

Career Service Board
Meeting #2457
Minutes

Thursday, November 20, 2025, 9:00 a.m.
201 W. Colfax Ave, First Floor, Career Service Hearing Office

(A recording of this meeting is available upon request)

Board Attendance: June Taylor, Michelle DeVoe, Jorge Avendaño-Curiel, and Lynnea Hutton, Board Members; Bob Wolf, Assistant City Attorney Section Supervisor; Kathy Nesbitt, Executive Director of Office of Human Resources. Absent: Ashley Kilroy

Call to Order: The public meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by June Taylor.

I. Agenda/Minutes

- A. Approval of the Agenda for the November 20, 2025 Board Meeting
The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.
- B. Approval of Minutes for the September 18, 2025 Board Meeting
The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

II. Board Comments

III. Public Comments

IV. Public Hearing

- A. Public Hearing Notice No. 700, Rule 5: Appointments and Status.

Nicole de Gioia-Keane, Office of Human Resources Director of Classification and Compensation presented revisions for Career Service Rule 5-34.

Ms. de Gioia-Keane started by explaining that while most positions within the city have six-month probationary periods, there are some positions with probationary periods of nine or 12 months.

She said Denver International Airport recently asked to have the Airport Operations Representative position added to the list of classifications requiring nine-month probationary periods.

She and her team performed an internal review and found other classifications with nine- or 12-month probationary periods which were not included in the rule. In addition to adding those missing positions, corrections to classification titles were also made.

The proposed changes to Rule 5 reflect what is currently in practice with respect to specific positions and the associated probationary periods.

Michelle DeVoe asked what is different for employees still on probations vs. employees that have completed it.

Ms. de Gioia-Keane responded that employees on probation essentially have an at-will employment status and if they are not successfully fulfilling their roles, their employment can be terminated. She went on to explain that the probationary period is the proving ground for employees.

Bob Wolf, Assistant City Attorney Section Supervisor, asked if the new nine-month probationary period for the Airport Operations Representative classification will affect any employees currently on probation in that role.

Ms. de Gioia-Keane said she didn't believe it would affect anyone. She then introduced Andre O'Leary-Fenwick, Senior HR Classification and Compensation Analyst from the Office of Human Resources to explain further.

Ms. O'Leary-Fenwick said that due to a lack of staffing and the intense training involved in becoming an Airport Operations Representative, the airport wants to provide new hires an extended amount of time to become proficient at their job.

Ms. Taylor sought to clarify that recently hired employees will be held to the current probationary requirements while future hires will have the nine-month probationary periods if this rule change is approved. Ms. de Gioia-Keane confirmed that would be the case.

Ms. DeVoe moved to approve the proposed changes to Rule 5 and Lynnea Hutton seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

B. Public Hearing Notice No. 701, Rule 10: Paid Leave.

Heather Britton, Director of Benefits, Wellness and Leave and acting Deputy Director of the Office of Human Resources presented revisions for Career Service Rule 10.

Ms. Britton reminded the board that they had approved a change to Rule 10 in August that stated all outstanding compensatory time would be paid out for the previous year in January as opposed to April.

She said the current proposed rule update is to ensure all other areas of the rule reflect that change.

Ms. Britton also said that the mayor has awarded employees a wellness day the past two years and the Auditor's Office recommended adding language stating that the mayor or appointing authority may grant this 8-hour wellness leave each year.

Jorge Avendaño-Curiel asked how this impacts employees who have a 10- or 12-hour workday as opposed to eight.

Ms. Britton responded that it is treated the same as holidays where employees who work longer days would need to make up the extra hours or use paid time off.

Ms. Taylor asked if this wellness day is currently included in benefits information that describes the different types of leave available to employees.

Ms. Britton said it is not included with current benefits information, but that it is mentioned under Rule 10-73 where it lists other types of leave that are not in ordinance.

Ms. Taylor then asked if the wellness hours are accrued. Ms. Britton responded that they are not.

Ms. DeVoe asked if this is leave the mayor grants across the board for all employees. Ms. Britton responded that it is awarded to all non-unionized employees. She pointed out that unionized employees have their own collective bargaining agreement and their own negotiated leave.

Ms. Hutton asked how the wellness day would affect part-time employees. Ms. Britton responded that part-time employees would still receive eight hours as it is written. Ms. Hutton suggested it be written as “up to” 8 hours and Ms. Britton agreed.

Ms. Hutton moved to approve the proposed changes to Rule 10 and Mr. Avendaño-Curiel seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

V. Executive Director's Briefing

A. OHR Update –Kathy Nesbitt, Executive Director, Office of Human Resources

Kathy Nesbitt, Executive Director of the Office of Human Resources introduced Jack Davies, Senior Human Resources Director, to discuss the recently completed layoff process.

Mr. Davies recognized the board for the tremendous effort they put into revising the rule to ensure that agencies could take the appropriate steps in making layoff decisions.

He also recognized the Office of Human Resources (OHR) staff for making the process human- centered and showing great professionalism.

He said Arts & Venues had to delay their layoffs because they were in the process of absorbing the special events team from the Mayor's Office. They laid off one employee in late October.

Mr. Davies stated Denver Human Services also needed to delay layoffs as they were waiting to complete a reorganization and make key budget decisions. They laid off 14 staff members in early November.

In total, 188 employees were impacted by the layoffs and 93% (170) of the severance agreements have been returned.

For the 15 delayed layoffs for Arts & Venues and Denver Human Services nine out of 15 severance agreements have been returned.

The Career Service Hearing Office received 10 total layoff-related appeals. Five are pending and five were subsequently withdrawn by the employee.

Two laid-off employees have been offered reinstatement so far. One employee accepted and the other declined.

Mr. Davies said that agencies are trying hard to rebuild a culture of trust following the layoffs. To do so, they are focused on transparent communication, leader visibility, employee engagement survey action plans and connecting employees back to their mission.

Ms. Taylor asked if there have been concerns from employees about the upcoming budget year and job stability.

Ms. Nesbitt responded that the mayor has been visiting agencies and taking questions regarding the budget and future layoffs. He has said that, assuming there are no significant changes at the federal level or unexpected crises, there will be no other layoffs.

Ms. Nesbitt asked Ms. Britton to explain the 2025 culture audit conducted by the Auditor's Office.

Ms. Britton said that the audit focused on OHR, the Mayor's Office, Arts & Venues and Denver Parks & Recreation.

The Auditor's Office interviewed staff and evaluated data dashboards, applicable laws, ordinances, executive orders, fiscal rules, policies and procedures. They also analyzed mission statements, strategic plans, organizational charts, budgets, expenses, annual reports and management plans.

The audit resulted in two findings:

- 1. The organizational culture in each agency needs improvement*
- 2. Staff in audited agencies either do not know how to provide feedback to superiors or are uncomfortable doing so.*

Ms. Britton said OHR was required to submit a response to these findings and create a timeline in which they would fulfill each of the Auditor's Office's recommendation.

Some of the 2025 deadlines were met, but others were not because of OHR's focus on the layoff process. They are working to catch up on those now.

Ms. DeVoe asked how the Auditor's Office's recommendations fit with the budget. Ms. Britton responded that they never recommend changes that cost money, but rather suggest actions that can require a lot of staff time. Ms. DeVoe pointed out that staff time is also costly.

Mr. Avendaño-Curiel asked why 2022 survey data was used for the audit as opposed to 2024. Mr. Davies responded that the 2024 data was not yet available when the audit began.

Ms. DeVoe asked why the audit wasn't postponed until 2024 data was available. Ms. Nesbitt said she asked to have the audit postponed, but her request was denied.

Mr. Wolf asked if the purpose was to audit OHR's internal operations or the scope of OHR's services to the city. Ms. Nesbitt responded that both were the analyzed.

Mr. Wolf also asked if there were any recommendations that OHR refused to implement. Ms. Britton responded that in their required response, they can either agree or disagree with the suggested changes. However, OHR agreed to all of the recommendations.

Ms. Nesbitt went on to provide other updates to the board. She said OHR is focused on communications to the workforce regarding upcoming collective bargaining.

An OHR leadership retreat was held recently where they focused on 2026 goals and how they align with the mayor's initiatives.

Ms. Nesbitt said OHR is also focused on performance reviews and making sure self-evaluations are completed. Although there will be no merit increase associated with this year's reviews, OHR is still emphasizing the importance of feedback.

Ms. Nesbitt told the board that Open Enrollment has concluded.

She also explained that the mayor was still interested in doing something to express

employee appreciation since there was no budget for the City Spirit event this year. As a result, the Denver Zoo offered a night for employees in November to enjoy their Zoo Lights event. Employees had free admission, but could bring up to five family members at a discounted cost of \$10 each. The mayor's office paid for food vouchers and approximately 5,000 people attended.

Ms. Nesbitt said they had two employees retiring at the end of the year, including Kat Barker, Senior HR Director at the Denver International Airport.

She also informed the board that interviews had been held for OHR's Deputy Director position and that they are ready to make an offer to one of the candidates.

Ms. DeVoe moved to go into executive session. Mr. Avendaño-Curiel seconded.

VII. Executive Session

The board went into executive session at 9:55 a.m. to discuss personnel matters.

VIII. Pending Appeals

IX. Adjournment

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