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CEO UpDate

Salaries, Job Equity and Promoting from Within Metro

By CEO ROGER SNOBLE



CEO Roger Snoble

This month, I want to talk about a couple of things I believe have been on the minds of many employees and another topic we all should be thinking about for the future of Metro.

In the FY 2008 budget, we're assuming a 3.5 percent pay increase for both non-contract and union employees. That's the percentage increase negotiated with our unions and that's the request we'll take to the Board. If approved, it would be effective July 1. We're having a great year, so you all deserve it.

Pay for performance. I know Metro has had a pay for performance program for non-contract employees in the past and, while it may have been popular with many employees, it also had its problems. It's very difficult to run such a program in a government agency. There are issues of fairness and justification in a politically charged environment. The large deficit Metro is facing makes it even more difficult.

I don't foresee a return any time soon to a pay for performance system. And yet, I realize there are inequities in the salaries of many of our non-contract employees. Working with a new Board-approved policy, we've set up a process for reviewing employee classifications and for making equity adjustments to salaries for those classifications.

We recently took to the Board a list of positions to be reclassified and we'll be reviewing 10 to 15 percent of non-contract positions every year – concentrating on those that are the most out of line with pay rates for similar positions at other employers in this region.

Objective recommendations

Each year, Human Resources will ask the executive officers to look at their departments to see where they may be having problems keeping or hiring good employees. HR will work with the Hay Group, a consulting firm that will look at the responsibilities and span of control of the jobs they

review, and give us objective recommendations for the right grade and salary level for those jobs.

Don't expect to see wholesale changes from this process. On the whole, HR says we generally are competitive in pay, although there may be certain skills that are in short supply in the area and that require higher pay to keep those employees or attract candidates with those skills.

Finally, succession planning. For the future of this agency, we'll begin developing a program this year to ensure that employees have opportunities to improve their skills and advance through the ranks at Metro. The result of the program will also ensure that Metro will have qualified people ready to step up to the next level when a manager or executive retires or leaves the agency.

I believe in promoting from within when at all possible. I'd rather groom a person inside the agency than go outside the agency to hire. We've had to go outside a lot lately, and that's disappointing to me.

Metro is a project-oriented agency and we'll focus on project management first. People with those skills are hard to find, and we're looking at how we can develop the good people we have into top-notch project managers by providing basic and advanced training programs.

Project management may be the first target area, but from a practical standpoint, I need people with talent in all areas of the agency. When we recruit someone at a lower level, I always feel that this could be the person who could end up being CEO someday. Maybe that someone is you.

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