers from our hiring process this was something i worked on in my previous position as the hr director in olympia washington one of the things that we did there just as an example is we reviewed all of our job classifications on ones that had bachelor

[00:05:28] requirements and whether or not that was necessary because that can be a big barrier for people they may have the years of experience and they may have everything we're looking for but is that education really required obviously as an engineer or some places like that we will not be able to move those but that's just an opportunity for us to remove some of the barriers so that is my first six months in a very short nutshell so there's any questions on that well thank you so much for your presentation. It's been a real pleasure already working with you just over the last several months, and so looking forward to this partnership as we move forward. There's

[00:06:08] two things I want to draw attention to in particular. First, our attrition rate is trending to the right direction, which is really what we want to see, and I believe that's in large part to the Board prioritizing incentivizing retention rates over the last couple of years.

[00:06:25] Absolutely. Yeah. And you can see from the slides that I added to the PowerPoint as our hiring has increased greatly. And then as Supervisor Jimenez mentioned that our attrition rate has dropped very significantly as we're all aware the pandemic did make some adjustments to how people were entering and leaving the workforce.

[00:06:49] but we have gone from 10.32, 11.11, back down to 9.4 for 2023. And then we'll have those updated statistics at the end of 2024. That's fantastic. Thank you. And second, the new merit hires is also trending in the right direction.

[00:07:06] So I'm pleased to see these numbers trending where we want to see them, especially after COVID. Obviously, that's something that the county is looking to try to adjust to as so many different organizations and counties are also looking at the same. I have one question for you.

[00:07:24] Do we know how we compare to other regions when it comes to the timing of receiving an application, from the time we receive an application to the time we offer someone a job? You know, I don't have numbers on comparables, but that's absolutely something I can look into and get you some numbers on that.

[00:07:42] Great. So at this point, I definitely want to pass it over to Chairman McKay for any questions that he might have, then we can take questions from the rest of the supervisors. So thank you. Thank you very, very briefly, because I know we've got a packed agenda today. But I want to follow up on the last question that Supervisor Uman has mentioned, which is the time to hire piece.

[00:08:02] I realize in the reference check area that that can vary by 100 days. And so it's somewhat job dependent. I just love to get your thoughts on what we can do to tighten that up to the extent possible.

[00:08:17] I mean, certainly we should know what other jurisdictions are doing, but, you know, I have this fear that we lose people in the process. I don't know if there's a way to measure that or not, but people aren't going to wait. You know, most people aren't going to wait 150-plus days to get offered a job.

[00:08:35] And so can you help me understand, you know, what we can do to tighten that up, where that maximum amount of time, that 150-day reference check period? Obviously, that, I would hope, is only for the most sensitive jobs, not, you know, some of the other jobs that we're trying to fill.

[00:08:54] So what is the shortest amount of time it can take somebody to go through our process, and what percentage of people fall in that shortest time frame versus this much more extended time frame? Yeah, thank you, Chairman. So I did update this slide for this presentation, which you can see on multiple screens, I guess.

[00:09:16] So what you have in front of you does include public safety, which we know does take a bit longer. So if you look at the updated slide, it is quite a bit shorter. So it's an average 20 days for the reference checks. And I think to answer your question, I'll go back to what I said earlier.

[00:09:33] I do plan on sitting down and doing a lean process with my group and then taking that out into the departments because I think that there are opportunities for us to shorten that. And I need to get a better understanding of where are those legs?

[00:09:49] Is there something we can do on the DHR side, or is there something we can do to support the departments to help shorten that window? Because I think you're correct. I think when there's a job market the way that it is now, it is softening a little bit, but we're still trying to get those top candidates.

[00:10:05] And if they're waiting a long period of time, it does make it more complicated. So, again, I think doing that process and then I think what would be great is after we do that and I am able to meet with some of the different agencies coming back to the board and sharing some of that data with all of you so we can kind of identify and drill down into length of time for different recruitments and that type of thing and which ones are the ones that we do struggle with a little bit that might take a little bit longer.

[00:10:33] Yeah, I appreciate that. I know some of that relies on help from other areas, too, and so I appreciate that. So the reduction, what I have and what was sent out ahead of time, you've acknowledged has been changed to 20 days. Is that a change moving forward? Is this what I saw in here, the 40 to 150 days, was that a reflection of the past?

[00:10:51] Is that what it used to be? That's a reflection of public safety included, because they do take longer, so this excludes public safety. So for public safety, we're still in that 40 to 150 day. Yeah, so I do think we need to spend some time working with you to try to figure out way to dramatically compress that if we can. And if it requires us getting cooperation from other entities outside of your span of control, then we need to know where those are so that we can be helpful on that. But thank you very much.

[00:11:23] Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now we will take other questions. Let's start with Supervisor Palchuk and then Supervisor Lusk. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Excellent work, Linnea. It's so great to have you here on board. One thing that's not on here that I really appreciate, I don't know if it was your idea, but I think the way we are advertising and showing the openings, the job openings, has made it so much clearer, easier to share, easier to share to recruit some of our younger employees as well, so really appreciate the small things that your department is helping with. In addition to the great work on retention and recruitment, there's one thing that came up

[00:12:03] recently that I was hoping you could look into, And that's especially as we're trying to hire international applicants or multilingual applicants. I've heard some concerns both about how they qualify for the language use, especially in our public safety community.

[00:12:22] If there are ways we can help make that a bit easier, we want more of those recruits. We know that we have a majority minority community and so many who speak other languages. So anything we can do there as well as, and that might be on our end.

[00:12:38] If there are issues and help we can provide on work permits, if there are concerns or things we can do on our end with our federal elected officials, if you hear more of that or ways we can help. Those are two things in addition to all the other ideas that you're working on that I especially want to make sure we can help target in our very diverse community.

[00:13:01] Yeah, absolutely. Thank you. I will look into that. Awesome. Thank you. Supervisor Lusk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just say I really appreciate the presentation and I want to just maybe drill down a couple things that you said. One was reviewing the hiring processes to remove barriers.

[00:13:19] I think that's really, really important. And thinking about how we can provide employment for some of our underserved members of our community and looking at ways to make it easier for them to transition into positions here in Fairfax County.

[00:13:34] So I'm very delighted to see that and look forward to seeing additional things that are done in that regard. And then the point that the chairman made is one that I know we've talked about before as well, and that is thinking through, like, the process for public safety as it relates to using data and also using electronic submissions.

[00:14:00] So we've noted that in some cases, our processing was a little different because we did not allow for certain things to be uploaded through the web. And I think we've now adjusted for that. But I'd just be curious to know how that's going as it relates to kind of streamlining the timeline for some of the processes as it relates to that.

[00:14:23] And if there's additional things that we can do in that area to make it move even a little bit faster, because I think that was kind of a little bit of an impediment. And then the other thing that we noted is that in the jurisdictions that did not have that impediment, they were kind of taking some of our recruits through that process.

[00:14:42] So we don't want to put ourselves at a kind of a competitive disadvantage. So this is a way for us to hopefully address that. So appreciate your continuing to look at that. But we'll be really curious to see what's the difference now with these changes versus where we were before.

[00:14:58] Okay. Great. I will look into that and get you an answer. Yes, ma'am. And then the last point, which I think I really want to drill on, too, is that I appreciate you've talked about recruitment and retention proposed strategies. I know you didn't get to go through the whole presentation, but under deferred compensation plan review, can you give me maybe a little bit of data in terms of how you are intending to look at and approach changes to deferred compensation?

[00:15:27] Yeah, so I don't have an outline strategy yet. It's just one thing that I've worked in public service for 20-plus years, and so I have seen jurisdictions that offer funds towards people's deferred compensation.

[00:15:45] So what I think what I had planned on looking at, if the board is interested, is just looking at some comparables and seeing if there is something another jurisdiction does, and if so, what's their contribution rate, and if it was something that we would be interested in reviewing. Okay. And I, again, appreciate that. I just was curious and I usually get a chance to really talk about it. And then the last thing I wanted to just maybe look at is I appreciate you making the reference to the retiree medical plan because I know that that's one that we get a lot of comments on. And maybe we can have a follow-up conversation there in terms of what we're doing

[00:16:21] specifically, how the cost has maybe been adjusted, because I know that this tends to be an area where I've heard people say it gets really hard, especially with the family plans, to retain them once you retire versus being a single person having your own coverage.

[00:16:41] So as a placeholder, maybe we could have an additional conversation about that. Absolutely. And with that, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Fantastic. Supervisor Alcorn? Thank you. This may be a question for Alicia. I'm curious, all the discussion about time to hire, very, very important, I think, for all of us.

[00:17:00] when was the last time uh we really focused on that in terms of reviewed the process look for ways to make it i mean when did we do that last so yesterday a couple weeks ago last year no every day um it is one of the things that we talk about a lot with our department heads because they're very concerned about being competitive and we have high vacancy rates and they're trying to make sure that we are filling those with the right qualified candidates but doing it quickly So we've started applying other tools to our toolkit over the last couple of years as it relates to Speeding up that process, you know, we've had I think you've heard before VidCruiter Some other ways that we do screenings so we get people in quicker and they recognize that we're interested in them

[00:17:39] So we've been applying a lot of tools and adding Linnea to our team is helping us think about this even more As we move forward but everybody has been all hands on deck trying to figure out the best ways to ensure One of the things that Linnea also talked about is upward mobility programs and some of those pre-graduate hiring programs, finding other ways to make it to remove the barriers, get more people who are actually accessible to us, working with some of our partners like NBCC on making sure I think Supervisor Walkenshaw had mentioned during one of our other meetings, but like making sure that some of our community colleges that we reach out to those folks and say Fairfax is a great place to work.

[00:18:15] Think of us come here, so doing internships with folks and branding ourselves. So we have been doing a lot of different things, and we want to continue to explore what other opportunities there are out there. Great. I do know, you know, for certain specific areas, like our DIT works closely with George Mason.

[00:18:33] There's a nice pipeline there for computer folks. I guess what might be helpful for me anyway is to get a better sense of over time, you know, when we've looked at this or different pieces of it that have had a significant impact or maybe even more importantly, what hasn't worked, you know, where we still have struggled to reduce those, you know, time to hire, what maybe some of those issues are, I think would be really helpful.

[00:19:01] I will say one of the things that we looked at recently, and it's been helpful because we talked about it through the legislative program as well, is that a need to go through the state police to get some of those background checks completed. So we're actively working on that in an area, so we'll come back if we need additional push from you all to help us navigate that.

[00:19:18] But we're definitely trying to find ways to target some of those specific choke points in our process. Okay, great. Thank you. Fantastic. Seeing no one else with any questions, one, two, no? Well, thank you so much for your presentation.

[00:19:34] We look forward to obviously continuing to work with you, but also hearing from your department of how we're making strides forward. So with that, I think we'll move on to our next

presentation. Thank you so much. Thank you. All right. All right. Up next, we have Shelly Skiana, the Deputy Director of Human Resources, to go over some of the personnel regulation changes. Shelly, the floor is all yours.

[00:20:00] Hello. Shelly Skiana, Deputy Director of DHR. Do I have, are there any slides? Perfect. Okay. So, as you're well aware, we recently implemented two collective bargaining agreements. And as a result of those bargaining agreements, we've had to update our personnel regs. And instead of incorporating all of the changes that were in the collective bargaining agreements into the personnel regs, we decided to have sort of a catch-all at the beginning of every personnel reg to basically say if there's a difference, if there's a conflict

[00:20:40] between the personnel reg, the CBA, the CBA trumps. And so we added that to each of the regs. And I think that's pretty much it. Pretty straightforward. We did update Chapter 4 to reflect some of the changes that have happened prior to the collective bargaining agreements and just update the practices that we've been doing. We took that opportunity. So pretty straightforward. Fantastic. Thank you, Shelley, for your presentation, your hard work, along with

[00:21:14] your colleagues on implementing these changes. To reiterate, these are a product of collective bargaining and are necessary to update as it relates to compensation edits and public safety promotional pay. As a proponent of collective bargaining, I'm hopeful these will be another boom to our recruitment and retention efforts and keep us at the top of the list when potential candidates are weighing their options about where they want to work. With that, I will pass it over to our Chairman, Chairman McKay. Thank you. I'm good. Supervisor Walkinshaw. And then Supervisor Alvin. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[00:21:50] So, important point, I think, that when you said elements of the CBA that will trump the personnel regs, that's for employees who are covered by one of the respective collective bargaining agreements. Correct. Yes.

[00:22:07] Can you or somebody talk us through the process or the work that's being done, and we had this conversation a couple weeks ago with respect of retirement benefits, to crosswalk CBA elements, administrative CBA changes to see which, if any, should be considered to be applied to employees who are not covered by a CBA.

[00:22:37] Good morning. Sorry, Alicia Seard-McCormick, Deputy County Executive. That is actually the matrix discussion that we brought up during the May 21st public hearing is going back to look at other items within our portfolio to see if in any way, shape, or form they should be adapted or adjusted. So one of the examples was like the, you'll see in there the Christmas Eve holiday was a half-day holiday, and that was one of the things that each of the unions had asked us to reconsider.

[00:23:03] We did, and so we are going to apply that to the rest of the population. So we are going to go back and look at other instances like that where there are things that we might need to apply to be somewhat consistent. Yeah, I guess I'm just trying to understand the timeline for that work because I think we would all prefer not to be surprised by a similar kind of situation, prefer to be proactive and be able to make thoughtful decisions about what should be applied across the board, what makes sense to be applied across the board, and what doesn't.

[00:23:32] Absolutely. One of the beautiful things is that Linnea had mentioned that she is working with each of our, Not only are recognized exclusive bargaining unit unions, but also talking to other employee

populations. We're getting a sense from them, too, of things that are important because I do think both of all of you all have said before, it is helpful that we have a voice, that there's a conversation with our employee groups to understand where we would need to apply various aspects of these kind of enhancements and making sure that they're comfortable with the choices we're making.

[00:24:01] So we're also trying to do that and be very cognizant and thoughtful as we approach this so that we're not making decisions for people without them having an opportunity to weigh in as well. So we're going to continue to work on that. We will not surprise you. Hopefully we will also not be surprised because we definitely, nobody wants to be flat-footed as we move forward.

[00:24:18] I appreciate all that. I guess for me, I'd like to know the timeline for that work and when we can expect to get an update either by NIP or in a committee meeting as to where that stands and what, if any, decision points there are for the board.

[00:24:36] You don't have to give me the timeline now, but if you... Yes, so I'm looking at Linnea as we go forward with this, but I think that is something we can absolutely bring back as part of the personnel committee meeting, and then if necessary, we can also come back at the beginning of the calendar year if we need a little more time.

[00:24:53] I think we can at least provide some perspective as part of our October personnel committee. It certainly seems that, I hate to say it, But as we start looking at the budget process for next year, we want to have a handle on that because some of them, you know, could have budgetary implications.

[00:25:09] We want to have time to make those decisions and I think have some consistency in how we will make those decisions moving forward with future CPAs. Okay, thank you. I'm Supervisor Walkinshaw. Thank you for that comment. Obviously, you highlighted something that was very important, the budget.

[00:25:28] So my goal, our goal, is to have something crosswalked in totality before the budget is even presented so we don't have those issues going into July of next year. So that is our goal and my hope. And sorry, I apologize, Mr. Chairman.

[00:25:44] I'll be quiet after this. But obviously we're not the first government in history to have employees who are covered by CBA, employees who aren't. and I'm sure you all have kind of looked at how other local governments and governments have managed this challenge and these questions.

[00:26:04] For me, when we get that update, I'd like to see a little bit of that. You know, what are kind of some standard best practices in terms of how to make these decisions for covered and non-covered employees? Thank you so much for that.

[00:26:21] Timelines are very important as we move forward. Supervisor Alcorn? Yeah, thank you. That was what I was going to ask about, too. I think it's really important that we not allow our process or our personnel regs to get too far behind our CBAs.

[00:26:39] I mean, so I guess beyond a timeline, I would really love to see a process, you know, not just one time, but sort of continuous. Every year, is there going to be a review, a crosswalk, or, you know, what is it going to look like?

[00:26:56] because I would hate to see a situation where we have so much divergence between our personal regs and our CBAs. So not only a timeline, so a process I would love to see too, or at least

proposed process. Thank you. And again, I appreciate that comment. We're going to be looking at it every year as well as every contract. So a year, an annual, and then a three.

[00:27:17] And noting that we're not all collectively bargained, we have to obviously crosswalk that as well. So a lot of work to do. I'll ask once. Anyone else have any other questions on this before we move on? Okay. Thank you so much for that presentation. And with that, we're on to the last agenda item of today's meeting. I'd like to turn the floor over to Brad Baker, Deputy Director of Retirement Administration. Thank you, Supervisor Jimenez. Again, thank you for the introduction. Brad Baker, Deputy Director for the Retirement Administration.

[00:27:56] First, I'd like to get into a little bit of background from the May 21st Board of Supervisors Public Hearing, regarding some of the ordinance changes that was discussed at that time, which included for all members of the Police Officers Retirement Systems and specific members of the Uniform Retirement Systems, the ability for those members to purchase up to four years of prior active duty military service. And in addition to that, all members of the Police officer's retirement system the ability to purchase up to four years of prior law enforcement service. These changes were brought forth by the collective bargaining agreements, by the

[00:28:33] International Association of Firefighters, and the Police Benevolent Association. And so that public hearing was codifying those stipulations within those collective bargaining agreements. We're presenting to you today is proposing that all members of the uniformed retirement system have the ability to purchase military service, not just ones that were specifically called out in the collective bargaining agreement. And that includes some of the documentation that's being accepted currently in the collective bargaining agreement. It's specifically called out a DD-214

[00:29:13] as a proper documentation to authorize the service purchase for that period of time. There's also National Guardsmen that are limited to receiving an NGB Form 22. So we've proposed adding that inclusion into the code. So those service members can use that form as well and don't have to go through either extra steps or a more difficult process trying to get DD-214, if even possible. In addition, all members of the Uniform Retirement System have the ability to purchase up to four years of public safety service as a full-time employee of another federal,

[00:29:52] state, or local government. And these amendments to the code are supported by both the IAFF, the PBA and by the Uniform Retirement System Board of Trustees there's a brief slide that just shows what the current status of the service credit purchases are allowed under the Uniform Retirement System and what the proposed changes would allow specifically for currently just fire and rescue of the Uniform Retirement System and Animal Protection Police of the Pirate Uniform Retirement

[00:30:27] System are allowed to purchase four years of military and just the APPO additional law enforcement service. This proposal will allow every single unit under the Uniform Retirement System the ability to do both the four-year purchase of military service or public safety service. Public safety, this includes the definition of sworn or uniformed law enforcement service, uniformed fire and emergency medical service, public safety communicators or emergency dispatch, and helicopter pilots. The cost of a service purchase is determined to a member. It is

[00:31:05] based on the projected retirement benefit that the member will receive with the service purchase, then subtracting from that the cost of the retirement benefit that a member will receive without the service purchase. And that is the cost directly to the members of the system.

[00:31:22] For a little bit more clarity there, the full cost is on the members purchasing the service. This is not a cost to the system at all, or a very minimal one, immaterial, in fact. So the Uniform Retirement System or the Police Officer's Retirement System, respectively and separately, will neither benefit nor be adversely impacted if a member chooses to or not to purchase a service.

[00:31:52] In fact, we also have our actuary, Chiron, has provided an actuarial impact statement advising that, quote, overall, the cost of these changes would be immaterial to the system. Brief note about the cost calculated, they're all based on actuarial assumptions, and the actual costs for any single member may or may not change based on their assumptions of their, for example, their life expectancy, their assumed raises, et cetera.

[00:32:28] Importantly, in this timeline, so right now, the collective bargaining agreements that were approved by the Board of Supervisors back on May 21st, they were called to be effective either the earlier of July 1st or when the Board of Supervisors approved those amendments.

[00:32:50] However, since the timeline for these proposed changes to the amendment would not go into effect, presumably until the board meets and approves something as such at a public hearing. I believe the earliest is scheduled for July 16th in order to align with the collective bargaining agreement and its language about making it uniform, effective July 1st at the latest.

[00:33:14] We believe it's in the best interest of everybody to equitably have them and allow them to, If they submit an application to purchase service, that is retroactive to July 1st of 2024, as long as their application is received within 30 days of the Board of Supervisors approving these amendments.

[00:33:40] The Board has, there is an admin item that has already been prepared for the Board of Supervisors' June 25th agenda to further add these and request that these be included in the public hearing scheduled for July 16th, or presumably to be scheduled for July 16th.

[00:33:57] With that, that concludes my presentation. Thank you, Brad, for the presentation. With that said, I'd like to reiterate some comments I made at the Board of Supervisors meeting back in May. This item is a product of the collective bargaining process, and it remains important that we respect the process and those who negotiate in good faith to get us to this point.

[00:34:21] Collective bargaining can influence policy for the better, and this is a perfect example of just that. When we bring folks to the table, there's a space created that allows for the exchanging of ideas that help improve innovative ways that can benefit others. I want to be clear. The intent here is not to encroach on the hard fought negotiations between the bargaining groups or to extend every benefit to those not party to the CBA. Rather, this is an exception. I also recognize that we are not voting on this today, as we do not take votes in the committee, but I want to be sure that we are respecting the

[00:34:54] collective bargaining process. This has a minimal fiscal impact, as mentioned in the presentation, on the front end and is not expected to have a significant impact down the road for the employer contribution rates paid by the county. So to me, this seems to be a low risk taken by the county and extending these benefits to the sheriff's office, public safety, communicators, and FCPD helicopter pilots is yet another mechanism in conjunction with all of our efforts, where as a county, we can give ourselves a competitive advantage in recruitment and retention efforts.

[00:35:31] It's also worth reiterating that the USR will neither benefit or be adversely impacted by member service purchases, which isn't always the case when we bring forward certain incentives to

attract and retain employees. While we will have the public hearing and vote at the July 16th Board of Supervisors meeting, I do want to be clear that the effective date of service will be retroactively implemented to July 1st for the purchase cost calculations.

[00:35:58] I have one question, and then I'll pass it over to our chairman. Brad, it's been shared with me that the military uses differing forms for those who served in the National Guard or as a reservist to capture their active duty services.

[00:36:13] I would think that the spirit of this policy would want to capture those individuals as well. Recognizing that, what would it take in terms of the process to make sure we are capturing those folks in our policy as it relates to forms that can be accepted as proof of service?

[00:36:31] Sure. Thank you, Supervisor Jimenez. Again, Brad Baker, Deputy Director of the Retirement Administration. In terms of practice and applicability, there is very minimal difficulty in applying or I should say broadening the documentation that we allow to provide a service purchase through military service for National Guardsmen. In particular, in addition to the DT 214. Both forms contain the same information that is critical to determining if someone is eligible to make that purchase. It includes a discharge of being honorable

[00:37:07] or not honorable. It includes a breakdown of the current period or the most recent period of service, start date, end date, and make sure it applies to the code in terms of length of service. So in terms of the form itself, there should be no administrative burden that would extend that process whatsoever. Thanks for that. I just want to make sure we're not missing anyone and that everyone has the same opportunity and not put in front of a hurdle due to a forum situation. So, I appreciate that. And with that, Mr. Chairman? Yeah, thank you.

[00:37:42] Obviously, the last conversation that we just had was triggered by this, which is I was going to have that conversation relative to this one. So, I think, you know, we were caught flat-footed here. We did not look at could this benefit be extended to other county employees and what the cost would be to that. And so this is an exact example of why it's important for us to do this crosswalk that you mentioned earlier and to have a timeline. I guess, you know, my question is when I look at page four, we have defined the expansion of this very clearly. And I'm just wondering to

[00:38:20] what extent did we look at where military service is within our current county operations, where it's most likely to be, and did we consider anyone beyond these categories? I think it's obvious that people who have military service are more likely to be involved in public safety, but not exclusively involved in public safety. And so I'm curious, did we look beyond these and And how did we make the determination that only the employees that are included in page four would be included in this?

[00:38:53] And obviously, we don't want to go so far and then result in a problem, but we certainly, I would hope, have some handle on which county agencies have people who have military experience. Do we know that, and did we think about that when we came up with the parameters on page four?

[00:39:13] Thank you, Chairman McKay. Again, Brad Baker, Deputy Director of the Retirement Administration. Our approach to this information or presenting this to you specifically to the Uniform Retirement System versus any other retirement system is we want to respect that if there's any particular nuance that the collective bargaining agreements either that are already in place or could become down

the line if the general county goes that way, that their negotiations sort of provide the baseline of how this gets implemented or not.

[00:39:50] For example, the police officer's retirement system specifically calls out prior law enforcement service as a purchasable form of service, whereas the uniformed retirement system, their supporters and the board of trustees for that system have specifically asked about public safety service in general is a little bit more broad. So we don't want to, from the a retirement agency perspective, don't want to either limit or enhance the goals of those entities. Okay. One of the reasons I ask it is because when I look at page four, my immediate reaction is, are we missing anyone that's considered public safety? Because I don't think

[00:40:29] any of us sitting around here would have thought when we first adopted this that helicopter pilots in Fairfax County Police Department were not included. And so that's kind of a surprise to me. And so I'm wondering, are there any other surprises? I just want to make sure, because we have to go to public hearing on this that we have captured everyone that we consider to be under the classification of public safety and do we have a methodology moving forward to look at any data beyond public safety to determine in the future if this is a retention opportunity is it pertinent to any other county operations that we might want to consider given the very

[00:41:09] small or non-financial impact to the county. And this is exactly why, you know, we had the conversation on the last item, because we want to respect the elements of the collective bargaining agreement that have been bargained in good faith and respect that those benefits go to the people who are involved in collective bargaining. But then we also have to balance that with our responsibility for the entire county workforce. And when we come across something or discover an element of a collective bargaining agreement that helps us with recruitment or retention, we have to immediately do that crosswalk and determine whether it's pertinent to come back

[00:41:47] to the board and suggest where this might help us in other areas. And I just want to make certain before we have the public hearing on this, because we've already had one, we're getting ready to have two, I just want to make certain that we're not going to discover some class of employees that are considered public safety that aren't on this list. And I also want to make sure that we can tell the rest of the county workforce that we're going to analyze this to determine potential future applicability in other areas. Alicia Seard-McCormick, Deputy County Executive. You may just see me leaning back to look at Deputy County Executive Arnold to make sure I think we have

[00:42:24] covered all of the public safety classifications, so we feel like we have done that. But what we have also been talking about with Linnea and I and the team is understanding the military like service and it segues nicely to the discussion earlier about recruitment because when people fill out their applications they note whether or not they are a veteran and their status and so we're going to go back and look through that data see if there are other agencies that have significant number of people who in those classifications have that kind of service and we can bring that back as part of the discussion at the october personnel committee meeting in terms of whether or not that is something that we would want to explore further but it is it becomes a little bit more complicated

[00:43:01] Because you might have veteran service, but we just need to come back and provide that information. Yeah, and those are the things we want to have ironed out, and I appreciate that. I mean, I know several of us have been to hiring events that take place on Fort Belvoir where we're deliberately attempting to hire veterans or people with military service.

[00:43:22] And so I think, and those are for all classes of county jobs. I mean, particularly public safety is emphasized, but there's a lot of other areas. And so I just want to make sure we're scrubbing that and making sure that when we see a benefit like this that's low or no cost, that we have it in our arsenal for where we think it's most helpful for recruitment and retention of county staff.

[00:43:46] So thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're going to go this way. So Supervisor Herity and then Supervisor Palchuk, please. I as well was going to ask the process question on this one because that's where it went astray.

[00:44:01] On the positions, the chairman was asking about police communication assistants. Where do they fall, the ones that are in the front of our offices? I know they've been left behind a couple of times. Are they included in public safety? Tom Arnold, Deputy County Executive, I believe they're on, given that they're on the S scale, they were not included with what we dealt with.

[00:44:28] Yeah, and they get left behind in the public safety just about every time. I need to do, I'll come back with a few more questions on that and ask, but I don't, is there, let me just ask now, is there a way to get them included or is that going to have to mean doing something with the S scale?

[00:44:56] Supervisor Herity, what I'll do is I'll come back to you with an overview of that, exactly what you just spoke about, because trying to answer that right here is probably not going to be the right answer. Yeah, I know they've been left behind a couple things in the past, so I just wanted to make sure they weren't.

[00:45:15] And just to follow up on that, again, we can't sit here and think about all of these. I mean, the one Supervisor Herity raises is pertinent, but what people believe they're doing in the way of public safety may be different than what scale they're in, but they're working side-by-side with people who are in public safety, and public safety considers them part of the public safety family.

[00:45:35] So if there are other nuances like that one, we need to make sure we see those before we advertise this public hearing so we don't have to do it multiple times and the board gets an opportunity to make that determination about inclusion or not. So I think we need not be so rigid if we can at looking at the scale, but let's look at the actual function of the people involved and make sure that we've considered all the people who are part of the public safety family before we go to advertisement so that we don't have to do this.

[00:46:06] We know we have to do it twice. We don't want to have to do it three times. Thank you for that, Chairman. Supervisor Palchuk. Oh, excuse me. Give me one sec. Sorry. Let me grab Supervisor Smith here. Just on that, it's always dangerous to ask a question if you don't know if it's an ignorant one.

[00:46:22] As we're talking about these other employees, would they all fall in public safety retirement systems? Some of them could be general retirement systems. So I think that's important for us to understand process and impacts and all that. Thank you.

[00:46:38] Supervisor Palchuk. Thank you. I wanted to make sure that, a little bit related to what I was asking, but I think this is important that we move forward on this. I think it's been done the right way and there's more information coming. One question I have, once this is adopted, hopefully, by our board, is as we talk about the recruitment and retention piece, right, being able to track and understand the impact on if it has any on recruitment implementation, how often it is used, if there are ways we can improve it. You know, I understand

[00:47:12] it's cost neutral. I also understand it's a pretty high cost. So really hoping that as we implement this for all of the eligible and deemed eligible employees that we're able to do that. And a little bit going back to the last one, I know there are a few little things that we're addressing and I've also heard perhaps a line to get polygraph, right? What are the small things that are easy fixes that we can take care of right away as we do have this continued challenge of recruitment, anything that can chip away easily at the time it takes to get people on board.

[00:47:50] So those are my only requests. I appreciate your work on this. Supervisor Lusk and then Supervisor Herity, please. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And again, I'll also say I'm very supportive of this and thank you for bringing it back and including more groups as well.

[00:48:08] The question I have is on the payment over time. It says you have up to 48 months. How did we arrive at that? Just looking at the cost structure for someone who's been in the organization for a while, it would be pretty difficult to be able to pull that type of funding over a 48-month period.

[00:48:34] So I just wanted to understand the calculus for the 48 months. Sure. Thank you, Supervisor Lusk. Again, Brad Baker, Deputy Director for the Retirement Administration. The 48-month payback period, or the purchase service, was specifically in the collective bargaining agreements that were approved.

[00:48:52] So that's what we've gone with as well, administratively. From a general contracting perspective, other contracts we have of similar, either transference of service or purchase of service, actually have a 36-month policy.

[00:49:09] within our administration. So this is a little bit longer. And specifically, that's why it's 48 months. Okay, I'll accept that. I guess the only thing that got me was looking at the higher payment amounts if you've been in service longer. And that would be extraordinarily difficult, I think, to pull off. But I understood that that was what it was negotiated. So I'll leave that alone. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before we move on to Supervisor Herity's second question, Supervisor Beerman, did you have a question?

[00:49:41] Yeah, I just wanted to, actually, Supervisor Smith sort of took my point. This was done police officers retirement system and uniform retirement system. But even looking at this and considering how we might go to other areas of public safety, I would recommend talking to the leaders in public safety, like Chief Davis, like Chief Butler.

[00:50:08] One thing that came to mind is the helicopter pilots are on here, but what about the helicopter mechanics? And actually, I bring that up because when I talked to the police, they talked about their vehicle techs as being integral to how, you know, how they are able to get their vehicles online and do their jobs.

[00:50:29] So my recommendation is that when you're considering this, to go to the heads of these agencies and try and utilize that to make sure that we aren't leaving people behind. Thank you. Supervisor Herity?

[00:50:45] Yeah, and at the board meeting, I thought I'd ask the question to see if we could get some kind of demonstration on what that cost is to buy into the system. I don't know that we got that, but I don't know if you've got that ready. So that's the first question. The second one is not so much a question, it's just a statement, because we are talking about this as having no cost and no impact.

[00:51:09] I fully support it, before I say this, absolutely fully support it to recognize the service of both our veterans and public safety. But it does cost us four years of service for these individuals. It allows them to retire with full employment four years early.

[00:51:26] So there is a cost to the county. It's costing, you know, we lose four years. We train them for 20 or 25 years, but we're going to lose four of those if they buy out, potentially, if they retire early. So that's a point that I don't think has been brought up, but I wanted to make sure everybody kind of understands that's really the only cost here.

[00:51:48] But it is very expensive to buy in. I don't know if you had – oh, it was there. Oh, I missed it. Different slides. Different slides. Sorry. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, first on that point, when I look at those charts and dollar figures, help us understand, is an employee allowed by a tax code to pay this amount out of a deferred compensation account? I believe they are, and I believe that's probably how most people would have to approach this. Is that the case for this? Yes. Thank you, Chairman McKay.

[00:52:27] Brad Baker, again, with the Deputy Director of Retirement Administration, that's correct. So, a rollover can be done to sort of supplement the cost of this, either in full or in part, and then a contract is derived that will be contractually agreed upon by the member to purchase in increments of months.

[00:52:47] So, for example, if they did a rollover of a deferred compensation plan and purchased a year of service and still had three more months that they wanted to purchase, they could do that monthly, all three months, one month, two months, three months, however they see fit. And I just wanted to touch briefly about the cost and extending the period of time for people to pay off the cost of a service purchase. It does become exorbitantly more expensive the longer you go due to the interest that is charged with these contracts. So even if

[00:53:25] there was a suggestion to move to, you know, five, ten years to purchase, the cost to the members would significantly increase. Yeah, I appreciate that. And I just wanted to make sure that was known to folks, because most people may not know that you're able to do that, use funds that you've set aside for retirement and other accounts to help pay for this, if it's a choice you personally want to make. And then, finally, I, you know, again, this was triggered by collective bargaining, as the chairman said. And I'll just point out what I pointed out the day we had this public hearing,

[00:54:01] that this is one of the huge positive byproducts of collective bargaining. This conversation happened because of collective bargaining. This option is coming forward to us at little to no cost to the county and is a retention tool and is a recruitment tool that brings itself to the table here because we have collective bargaining. And so I just want to remind everybody that that was the instrument that triggered this conversation when we think about our opinions about collective bargaining. I think this is a huge opportunity potentially for some county employees. It's a

[00:54:35] huge opportunity for retention, and I'm glad we're moving forward with it and appreciate the work that's been done on it because I know it's significant. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Supervisor Stork. Thank you, Chairman. This opportunity I think is an excellent one. I support it. Do we know how many folks have taken advantage of this? Do we have any other places around the country that have done something similar? And can you give me some sense of what we are likely to see with the

[00:55:10] number of individuals to take advantage of? Sure. Thank you, Supervisor Stork. Again, Brad Baker, Deputy Director for the Retirement Administration. Comparatively, the Virginia Retirement System

was looked at in terms of they have a similar opportunity to purchase their service for their members, military service specifically. And reportedly 0.01% of their population has completed that process of purchasing service. Internally, we've received roughly 30

[00:55:47] applications. Has this been available to VRS? How long have they had this option? I do not know how long they've had that. I'm just trying to get an idea of this has happened for five years, 10 years? Internally, we've received roughly 30 applications so far. Nobody's gotten to the process where they've actually purchased the service or signed a contract. Those are actually going out this week for the people that we received within the last 30 days. What's the denominator for that? I believe it's roughly 3,000 total active between the uniformed retirement

[00:56:24] system and police officer's retirement system. Thank you. Are there any other supervisors who'd like to ask a question at this time. Well, with that being said, I want to thank all the supervisors for your questions. I think that it helps us in the committee. It helps obviously all of our leaders here figure out what we need to do and doing it right for our board meeting on July 16th.

[00:56:55] So thank you for all of your questions. Obviously, please reach out to me and reach out to our amazing staff for our questions. Linnea? I just had one thing that I wanted to share. So thank you, Chairman. Jimenez. At the board meeting, I want to say last week or a few weeks ago, you had requested a salary tool for employees to take a look at what their pay would be in July. So we have actually created

[00:57:23] that tool. So with some amazing work with the DHRIT group, we do have that tool 99.9% ready. We are hoping to perhaps present it today, but I will be sending that out for your review so staff can input their data and see what their pay will be in July.

[00:57:48] In addition to that, I did also want to say when we send that out to employees, Supervisor Herity, when you and I spoke a couple months ago, we talked about the total compensation that people have access to.

[00:58:01] Unfortunately, we are not able to grab that out and send it individually, but what I plan to do is send out a very detailed step-by-step process so that people know how to gain that information within focus, so not only will they have that new tool to see what their pay will be, they will also be reminded that they have that opportunity to look in focus to see what their total compensation is with all of the additional benefits that the county does provide them in their employment.

[00:58:29] so i just also wanted to add that so if there's any questions thank you for that by the way on that point mr chairman i i really appreciate that i will just say there was a point in time and it seems like technology's gone backwards or our systems have become overly complex i'm not sure which but there was a period of time for people who've been in the county for a long time where we used to get that annually very well documented personalized to the employee what their total compensation was and so at some point i would like to get an explanation um you know from it or someone how it we seemingly on the surface seem like we've gone backwards because

[00:59:08] that was intentionally mailed out as a retention tool to county employees for decades um i still have mine from decades ago and so i'm just curious as to why that's so complex i don't need to know the answer to that now but that's one of the reasons people are asking for it because people have been in the county for a long time just abruptly stopped getting those and and at some point i'd like to to know why so the good news is as part of employee self-service people can go in and look at it daily and so immediately

after your salary changes you can go in and look at it you don't have to wait for us to mail it so we were it's actually an easier way for people to be able

[00:59:45] to through focus go in and see for themselves their specific salary and then the total compensation for it so it was an actual edition after focus went live where people were able to see it on their own without having to wait for somebody to mail it to them so i think that was the intent what i'm going to ask is that we give a more detailed overview of how people can do that on focus because some of us know and some of us don't know so let's try to do that because it's they're already through the um the application unfortunately it's not easy to get to yeah Yeah, and that we need to fix because that is, you know, we talked about retention earlier.

[01:00:24] It is a big retention tool for somebody to be able to look right after we pass our budget to know what their salary is going to be next year. And I don't think we have reminded a lot of people of the point of total compensation in a long time unless somebody on their own knew how to navigate and find that in focus.

[01:00:42] And so I think we need to be much more intentional about explaining to people how to do that. And I'm assuming they don't have to self-populate anything because if that's the case, that adds to the complexity. And so it populates on its own, customized for the employee, and they can see what we used to get at any point in time electronically.

[01:01:03] And if that's the case, we really need to communicate to people how to do that because I've talked to a lot of county employees that don't know how to. Well, it's predicated on a unique username and password. So it is self-populated when you put in your, it looks sort of like an email address, right?

[01:01:18] So what we'll do is we'll have a campaign on how to access it so everybody can see it. Okay, thank you. Mr. Chairman. Supervisor Herity and Supervisor Stork. You know, our people are really busy. And, you know, I stumbled on it, which is why we had the conversation.

[01:01:38] I've had it with a bunch of people. But I really think it's valuable enough to push it out versus waiting for them to, I mean, just on an annual basis, find a time to just put it in front of people, whether that be email or otherwise. And I don't know that that's going to cost a whole lot more than it should just come right out of the system.

[01:01:59] But it's there. I mean, you can find it if you're looking for it. But I don't know that our employees are, even if you do the campaign to go find it, they're going to go to it. I think we really ought to put it.

[01:02:11] We can put it with an active link, and then you can click on it, and it will pop right in based upon, I mean, because we've been tasked through IT to be more paperless as opposed to more, and I understand where you're coming from, so we can do some things through the IT realm to allow us to hit the link, self-populate your name and maybe your password if you're set up that way, and it will pop right up.

[01:02:39] Yeah, but it's pretty impressive when you look at the benefits that most people don't realize we're paying for. Supervisor Stork? Thank you, and thank the chairman for bringing this up. And, again, as a private business owner still, the benefits our employees get are huge.

[01:02:59] They're far exceed at least what most small businesses offer and particularly valuable to remind people of that. When you do the budgeting for positions, at least there is some formula, some percentage you use. You take the base hour, then you multiply some percentage of that to assume what your costs are.

[01:03:18] What do you all use for that? So, Alicia Seard-McCormick, Deputy County Executive, putting on Christina Jackson. I was just thinking I may be asking the wrong person, but I appreciate it. She's probably watching, so yes, I'll make sure I say this correctly. But yes, when we budget for positions, we assume, obviously, the cost of the position, typically the midpoint to allow for some ability to hire, you know, higher than the men.

[01:03:41] And then they also do an average of what they would assume the benefits would be fully loaded, including retirement and health insurance. Not everybody takes all of those choices, but assuming that when we budget positions, we include all of that in the calculation of how much it would cost. Is that 20 percent, 30 percent, 50 percent?

[01:03:58] What is roughly the order of magnitude that you use for that? It varies by type of position. So, like, for public safety, in particular for, like, the police, the cost of their retirement is significantly higher. So I think it's, I want to say about 50%.

[01:04:13] Tom Arnold, Deputy County Executive, I believe it's 68% for public safety. 68%. Yeah. And then for a general employee, again, in order of magnitude, I'm not going to hold you to the specific percentage. I just want to have it in my head. So Christina's head does not explode. I will provide that information to you.

[01:04:29] All right. Fair enough. I see a response to a question. Yes, she probably is, yeah, shaking her fist at me right now. Yeah, no, that's what I – no, thank you very much. All right. Well, thank you so much for highlighting that tool.

[01:04:45] I think that Chairman McKay's idea with our county executive, Brian Hill, to amplify and push this out so it's a tool that folks don't just have to go to but that we're actually helping provide some coverage on is fantastic.

[01:05:01] But, yeah, all these tools are very helpful. I think, especially for the recruitment aspect of that. And with that, Linnea, I'd just like to say thank you so much. And Alicia, it's been so wonderful working with you to get to this point in my first personnel committee hearing.

[01:05:18] So thank you for all the hard work. And to all of you who came and presented today and sat before us to answer questions, I say thank you. And with that, it is 1035, and this meeting is adjourned.

