

COUNTY OF VENTURA

civil service commission

BOARD OF REVIEW AND APPEALS



Commissioners
Don Becker
Alyse M. Lazar
Haywood Merricks III
Joyce A. Taylor
James Vandenberg

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2015
8:30 a.m.
VENTURA COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
LOWER PLAZA ASSEMBLY ROOM

Chair Merricks called the meeting to order at 8:32. Present were Chair Merricks, Vice-Chair Becker, and Commissioners Vandenberg, Lazar and Taylor; Cheryl Shaw, Commission Assistant; and Roberto R. Orellana, Law Advisor to the Commission.

Colleen Joyner, the County employee who asked the Commission to conduct the instant investigation, was present with Pam Briscoe, SEUI Local 721 union steward. Emily Gardner, Assistant County Counsel, and Yolanda Walker, Assistant Director of Human Resources, were present for County Human Resources. Also present were Rajima Danish and Diane Crist, as noted below.

1. Request to Amend and Expand investigation regarding examination procedures for Data Analyst Program Administrator II recruitment to include investigation regarding Business Analyst recruitment in Case #15-044-10-03.

Vice-Chair Becker stated that the alleged violations pertaining to the Business Analyst recruitment were similar to those Ms. Joyner has alleged with respect to the Data Analyst Program Administrator II recruitment, and suggested deferring any decision to undertake or expand an investigation until the conclusion of the investigation of Ms. Joyner's prior request. The Commission unanimously agreed to defer the matter until after the conclusion of the primary investigation hearing on today's agenda.

Subsequent to the hearing and deliberations with respect to the Data Analyst program Administrator II recruitment, described below, the Commission unanimously decided not to undertake an investigation with respect to the Business Analyst recruitment.

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2. Investigation regarding examination procedures for Data Analyst Program Administrator II recruitment, Case #15-044-10-03.

After the Commission addressed several questions to most of those present at the hearing (as noted above), the Commission asked Rajima Danish, an employee in the Behavioral Health Department, to answer several questions regarding the changes made to the recruitment notice with respect to minimum qualifications required of applicants for the employment opportunity, as . Diane Grist, a prior county employee, also answered some questions from the Commission.

At 10:50 a.m., at the conclusion of the question and answer session, the Commission went into closed session to deliberate. The Commission re-convened in open session at 11:20 a.m.

Chair Merricks stated that the Commission had unanimously determined that the claims made by Ms. Joyner were without merit and did not warrant any formal recommendations to the Board of Supervisors by the Commission. Ms. Joyner inquired whether she could have time to amend her request. Mr. Orellana stated that the amendment provisions contained in Civil Service Ordinance Section 1352-3 and Section 2303 of the Personnel Rules and Regulations do not apply to requests for investigation. The investigation is now over and the request cannot be amended.

Vice-Chair Becker stated that, although the Commission found no merit to Ms. Joyner's complaints, it was troubled by the fact that language in the recruitment bulletin did not explicitly state that applicants could satisfy the job prerequisites by substituting experience for a college degree. Despite language that could be read to imply this possibility, Commissioners concluded that wording in the bulletin was not specific enough to reasonably inform potential candidates who otherwise might not apply if they had no college degree.

Commissioner Lazar thanked the participants and concurred with the statement by Vice-Chair Becker. She emphasized that Human Resources needs to use clearer language in recruitment bulletins in order to make the recruitment process open and fair. However, based on the facts presented, she agreed that nothing warranted the Commission bringing this matter to the attention of the Board of Supervisors.

In response, Ms. Joyner stated that she had made several attempts to obtain various records but that the County had failed to comply with her Public Records Act requests, which failure she asserted had prevented her from obtaining documents she said would substantiate her allegations. She stated she will continue to continue to pursue her Public Records Act requests through appropriate channels.

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Vice-Chair Becker noted that Ms. Joyner, while obviously disappointed with the Commission's decision, was instrumental in bringing this issue to the Commission's attention, which had at least led to the Commission providing advice to Human Resources to make recruitment bulletin language clearer in the future.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.