



HR, Personnel, and Organizational Development Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
February 25, 2025
NOACA Offices
1299 Superior Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio

Present: Please see the attached attendance record.

Mayor Matt Castelli, Chair of HR, Personnel, and Organizational Development Subcommittee, convened the meeting at 2:32 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Ms. Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 11, 2025. Mr. John Gall seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

Public Comments on Agenda Items

No public comments were made at this meeting.

Executive Director's Report

No report was presented at this meeting.

Action Items

No action items were presented at this meeting.

Presentation/Discussion Items

Charter Development

Director Grace Gallucci mentioned that NOACA staff included a draft charter in the meeting packet, following the standard format used for other committees, subcommittees, and charters. The draft outlines the purpose, goals, functions, membership, reporting relationships, meetings, agenda and minutes, and staffing.

Ms. Liz Barlik explained that she filled in the goals and functions in the draft charter based on discussions from the first Subcommittee meeting. She included three specific items that County Executive Ronayne wanted to accomplish under the functions section. The draft is now presented for the Subcommittee's review and any potential edits, particularly for the purpose, goals, and functions, as the rest of the content follows a standard format.

Director Gallucci mentioned that she reviewed the meeting minutes to ensure that the draft charter accurately reflected the discussions and decisions made.

Ms. Barlik explained that the goals in the draft charter were sourced from NOACA's Internal Strategic Plan (ISP). She also noted that Suzanne Miklos from OE Strategies was unable to attend this meeting but will be present at the next one to speak in more detail on the ISP.

Director Gallucci invited Subcommittee members to share any comments or feedback on the functions or goals outlined in the draft charter.

Ms. Debbie Berry pointed out that the last bullet under the functions section states, "Develop performance process for the executive director." She asked whether the Subcommittee preferred this wording or if it should be more specific by stating "performance evaluation process."

Director Gallucci explained that staff discussed the wording and intentionally used "performance process" because it encompasses both goal-setting and evaluation. This phrasing was chosen to better reflect the scope of the Subcommittee's work.

Ms. Berry stated that she was fine with any wording choice but had asked about it because the phrasing seemed short to her.

Mayor Castelli suggested that the term "performance management process" should be used instead.

Director Gallucci stated that the fourth bullet point will be revised to read: "Develop performance management process for the executive director."

Ms. Barlik informed the Subcommittee that they could take action on this item during the current meeting or choose to make it an action item for the next meeting.

Director Gallucci explained that NOACA typically has its committees, subcommittees, and councils formally adopt charters to make them official. However, staff did not include this item as an action item on the agenda because they were unsure how many comments would be received. She then asked the Subcommittee if it was ready to proceed with adoption.

Ms. India Birdsong Terry pointed out that the membership terms are listed as one year and asked whether there is a limit on how many consecutive years a person can serve.

Director Gallucci explained that each year, the Board reappoints all board members, committees, and councils, and this policy follows that same process. However, there is no limit on how many consecutive years a person can serve on a committee.

Mayor Castelli stated that he had no objections to the Subcommittee approving the charter.

Commissioner Richard Regovich made a motion to approve the charter for the HR, Personnel, and Organizational Development Subcommittee. Mr. Gall seconded the motion. The Subcommittee voted and the motion passed by voice vote.

Recruitment and Retention

Director Gallucci noted that at the last meeting, the Subcommittee asked about NOACA's processes for recruitment and retention. In response, staff would be providing an overview of the recruitment process at NOACA. She introduced Ms. Lindy Burt, Director of Administrative Services, who oversees the human resources function, to give a presentation on recruitment and retention.

Ms. Burt presented information on the following:

- Vacancy or operational need – hiring process initiated
 - Posting authorization form
 - Hiring authorization form recruitment

- Personnel Requisition Authorization to Post Position
- Personnel Hiring Authorization Form
- Recruitment Methods
 - Post - NOACA website
 - Post - Trade and professional associations
 - Post and email - Colleges and Universities
 - Attend - Special events
- Application management – Breezy HR web application
- Jobs Webpage on NOACA's Website
- Internships
 - General
 - Special Programs
 - Summer on the Cuyahoga
 - Cleveland Foundation Fellow
- Interview Process
 - Structure
 - References and background screening
- Market Trends
 - Urban Planning
 - Communications and Marketing
 - Transportation Planning, traffic engineering, environmental planning
 - Level of experience
- Onboarding
 - Agency orientation
 - Division and position orientation
 - Agencywide trainings
- Professional Development tracks (HR Handbook 5.2.1, 5.2.2)
 - Job-related
 - Job-advancement
 - Managerial/leadership training
- Professional Development Activities
 - Training budget
 - Additional trainings, as needed
 - CSU Leadership Academy
 - Professional Conferences
 - Promotion
- Employee Benefit Programs
 - Health, OPERS, deferred comp, life insurance, FSA, EAP
 - Professional association dues reimbursement (5.5)
 - Professional certification/licensure reimbursement (5.4)
 - Tuition reimbursement (5.3)
 - Transit pass subsidy (8.4)
 - Fitness center subsidy (4.13)
 - Longevity pay (4.12)
- Retention Activities
 - Internal Strategic Plan
 - Compensation Study

Mayor Castelli noted that NOACA has a comprehensive employee life cycle but that the Subcommittee had not yet addressed the performance management aspect and its potential outcomes. He asked Ms. Burt to share her perspective on HR across the organization and whether she identified any gaps or areas needing more focus.

Ms. Burt stated that the recruitment process is very labor-intensive, especially with seven positions currently posted at NOACA. She expressed a desire for more time to explore creative recruitment strategies and noted that it is an area where additional support could be beneficial.

Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells asked whether NOACA has implemented any aspects of the compensation study and whether employees have received their pay adjustments.

Ms. Burt said yes.

Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells inquired whether individual work plans serve as the foundation for performance management or how they are connected to performance evaluations and the overall performance management process.

Ms. Burt explained that NOACA's performance evaluation process begins on July 1, immediately after the fiscal year ends on June 30. Each employee has an individual work plan, which serves as the first section of the performance evaluation form. The second section evaluates employees on six professional competencies, including initiative and teamwork.

The process includes:

1. Self-evaluation by the employee.
2. Supervisor's assessment in a side-by-side format with the employee's self-evaluation.
3. Review by the department director followed by HR review.
4. A calibration process, where NOACA staff worked with a Clemens Nelson consultant to analyze performance evaluation data and standardize the process.

Commissioner Regovich asked Ms. Burt whether she reaches out to colleges beyond Cleveland State University (CSU), specifically engineering colleges, given the difficulty in filling engineering positions. He noted that fewer people may be entering those fields, making recruitment more challenging.

Ms. Burt confirmed that NOACA does engage with other colleges but noted that it still can be challenging. Colleges are particularly helpful for entry-level positions since they primarily connect with recent graduates. Most institutions use platforms like Handshake and other job posting apps, which NOACA utilizes to advertise job openings. Ms. Burt stated that NOACA posts job openings on these apps, but connecting with experienced candidates—those who have been out of college for several years—remains a challenge.

Commissioner Regovich suggested that the Subcommittee review NOACA's current HR manual.

Mayor Castelli agreed, stating that it was a good idea.

Director Gallucci stated that NOACA's HR manual has been in place since 2012, around the time she joined the organization, and it was adopted. She said she would send the HR manual to the Subcommittee for review.

Ms. Terry stated that organizations often need to recruit out-of-state candidates for specialized positions and asked whether NOACA has relocation provisions.

Director Gallucci confirmed that NOACA does have relocation clauses, but they do not include a substantial amount.

Ms. Terry suggested that NOACA consider revisiting its relocation policy when appropriate. While she acknowledged that not all expenses should be covered, offering some relocation assistance

can be beneficial. She noted that agencies without a robust or open-minded approach to relocation risk losing strong candidates from a broader talent pool.

Commissioner Regovich remarked that once candidates relocate to the area, they will not want to leave.

Ms. Terry stated that NOACA would need to get the candidates in the door.

Ms. Terry asked whether NOACA conducted an additional equity analysis beyond the compensation study. She also inquired about which organization conducted the compensation study for NOACA.

Ms. Burt stated that Clemens Nelson out of Columbus did the study and noted that they have done similar studies for other MPOs.

Ms. Burt asked Ms. Terry to clarify what she meant by "equity" and whether she was referring to market or parity.

Ms. Terry clarified that she was referring to parity and compression. She mentioned that GCRTA had conducted similar work a year ago, which was beneficial in addressing compensation compression and market value through a compensation study. However, she highlighted an additional layer of concern—what she called “isms” (racism, sexism, ageism, etc.)—that can contribute to disparities in hiring and promotions. She explained that while compensation studies typically focus on market value and job descriptions, organizations can also request services that analyze disparities related to protected classes. This helps address concerns from individuals who believe they were denied opportunities due to factors such as gender, race, or age. Ms. Terry suggested that NOACA might consider incorporating this additional review in the future, as it provides another layer of protection in the hiring and compensation process. She shared that GCRTA had its legal counsel review the final findings as an added safeguard for HR. This process extended the overall timeline by six months, ensuring that after the initial compensation adjustments, a follow-up review was conducted to identify and address any further disparities related to protected classes.

Ms. Terry asked how often NOACA plans to have a compensation study conducted, noting that regular reviews are a good practice.

Ms. Burt stated that the recommendation is to revisit the compensation study every three years.

Ms. Terry agreed with the recommendation.

Mayor Castelli asked Ms. Burt whether she believed NOACA's position was appropriately classified within the correct pay levels or bands based on the external data gathered during the compensation study.

Ms. Burt said she recalled that the results showed that NOACA was doing well, but it did recommend some adjustments.

Mayor Castelli asked if the adjustments were made.

Ms. Burt said yes.

Ms. Berry asked whether NOACA conducts exit interviews when employees leave. She also inquired about how the data from those interviews is evaluated and used when posting a new position or hiring a replacement, expressing curiosity about the robustness of the process.

Ms. Burt stated that NOACA conducts exit interviews, but participation is voluntary, with each departing employee invited to take part.

Ms. Berry asked whether employees typically choose to participate in exit interviews.

Director Gallucci stated that participation in exit interviews is roughly 50/50, with about half of employees choosing to take part.

Ms. Terry asked whether Director Gallucci personally reviews all employee evaluations.

Ms. Burt stated that division directors review all employee evaluations.

Director Gallucci stated that the evaluations are available to her, but she does not review each one individually.

Mr. Gall stated that the Subcommittee is new and it is doing a lot of baseline things right now. He praised NOACA for having a compensation study and a strategic plan in place, calling them important steps. He noted that the Subcommittee will be reviewing NOACA's HR manual, which may be outdated compared to today's standards. He then asked about employee longevity, specifically the average number of years employees have worked at NOACA, as he wanted to establish a baseline.

Director Gallucci estimated that the average employee tenure at NOACA is around 10 years, though the exact number has not been formally calculated. She noted that NOACA has a wide range of employee tenure, with some employees having been there for 40 years, while others have only been with the organization for one year. She stated that staff will calculate the exact average for the Subcommittee.

Mayor Castelli requested data on NOACA's turnover ratio and annual turnover percentage for review.

HR Position

Director Gallucci began discussion on this item by recapping a meeting between her, Mayor Castelli, and Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells the previous day. She said it was an excellent meeting, with Mayor Castelli and Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells sharing information with her and Director Gallucci sharing information with them about NOACA's current process. The three of them had a discussion that focused on two areas. First was the performance evaluation process. Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells had shared with Director Gallucci her performance goal setting process. Director Gallucci was asked to develop 10 goals, which she has done. At this point, the next step is to review them with Board President Ronayne and then bring it back to the Subcommittee and/or Executive Committee. She said she felt very confident that the 10 goals reach across the agency and are not just projects that have to be completed but encompass the leadership of the agency in various areas. She noted that the three of them looked at them yesterday. Director Gallucci said she would send them out to the Subcommittee members and requested feedback.

Director Gallucci then explained that the other area of the discussion was regarding the HR position. She explained that the initial plan was to create an HR generalist position, but after reviewing job descriptions and gathering input from senior staff, they decided to pursue a director-level role. This position would be on par with senior staff members. To inform this decision, they reviewed a job description from a local agency like NOACA and will also collect and review job descriptions from other MPOs with HR directors. The feedback from senior staff aligned well with a standard job description, suggesting it will be positively received. Director Gallucci plans to

compile this information, along with any additional input from the Subcommittee, to create a finalized job description for their review.

Ms. Terry supported the idea of creating an HR director position, emphasizing its relevance given NOACA's current activities. She inquired whether there might be any financial implications that Director Gallucci had not yet considered as the job description is being developed. She also asked if NOACA would need to adjust its finances to accommodate the increased responsibilities associated with the new position.

Director Gallucci explained that NOACA currently does not face severe budgetary issues, allowing flexibility to reallocate funds or adjust positions to support a director-level role. Since the budget already includes a generalist position, only the incremental cost needs to be covered, and staff will make the necessary budget amendment.

Mayor Castelli expressed satisfaction with the productivity of the Subcommittee's meeting, noting that progress was being made at a good pace on issues raised in the first meeting. He said he was optimistic about continued progress and hopes that by the next meeting, the Subcommittee will finalize the job description for the HR director position and the established goals for the Executive Director.

Reports/Updates

No reports or updates were presented at this meeting.

Old Business

No old business was discussed at this meeting.

New Business

No new business was discussed at this meeting.

Adjournment

Ms. Berry made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:10 p.m. Commissioner Regovich seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

The HR, Personnel, and Organizational Subcommittee will hold its next meeting at the NOACA offices, Tuesday, March 11, 2025, 2:30 – 4 p.m.



NOACA HR, Personnel and Organizational Development Subcommittee 2025 Attendance Record

MEMBER	2/11/25	2/25/25	3/11/25	3/25/25
CASTELLI, Matt	X	X		
DREYFUSS-WELLS, Kyle	X	X		
GALL, John	X	X		
HARRISON, Aaron				
REGOVICH, Richard	X	X		
RONAYNE, Chris (Debbie Berry, Alternate)	X	A		
TAYLOR, Katie	X	X		
TERRY, India Birdsong		X		