

GREENE COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

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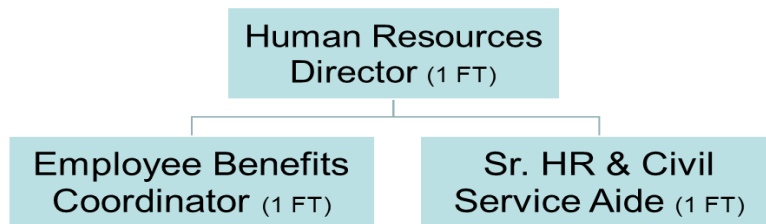
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HR MISSION STATEMENT: To provide the highest quality personnel services to our employees, retirees and other customers, while promoting effective and efficient County government.

HR VISION: To support the work of the Greene County community toward achievement of its strategic goals.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT



INTRODUCTION

One of the preeminent and most challenging aspects of working in Human Resources is that the rules, roles and responsibilities change moment to moment, which means a continual need to adapt. This seemed especially true for Greene County Human Resources (HR) staff members as FY2018 got underway.

Among the highlights, passage of the New York State 2018-2019 Budget resulted in two projects for our team as the **State’s Sexual Harassment and Civil Service Laws** were both revised. Under the amended Sexual Harassment Law, employers in New York State would be required to adopt a sexual harassment prevention policy and provide annual training that meets or exceeds the Law’s minimum standards. The amendment to Section 208 of NYS Civil Service Law (a/k/a the Taylor Law) set forth new requirements regarding membership data transfer and union dues deductions. Also in 2018, an important U.S. Supreme Court decision (**Janus vs. AFSCME**) had no impact on the HR Department, but resulted in a flurry of activity for the Payroll Unit of the Treasurer’s Office which is responsible for administering union dues. (See the Labor and Employee Relations section for details.)

In addition, the New York State and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS) toiled throughout 2018 to finalize its *Retirement Online* program scheduled to go “live” in 2019. HR staff participated in a series of seminars and webinars designed to prepare municipalities for the changeover and acclimate them to the database. *Retirement Online* will allow Greene County HR staff to directly input membership registration information into the NYSLRS system for all new hires. This will accelerate the registration process by instantly issuing Membership Registration Numbers, thereby assisting Payroll in completing employee reporting in a timely manner.

Implementing the newly negotiated provisions of several union contracts in terms of health care and buyout changes, drug screen policies, and so on, were also on the top of the HR “to do” list in 2018. This was in addition to other important work in the areas of workforce planning, staffing and employment, compliance, policy development and administration, compensation and benefits, labor and employee relations, and training and staff development. The particulars are specified throughout this document.

All HR staff participated in professional development and training throughout the year, including classes on OSHA recordkeeping, legal updates, and topics for those new to HR. Representatives also

attended the NYS Society for Human Resource Management and workers' compensation annual conferences.

Our small, but mighty TEAM of three, which is responsible for providing HR services to nearly 550 active employees and 350 retirees, was able to accomplish all of its stated goals for 2018, including evaluating workplace injuries/illnesses and helping departments find ways of reducing incidents, monitoring legislation at the state and federal level to remain compliant, and undertaking initiatives to increase awareness and utilization of the Employee Assistance Program. HR is proud of its many achievements and is pleased to present this summary of activities for 2018.

STAFFING AND EMPLOYMENT

Personnel Changes

HR remained busy with personnel changes in 2018, in addition to other job changes such as promotions, transfers, and modifications in status. While the **total number of personnel transactions remained exactly the same, there were fewer retirements in 2018 as compared to 2017, and more terminations**, some of which involved taking per diems off the payroll that had not worked in a long time. The busiest months for hiring in 2018 were January, June and October. The same was true in 2017, except there was more activity in September, rather than October, that year.

	New Hires	Rehired Retiree	Resigned	Retired	Terminated	Deceased	Total
2017	61	4	30	19	10	2	126
2018	63	2	30	13	17	1	126

In accordance with one of our 2018 stated goals, HR partnered with Greene County Civil Service to pilot outreach opportunities for local high school students regarding employment with Greene County, and to explain the job application and examination processes. Activities kicked-off with participation in a college/career fair at Cairo-Durham High School in the spring. We hope to be able to expand and enhance our efforts going forward.

In addition, HR continued to work closely with department heads and the Civil Service Department to post, advertise, and fill vacancies in accordance with NYS Civil Service Law, Greene County Civil Service Rules and Regulations, and applicable provisions of the union contracts and County policies and procedures. In terms of filling vacancies, we are required to post within an agency or on a County-wide basis first, or to refer to an existing eligibles list generated by Civil Service examination. Job announcements are sent to the departments for posting in accordance with Civil Service Rules and applicable union contract language, and placed on the Greene County website. When, and if, the search for candidates requires external advertising, we utilize as many free or low-cost alternatives as possible, before consulting with a department head about more pricey options. The number of vacancies posted internally, and the number of Civil Service exam lists canvassed, typically exceeds the number of advertised positions. Hiring from an exam list is usually preferable to hiring a candidate provisionally since there is a risk the incumbent may not pass the test or be 'reachable" on the list. This outcome can be devastating to the employee, and a waste of time and money for the employer. Very often, the hiring authority waits until the exam results are out before filling the vacancy.

Reclassifications, Reallocations, Promotional Opportunities

HR participated in evaluating the reclassification requests of two individuals, both of which were denied, although one resulted in a pay rate adjustment in light of the duties and level of responsibility required for

her position. The Committee is comprised of the Commissioner of Civil Service, HR Director and a Department Head appointed by the County Administrator annually on a rotating basis.

The HR Director also collaborated with Department Heads, the County Administrator and Civil Service on staffing planning. These efforts led to the creation of several new titles, some of which provided promotional opportunities for a number of staff. We also worked on enhancement of a career ladder for one series of titles. The HR Director evaluated all newly created bargaining unit titles and assigned grades accordingly. Promotion exams for some existing titles were ordered by a couple of department heads based upon the needs of those departments. Other exams were ordered by the Civil Service Department at the request of department heads filling vacancies.

Pre-employment Screenings

Background checks, physicals and drug screens continued to be ordered on all prospective new hires receiving a conditional offer of employment. All background checks ordered by the HR Department are conducted by the Greene County Sheriff's Office.

Random Drug Screens

A random drug screening program initiated for employees in the Managerial/Confidential (M/C) group in 2017, was expanded to members of the CSEA General and CSEA Dispatch/Probation Units in 2018. (Employees of the County's Highway and Solid Waste Management Department, and the Sheriff's Office/Jail, participate in separate, agency-specific programs.) Conversations with union officials and representatives of the screening agency after the initial round of testing resulted in planned procedural adjustments for future tests. Department Heads participated in a roundtable on random and reasonable suspicion testing, and were provided details about video training available on this topic from the County's workers' compensation third-party administrator.

Employment Eligibility Verification (I-9)

Completion of mandated I-9 Forms continued to be part of the onboarding process used to document verification of the identity and employment authorization of each new hire to work in the United States. HR kept on the lookout for possible changes to employment verification laws promulgated by the federal government.

License Event Notification Service (LENS)

HR continued to administer the LENS Program through the NYS DMV. LENS is a data service that gathers information daily from the DMV's driver's license files and reports any new information to us (e.g., suspensions, expirations, renewals, etc.). As a result, we are able to monitor the NYS license records of CDL holders and other employees that drive for the County in the course of their work. This service is free to government agencies and helps reduce the County's insurance rates.

Employee Performance Appraisals

HR continued to send out quarterly reminders and to monitor the completion of employee performance appraisals by department managers and supervisors.

Exit interviews

HR revamped the Exit Interview Questionnaire to try and elicit greater participation. The importance of providing feedback about one's experience working for the County was also discussed at a department head meeting and described in the employee newsletter. HR continued to provide employees the opportunity to complete the survey upon retirement or voluntary separation from employment. The completed questionnaires are reviewed by HR on an annual basis.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Reporting

Per an **HR goal for 2018**, the Director monitored proposed new EEO-1 reporting requirements re: W-2 wage data and hours worked. EEO reports are to be submitted by most private and public employers to identify by job category, race, sex and ethnicity how many people work for the business. While it would appear the EEOC could begin requiring organizations to submit the additional data sometime in 2019, there was still no indication the proposed requirements would also apply to EEO-4 filers, which we are.

Forms

In 2018, HR staff developed and/or amended the following forms:

1. Following enactment of the **Tax Cuts and Jobs Act**, HR began using the newly released form W-4, and made all employees aware of the availability of the Tax Withholding Calculator as a tool to help them decide whether or not to refile their W-4 for the year.
2. Updated our standard **medical leave packet** to include newly released FMLA forms, in addition to claim forms provided by our new NYS Statutory Disability carrier.
3. Updated the **Sexual Harassment and Discriminatory Harassment Acknowledgment** forms for employees, interns, and volunteers.
4. Reviewed and revised the **employment application** in response to issues being raised nationally (i.e., pay rates), or those that have fallen into obsolescence.
5. Replaced the existing **Fair Credit Reporting Act Model Notice** with an updated version as an attachment to our Consent and Release for a Background Check.
6. Updated the **Exit Interview Questionnaire** to try and elicit greater participation.
7. Began attaching **Personnel Change Forms** to individual employee screens in the County's personnel/payroll system.

Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

The HR Department's mission is to provide the highest quality personnel services to our employees, retirees and other customers, while promoting effective and efficient government. To accomplish this mission, HR must ensure its operations are performed proficiently with minimal disruption, especially during an emergency. Continuity of Operations Plans were developed by all County agencies in 2017 to ensure they would be capable of conducting their Mission Essential Functions in the event their Primary Operating Location becomes unusable. The HR Department's COOP was reviewed in December 2018, however, a decision was made to hold any updates until after the first of the year in anticipation of the addition of a fourth staff member to our team in mid-January.

Administrative Manual

HR continued to be actively involved in contributing proposed updates to the Greene County Administrative Manual. In 2018, our proposals resulted in amendments to the Appointments Procedure, Performance Appraisal Process, Leave for Cancer Screening and Blood Donation, and Harassment and Discrimination sections of the Manual, including the addition of a stand-alone Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy.

Cost Allocation Plan and Annual Audit

HR compiled employment data needed by the consultant preparing the County's Annual Cost Allocation Plan, and responded to requests for information from the County's auditors during their annual review.

NYSAC Salary Survey

HR completed the annual salary survey administered by the NYS Association of Counties.

Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) Requests

HR collected data for the County Attorney in response to a number of Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests received during the year.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Affordable Care Act (ACA)

In addition to **satisfying our long-standing goal (renewed for 2018)** of keeping all ACA reporting data current as enrollment status and/or health insurance coverage changes occur, **HR achieved a second goal** of closely monitoring activity at the federal level re: possible amendments or repeal, replacement, and/or **repair plans**. Beyond that, the Department persisted in managing the myriad of tasks needed to successfully achieve compliance with the ACA's many mandates, including: (1) Monitoring the hours worked of all on-going part-time and per diem employees during the County's "Standard Measurement Period" in order to evaluate their eligibility for health insurance, (2) Monitoring the hours worked of all newly hired variable hour part-time and per diem employees during their "Initial Measurement Period" in order to evaluate their eligibility for health insurance, (3) Conducting "Affordability" calculations for each of the health plans offered by the County, and (4) Regularly re-evaluating the "Offer and Coverage" and "Safe Harbor" codes being used to ensure our selections are appropriate for each individual's circumstances, in order that our end product will be as precise as possible.

Health Insurance

HR continued to administer the following health insurance plans in 2018 for **approximately 1400 Greene County employees, retirees and dependents**:

- 1) Medicare Advantage Plan
- 2) Non-deductible PPO and EPO
- 3) Deductible PPO and EPO

Note: The Teamsters Health and Hospital Fund Select Plan is managed by the Greene County Department of Highway and Solid Waste for Teamsters bargaining unit members.

At the start of the year, HR focused on completing conversion of CSEA General Unit and Dispatch/Probation Unit members from non-deductible plan enrollment to enrollment in the deductible plans. This included entering updates in the personnel/payroll system related to Offer and Coverage, and ramping-up our outreach to help participants better understand how the deductible plans work, as well as to address their questions and concerns.

Later in the year, we picked up on the continuing theme of looking for ways to reduce or maintain health care costs. Under consideration was a **move from a fully insured (minimum premium) plan to a self-insured (administrative services only) arrangement**. The process, which began with a series of meetings and review of quotes arranged by the Broker (and included the County Administrator, HR Director, Benefits Coordinator and health insurance company representatives) resulted in a move to the self-insured option, in addition to a carrier change. The new plans were structured the same as the existing ones, with the only real difference being the way in which the claims would be paid. In general, employee premium contributions would remain steady, or be slightly less in 2019 over the previous year.

Once the decision was made, the County Administrator and Broker met with union leaders to communicate the changes that would become effective on January 1, 2019. After that, HR took the lead by disseminating information to all benefit-eligible employees covered by the PPO and EPO non-deductible and deductible plans, and arranging for representatives from the new carrier to attend the annual Benefits Fair in November. Special information sessions were also scheduled for health insurance eligible retirees under 65, as well as for members of the AFSCME bargaining unit (the only active employee group remaining on the non-deductible plans). Then it was back to processing Open Enrollment changes, updating the personnel/payroll system, addressing employee concerns and easing minds, printing temporary ID cards for some, and facilitating the transition from one carrier to another. All of this was primarily accomplished by the Employee Benefits Coordinator.

In addition to the foregoing:

- The HR Director participated in an initial meeting with the Broker and County Administrator to explore use of a **Pharmacy Benefits Manager** as a possible way of reducing prescriptions costs in the future.
- The County Legislature passed a Resolution amendment for **retirements effective 1/1/19 or after**, providing that health insurance eligible Greene County retirees and their eligible dependents, who are less than 65 years of age or, otherwise, not eligible for Medicare at the time of the employee's retirement, will be qualified for participation in the same type or similar type of health insurance plan upon retirement as they had while actively working. This does not guarantee their health insurance plan will not change during the course of their retirement. HR updated its retiree and new hire packets to include this updated information.

Medicare Advantage Plan (MAP)

HR continued to monitor when benefit eligible retirees and their benefit eligible dependents become qualified for Medicare Part B in order to appropriately transfer them to the County's Medicare Advantage Plan. In 2018, the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued new ID cards with a new Medicare Number unique to each individual (rather than using their Social Security Number) as a way of protecting their identity. In response, the County's MAP carrier issued new insurance cards with new group and ID numbers to each enrollee. At that point, HR became involved in addressing member questions and concerns, verifying they had notified their health care providers of the changes, making sure they were actually using their new card (rather than the expired one), and helping them navigate claims issues.

Creditable Coverage Notices

HR sent annual compliance notices to all Medicare eligible actively working individuals and their dependents, Medicare eligible COBRA individuals and their dependents, Medicare eligible disabled individuals and their dependents, and retirees and dependents covered by the Greene County Prescription Drug Plan, informing them that the Greene County plan is a creditable plan so they need not join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. The HR Department also fulfilled the online Notice of Disclosure to CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) requirement.

Health Insurance Buyout

HR continued to process applications and maintain records for the Health Insurance Buyout for employees providing proof of alternative health care coverage. Personnel/Payroll System updates related to implementation of a buyout cap were completed in the first quarter of the year for both CSEA Units, and preparations were made to do the same for management and confidential employees for whom a cap would become effective on 1/1/19. Rather than being tied to health insurance premiums which continually rise, the new caps are fixed dollar amounts.

Dental and Vision Insurance

No modifications in dental or vision insurance carriers or plans were made for plan year 2018. Dental rates negotiated for 2018 were for a 2-year period. The vision rates have remained exactly the same since 2016. HR staff continued with routine administration of the plans throughout the year.

Open Enrollment

HR coordinated an Employee Benefits Fair during the annual Open Enrollment Period providing employees the opportunity to converse with representatives from the County's benefits providers (e.g., health, dental, vision, and supplemental). HR also processed all enrollment changes made during Open Enrollment for a January 1st start date.

Life Insurance

HR also continued to oversee the life insurance plan for members of the Management/Confidential (M/C) group, including generating COBRA notices for those terminating employment.

Flexible Spending Plan (FSA)

HR kept administering the FSA in 2018. **Enrollment in the plan was down by 4% for the year, then increased 10% during the fall Open Enrollment period for the 2019 plan year.** Enrollees enjoyed an approved increase in the 2018 annual medical FSA designation to \$2600 from \$2550. The County Administrator upped the limit again at Open Enrollment time to \$2650 for the coming year, in addition to reconfirming his decision not to participate in the rollover.

COBRA Administration

HR routinely extends health, dental and vision insurance coverage under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) to covered employees and their family members when there is a “qualifying event” that would result in a loss of coverage under an employer’s plan (e.g., resignation, loss of dependent care status, divorce, death, etc.). The COBRA amount is equal to the full cost of the monthly insurance premiums. HR also created and is using separate and distinct COBRA notices for the Flexible Spending Account (FSA) and Life Insurance Plan.

Premium Assistance Program

HR updated and posted a mandated notice on the employee portal, and sent the same to all departments for posting, regarding potential employee eligibility for a program available through New York State that can help those struggling to pay their insurance premiums. NYS uses funds from its Medicaid or Children’s Health Insurance Programs (CHIP) to help people who are eligible for employer-sponsored health coverage, but need assistance in covering the cost of their health premiums. This premium assistance program became effective for local government employees on September 1, 2010.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

As co-ADA Coordinators, the HR Director and County Attorney processed four (4) requests for accommodation in 2018, which was **an increase of 50% over the previous year.**

Employee Assistance Program

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) celebrated its second year of operation in 2018. The EAP is a free, confidential service available to Greene County employees and their immediate family members that provides a way to cope with issues such as stress, grief, anxiety, family/marital concerns, substance abuse and work-related issues. A report of aggregate data received for the 2018 plan year revealed **utilization remained steady in 2018 when compared to 2017 at 3.1%,** which is slightly above the national average.

It is desirable to have employees maximizing use of this valuable resource for their own well-being, as well as to help reduce time and attendance issues, maintain performance, and minimize work-related injury/illness and health care costs. Therefore, **a primary goal for 2018 became to increase employee awareness of and contact with the EAP.** As a way of accomplishing this, HR upped its marketing efforts through distribution of informational material during the onboarding process, more frequent email blasts and other communications, and by inviting an EAP representative to have a presence at the annual Employee Benefits Fair. Hopefully these efforts will prove fruitful in maintaining or increasing utilization as the years pass.

Medical Leave, Disability, Paid Family Leave

HR processed a total of 61 new requests for leave under the **Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)** in 2018, which was an **increase of 22%** from the previous year. A total of 47 applications were approved for FMLA leave. The others were disqualified because the applicants did not meet the eligibility

requirements (i.e., had not worked for the County a minimum of 12 months and/or had not worked at least 1250 hours in the previous 12 months). However, all 14 of these applicants were approved for non-FMLA medical leaves. The majority of employees used FMLA leave for their own serious health condition. The length of the leaves averaged 7-10 days for most individuals, although five of the participants were out for 12 weeks or more. HR processed the paperwork for seven employees on approved medical leave who also filed for **NYS Statutory Disability (down 63% from 2017)**. Eighteen of the 47 leaves were granted on an intermittent basis which was a **decrease of 18% from 2017**. One of the reasons employees may decline short-term disability is that it can negatively impact the accumulation of retirement service credit. There were no new requests for FMLA Military Family Leave in 2018.

The County opted not to participate in the **New York Paid Family Leave** program slated to become effective on January 1, 2018. The program is optional for public employers in New York State. There is currently no collective bargaining obligation to provide the Paid Family Leave benefit to Greene County employees, however, leave benefits are extended to them under the FMLA and the union contracts covering County employees. The County provided advanced notice to the NYS Workers' Compensation Board and all employees that the County would not be "opting in" to the benefit at this time.

Workers' Compensation

HR continued to guide claimants and department representatives through the Workers' Compensation claims process, transmit paperwork to the County's Third-Party Administrator (TPA), and follow-up as needed. In January 2018, HR completed the SH900 and SH900.1 forms for 2017, distributed them to County departments in compliance with posting mandates, and sent copies to the NYS Department of Labor. HR also maintained records of all existing and new work-related injuries and illnesses that occurred throughout the 2018 calendar year. In 2018, Greene County had the following experience:

- **0 deaths (down 100% from 2017)**
- **7 cases of missed work (down 41% from 2017)**
- **0 job transfer or restriction cases (no change)**
- **21 other reportable cases (down 4.5% from 2017)**

This was the result of 28 total incidents which represents a 20% decrease as compared to 2017.

In accordance with one of **HR's stated goals for 2018**, we evaluated the incidents that occurred County-wide in 2017 and identified areas needing improvement. We then followed-up with department heads, as needed, to make them aware of any trends and get them started on a remediation plan. As part of this, HR disseminated information regarding free safety training resources available through the County's TPA, including a library of DVDs and on-line training programs. We believe this intervention may have helped as the agency identified as having the most incidents in 2017 **realized a 27% reduction in incidents in 2018**.

Unemployment Claims

HR assisted in processing all claims for unemployment insurance benefits in 2018.

Retirement: New York State Voluntary Defined Contribution Program

The HR Department continued to offer this alternative to membership in the NYS and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS) to all eligible new hires. (General eligibility: Non-union employees hired on or after 7/1/13 that make \$75,000 or more and are not already enrolled in the NYSLRS.) Defined contribution plans are retirement savings vehicles that provide benefits "defined" by employer and employee contributions to the plan and the investment earnings on those contributions. Participants are responsible for managing the investments in their account. Their retirement benefits are based on the success of their investments. This is different from the NYSLRS which is a defined benefit plan that provides a fixed and predictable lifetime monthly income at retirement.

FLSA Overtime Exemption

Pursuant to an **HR Department goal for 2018**, the HR Director continued to monitor activity at the Federal level related to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Overtime Rules Exemption. The FLSA entitles employees to overtime payments, in certain circumstances, unless they are subject to an FLSA exemption. The U.S. Department of Labor's 2016 Exempt Overtime Rules changes were met with legal challenges, causing the agency to file an appeal and a motion to stay while it began work on a new proposal. While the item continued to appear on the 2018 regulatory agenda, with regional and various other thresholds under deliberation, no changes to the salary-level threshold were announced by the close of the year. Meanwhile, the existing exempt salary threshold (2004) of \$23,660 remained in effect.

Compliance Postings

HR conducted its annual audit of federal and state employment posting mandates and distributed new and updated postings to all departments.

Employee Wellness

HR remained an active participant on the County Wellness Committee, along with representatives from Greene County Public Health, our insurance carrier, the Greene County Healthy Weight initiative, the County Administrator, and the County's Insurance Broker. The ***Go Greene for Wellness Team*** continued to offer or support a variety of valuable wellness programs throughout the year, including *Nutri-Savings* information sessions, healthy vending options, numerous worksite walking and weight loss/maintenance initiatives, monthly wellness tips, and fitness classes available at no cost to insurance plan members and their dependents.

Blood Borne Pathogens

HR continued to have a presence on the Blood Borne Pathogens Committee and worked with the Public Health Department to coordinate and track training for County employees for 2018.

LABOR AND EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Labor Contract Negotiations

The HR Director maintains an active role on the management team for union contract negotiations, including assisting with development of the County's proposals, as well as analyzing the proposals of each union. She is also responsible for preparation of the employee data sheets for each bargaining unit, including hire and longevity dates, leave time accrued and taken, health insurance enrollment information, and so on. Upon ratification of each contract, the HR Director assists in checking the final document for accuracy, works with the Payroll Department to establish the pay schedules, and implements new or amended terms of each Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), as required.

It was a quiet year for negotiations as compared to the recent past when multiple unions were working without an Agreement. With only one expired CBA remaining, attention was focused on administering the terms of the Agreements in place, and continuing to look for a meeting of the minds for the seventh.

AFSCME: As 2017 came to a close, there was still no negotiated Agreement between the County and its Highway workers for the term beginning January 1, 2015. While talks were initiated before the previous Contract expired, the parties ended 2014 at impasse, were in mediation by March 2015, and have failed to gain any traction since then. Despite having multiple presentations and Q&A sessions with representatives from the insurance carrier, AFSCME members have reiterated they have no interest in adopting the County's deductible health insurance plans. Negotiation sessions reconvened in September 2017 with a team change on the labor side and an exchange of offers. However, there was no activity again until May 2018 when another Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed, only

to be voted down by the Union membership. By October the parties were back at Mediation and were awaiting Fact Finding at year's end.

Corrections Unit (Council 82): The parties did not meet in 2018 as the current Agreement is good through December 31, 2019.

CSEA General Unit 7000: Negotiations with the CSEA General Unit, which had been on-going since May 2013, finally came to a conclusion when the parties entered into an MOA and the Contract was ratified by the membership at the end of 2017. At that point, HR staff got busy transferring enrollment of affected employees to the deductible health insurance plans, adjusting buyout amounts (some with the new caps), and assisting Payroll with questions concerning wage adjustments, and so on. The parties did not meet in 2018 as the current Agreement is good through December 31, 2019.

CSEA Dispatch and Probation Unit 7002: HR finished up the many tasks related to settlement of a new Contract shortly after the first of the year. The parties did not meet in 2018 as the current Agreement is good through December 31, 2019.

Deputy Sheriff's Association (Council 82): The parties did not meet in 2018 as the current Agreement is good through December 31, 2019.

Teamsters (Solid Waste Management): The parties did not meet in 2018 since the current Agreement is good through December 31, 2019.

UPSEU (Nurses): The parties did not meet in 2018 as the current Agreement is good through December 31, 2019.

Contract Grievances

The HR Director was present at most of the Second Step Grievance meetings at the request of the County Administrator. A total of 11 on-going or new grievances were processed in 2018 with the following outcomes. **This represents a 50% drop in actions since 2017 when there was a 50% increase over the prior year.**

- Arbitration Adjourned by Union - 1
- Awaiting Step 2 Appeal - 3
- Awaiting Arbitration – 1
- Grievance Denied by Arbitrator – 2
- Grievance Upheld at Step 1 – 1
- Step 2 Meeting Denied (member ineligible) – 1
- Grievance Withdrawn by Union - 2

Labor-Management Meetings

The HR Director participated with the County Administrator and several department heads in Labor-Management meetings to discuss a number of department-specific policy development issues and grievance-related matters.

Management Team Support

The HR Director continued to be regularly engaged with Department Heads and supervisors in a consultation and support role regarding staffing and employee relations matters.

Disciplinary Actions

The HR Director assisted Department Heads in processing 16 new or continuing disciplinary actions in 2018 which had the following results. **This represents a decrease of 24% from 2017 when there was a 23.5% increase over the previous year.**

- Letter of Reprimand - 1
- Loss of 7 vacation days - 1
- 20 day unpaid suspension and awaiting arbitration - 1
- 90 day unpaid suspension and awaiting arbitration – 1
- Stipulation of Settlement - Letter of Reprimand and loss of 2 vacation days - 1
- Stipulation of Settlement - Loss of 12 vacation hours – 1
- Stipulation of Settlement - 3 day unpaid suspension and no pay for 3-hour unauthorized absence - 1
- Stipulation of Settlement - 3 day unpaid suspension (2 days held in abeyance), no upgrades, promotions, equalization - 1
- Stipulation of Settlement - 4 day unpaid suspension (2 days held in abeyance) – 1
- Stipulation of Settlement - 30-day unpaid suspension – 1
- Stipulation of Settlement - Transfer and 10-day unpaid suspension - 1
- Stipulation of Settlement - Loss of time and pay from date of service of the NOD through date of execution of the Stipulation, Letter of Reprimand, restoration of sick and personal hours - 1
- Stipulation of Settlement - Resignation in lieu of termination and payout of vacation accruals – 1
- Resignation in lieu of termination, plus some back pay – 2
- Termination - 1

Workplace Investigations, Administrative Proceedings and Hearings

Aside from the disciplinary matters, the HR Director participated in a number of other workplace investigations, administrative proceedings, and hearings.

Sexual Harassment Prevention

New York State's Sexual Harassment Laws were updated with adoption of the State Budget on April 12, 2018. As a result, employers in New York State are required to adopt a sexual harassment prevention policy and provide annual training that meets or exceeds the law's minimum standards.

Greene County has maintained a **Discriminatory Harassment Prevention Policy and Complaint Procedure** (that includes sexual harassment) for years, routinely updates the policy, and provides training to staff. In order to remain compliant, HR worked with labor counsel in 2018 to revise the County's existing policy and to create a **stand-alone Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy** that meets the new standards. These policies were adopted by the Greene County Legislature in the fall, disseminated to staff, posted on compliance boards at all worksites, and made available on the Employee Information Website, HR Department link on the Greene County website, and the County SharePoint. HR also began handing them out at new hire orientation and upon request.

HR also amended the Sexual Harassment and Discriminatory Harassment Acknowledgment forms for employees, interns, and volunteers. The acknowledgements and copies of the policies were emailed to department heads for distribution to interns and volunteers.

NYS Human Rights Law also protects those providing services in the workplace from sexual harassment. Therefore, the policies and an acknowledgement form were made available by the County Attorney's Office to contractors, subcontractors, vendors, consultants or others providing services to Greene County. These documents can be found in the Legal Notices section of the Greene County website.

Training began late in the year with additional dates scheduled for spring and fall 2019, using a new curriculum. This training will be on-going in accordance with the Law.

NYS Taylor Law Amendment

An amendment to Section 208 of NYS Civil Service Law (a/k/a the Taylor Law) also resulted from adoption of the 2018-2019 NYS Budget. Responsibility for administering some of the provisions of the revised Law fell on the shoulders of the Payroll Department (e.g., deducting union dues from newly hired employees no later than 30 days after receiving proof of a signed dues deduction authorization card). Tasks assumed by the HR Department in conforming to the changes involved providing each union with the name, address, job title, department name, and work location of each individual they represent within 30 days of initial hire, re-employment, promotion, or transfer. As a starting point, HR ran an Employee Information Report for each union detailing the required data for all those covered by their respective bargaining units. HR then setup a system enabling each union to receive notification of changes as they arise, but no later than 30 days after they occur.

Janus v. AFSCME

On June 27, 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court determined that Agency Fee Payments are unconstitutional for public employees. This historical event had no impact on the HR Department, but resulted in a flurry of activity for the Payroll Unit of the Treasurer's Office as the agency responsible for administering union dues.

School Resource Officers

The HR Director participated (from a labor relations standpoint) in an initial meeting to discuss the impact of placing Sheriff's Deputies in local schools as School Resource Officers.

Employee Awards

HR produced the annual employee awards event on behalf of the Legislature in collaboration with the County Administrator's Office. Pins and certificates were conferred within the departments and a ceremony was held prior to a Legislature meeting to announce the Employee of the Year and Chairman's Award Winner.

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

HR coordinated the following workshops in 2018, and continued to administer a database to track employee participation in County-sponsored compliance (i.e., Workplace Violence, HIPAA) and other training:

Blood Borne Pathogens: In collaboration with Greene County Public Health, provided training for all employees that may be at risk of accidental occupational exposure to blood borne pathogens or other potentially infectious materials in the course of their work.

Discriminatory Harassment Prevention: Classes were held for all levels of staff throughout the year. In the fall, the **Sexual Harassment** piece was amended and enhanced in compliance with NYS Law and County policy. Sexual Harassment Prevention training will be conducted annually for all staff as mandated.

Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace: Labor Counsel provided an overview for Department Heads and upper level supervisors on the Management/Confidential and negotiated Greene County Substance Abuse Testing Procedures, and related issues.

Benefits Information Sessions: Continued to provide opportunities throughout the year for employees to learn more about their benefits options, via presentations, walk-in consultations, information tables, and mailings/emails.

Workers' Compensation: In accordance with one of **HR's goals for 2018** as related to the reduction of workplace accidents and injuries, HR disseminated information regarding free safety training resources available through the County's Workers' Compensation TPA, including a library of DVDs and on-line training programs. This information was released twice in 2018. (See Workers' Compensation section above.)

Interview Skills Training: HR continued to partner with Columbia Greene Community College (CGCC) to bring needed skills building to the workforce. At the request of HR, a workshop was developed focusing on interview skills for hiring managers, with a winter 2019 anticipated launch date. **As in the past, Workforce Development Grant funds will be available to cover the cost of the training offered through CGCC, making it very cost effective for Greene County.**

PLANS FOR THE NEAR FUTURE

In addition to continually improving our service to Greene County's employees, retirees and members of the public who seek our assistance, the Human Resources Department has set the following goals for 2019:

1. **Exempt OT Rules:** Continue to monitor legislated changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Overtime Exemption and make sure employees are properly classified.
2. **Sexual Harassment Prevention:** Complete training for all employees in accordance with the amended NYS Law.
3. **I-9 Maintenance:** Establish a process to identify and prepare I-9's for destruction. These forms are used to verify the identity and employment authorization of each new hire to work in the United States.
4. **Health Insurance:** Help transition the County from being fully insured to self-insured, and facilitate the change in health insurance carriers.
5. **Affordable Care Act:** In terms of 1095 reporting going forward, begin to track the "Covered Individuals" details, in addition to the "Offer and Coverage" information (which we have been doing) in conjunction with becoming self-insured for the PPO and EPO plans. Continue to update records for all staff in the County's database as employment status and/or health insurance coverage changes occur. Also continue monitoring what's happening at the federal level re: replacement plans, etc.
6. **Federal and State Legislation:** Stay abreast of what's happening in terms of proposed new or changing workplace rules and regulations in order to be able to respond accordingly.