

IBBT Meeting

April 19, 2023

3:00pm-5:00pm

HR Training Room

In Attendance:

Facilitator: Laura Graetz

Note Taker: Lindsay Lowery

CWA Representatives: Robert Arnold and Don Welch

Management Representatives: Cheryl McBride, Scott Holowasko, Phil Mann, Brett Goodman, Steve Varvel, Pam Harris-Barber, Doug Beck and Heather Mitterer

Agenda

- **Update on General Government's budget and process**
- **Differential pay for SEC location**
- **PTTP pay charts & information**

Discussion

- LG Welcome. I know we've tried to meet and had to delay it until the Commission met. We have a few items on the agenda. An update on the budget. We've been under pressure from JLAC. Leadership has been working diligently to figure it out. Steve and Brett will provide an update. An item for differential pay for the SEC location. We did talk in our Management meeting and we need to do more work. Doug and Scott will review over the PTTP items. It has gone through the PTTP board. Is there anything you would like to add?
- DW No, we are good.
- SV I assume you and your members paid attention to the policy meetings. The Government services contribution. We sit with a gap just over 15 million dollars. What we are doing today will cost more in 2024. The actual gap is even more than that. That's what we are battling with. I'm not comfortable to discuss the whole impact in details. Things have been better.
- BG On the GRU side, we are in the throes of taking that information and going back to each line of business. To start creating the budgets that will be proposed. The General Fund Transfer has been set and we are trying to fill the rest of that bucket.
- LG Well this segues into our discussion with wages. We met with the Commission last week and brought them up to speed on how we got here and where we are at. We were told to hold at the 2.5%. There is one year left on this contract and when it opens up you all can decide and we can explore. Hopefully we will have more clarity. One piece is the reduction of the General Fund. I'm sorry I don't have better news. It's not that we don't want to provide more, it's a challenge right now.

RA It's to maintain the 2.5%?

LG Correct. What is currently in the contract. I'm sorry I don't have something better. We will close Article 34. Before we move into the others. There's a bill floating around about Unions. That's also another unknown.

DW We will know next week.

LG It's important to keep in mind the budget. It causes a lot of angst and concern. There's not a lot of clear and definitive information. Naturally we want to fill that void with things we hear. I think it is of the uttermost importance that we are saying only factual information. I'm sure members have a lot of questions. There was some say at a CWA meeting around the union bill and if that passes then the current employees would lose their pension.

DW That was being brought up all over the place.

LG Unless it's come from that guy's mouth who is over the pension, then reach out and ask. I'm just using that as an example. I even say this to my own team.

RA What would be your option?

SV Vested employees, current employees and past employees, those benefits are held. Absence of corporate bankruptcy. Municipal bankruptcy is almost impossible to get through in Florida. No pensions are at risk. It is well funded.

RA The mayor called us to the hall and told us what everyone is saying. Only opinions I've ever said was the worst case, they may close it.

SV They can close, but it doesn't shed the obligation of paying those that are in the plan. Closed pension plans are expensive to maintain. You will have to change your investment policy to make it less of equity base. The most expensive plans are closed or terminated plans. Contribution rates in excess of 100%. Could they? Sure. Would it cost less? No, it would cost more. It is the poison pill in most places.

RA We will parrot that to our people. Are pensions insured?

SV No they are not.

LG Just wanted to put that out there. It's important as we navigate through this. If you don't have the answers then we are happy to assist and provide them.

RA If the government board comes in and takes over, what extent could they make a bad decision with our pension?

SV Each one has a sponsor. The City of Gainesville is the sponsor. Described utility and the city as not lost of the pension. That was my first thing is defining the employee and the employer definition. I don't think the powers they were given includes creating a retirement plan.

RA How much authority does the board have?

BG Authority directed to govern all utility business. Rates, business decisions. It depends on what is passed.

RA Unions, we aren't very popular up there if you haven't noticed.

LG Speaking more on behalf of the City Manager and I'm sure the General Manager. As information comes out it will be communicated. On the GG side, there is a section on share point where updates are posted along with past memos, rumor control and even a question box. Please encourage your members to check that out. We are all in this together.

BG GRU side is communication from what we know. We've held several small group meetings with folks in the operational areas. All of the questions you asked, those are floating out there.

RA I'd advise maybe on the HR side to insure people on that pension information. With retain ability, it does scare people.

SV It's hard for me when I see that type of stuff, to not respond. Things like write ups in the Alachua Chronicle.

LG So that's noted Robert. I appreciate that. Are we good to move on to PTP pay charts?

DB Any questions? You've seen them all. There's more to come.

RA No questions.

BG Good meeting. We are in this together.

PM I agree. We are in this boat together.

SV Good meeting and please if you hear things like that then ask me. I do not think I'm described in public as a big union guy. I do like the efficiencies of setting terms and conditions. You are the third or fourth union president and I've enjoyed it more with you and the team you have put together than any of the others.

PM It was a good meeting.

SH Good meeting. From our side any questions at all about the PTP we are the ones to ask.

DB Good meeting.

RA Good meeting.

CM Good meeting.

DW A lot of information that needs to be brought up so it can stop the rumor mill.

HM Good meeting.

