

Transition Task Force

Personnel subcommittee

Report of 3/14/12 meeting

Members of the Transition Task Force's Personnel Subcommittee (Thea Berkhout, Jo Butler, Jim Levine, Shirley Meeker, Gary Patteson, Bruce Topolosky, Bob Bruschi, Kathy Monzo, Jim Pascale and Sandra Webb), Alice Small (liaison from Consolidation Commission) Bill Kearns (legal counsel), Eugene McCarthy (NJ Dept. Community Affairs), and Joe Stefko (Ctr. For Governmental Research) met and discussed the following:

- The committee's priorities, based on the outline provided by Joe Stefko to the Transition Task Force at its 3-12-12 meeting. These included: workforce sizing; separation options; reconciling employee policies, procedures, and benefits; and cross-pollination of staff.
- Separation options: Gary Patteson reported on progress of his work so far identifying the various employee separation options that the Task Force should consider, including severance and early retirement program (ERI). The state may consider any voluntary separation arrangement as a type of ERI. He will prepare a description of each type of option, describe pros and cons of each, and provide potential upper level costs and/or analyses of the potential numbers of eligible employees affected by the merged positions. This report will be provided by the Personnel Subcommittee to report to the full Task Force on March 28.
- Jim Levine reported on the work done so far in comparing the two sets of personnel policies and benefits. He will continue to work with the staff to complete a spreadsheet of the differences, in order to report on the major and minor areas of difference. They are grouping the various policies under six main categories: health care, time off, compensation method, insurance contracts, performance, procedures. The largest divergence looks to be in the health care area. He will report back to the subcommittee on progress in this area with a goal to presenting a report on this to the Task Force on April 18.
- Cross pollination of staff: Shirley Meeker agreed to work with the administrators to monitor the cross pollination efforts of the staff, ensuring that there are regular schedules in all areas and that staff are being encouraged to do as much of this as possible to learn each others' business practices, working toward the consolidation. She will report back to the subcommittee which, in turn, will report on this to the Task Force.
- Joe Stefko agreed to keep the Public Safety and Public Works committees informed of the Personnel Subcommittee's work so that issues related to personnel are coordinated.

- Workforce sizing: Joe Stefko indicated that he will be providing the committee next week a recommendation for handling the two levels of employees that will be affected by the merged positions – those at the managerial/senior level, for which he thinks a process should be recommended by mid-year, and line staff. Mr. Kearns indicated that he had provided Task Force members with a memo containing his legal opinion on a number of personnel issues, including tenure, etc., that will most likely also be sent to all personnel subcommittee members.
- Acknowledging that it may not be a priority issue for the Task Force, but a responsibility of the new government on January 1, the committee agreed to receive more information from the administrators about their proposed departmental reorganization – especially in the areas of administration and finance. Issues of reorganization could affect the work of the Facilities and the IT committees. The administrators were asked to provide – at a future meeting – a comparison of the Commission’s recommendations regarding all of the positions to be merged (except in the public works and police areas) with their own suggestions, showing explicitly the number of positions and savings that would result.
- The next meeting of the committee will be on March 21 at 5:30 p.m.