



Career Service Board
Meeting #2459
Minutes

Thursday, January 15, 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, 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: Michelle DeVoe and Ashley Kilroy

Call to Order: The public meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m. by June Taylor.

I. Agenda/Minutes

- A. Approval of the Agenda for the January 15, 2026 Board Meeting
Lynnea Hutton moved to approve the agenda; Jorge Avendaño-Curiel seconded. The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.
- B. Approval of Minutes for the November 20, 2025 Board Meeting
Lynnea Hutton moved to approve the minutes; Jorge Avendaño-Curiel seconded. The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

II. Board Comments

III. Public Comments

IV. Public Hearing

- A. Update on Classification & Compensation Transaction Processing, Nicole de Gioia-Keane, Director of Classification & Compensation

Nicole de Gioia-Keane, Office of Human Resources (OHR) Director of Classification and Compensation, stated that each year, per Career Service Rule 7-34b and 9-39e, there is a classification and compensation moratorium that occurs December through February.

She explained that this quiets the system so that they have stable data to build citywide files and implement the annual merit program. However, since there is no merit program this year, her department would like to release from this moratorium on February 1 rather than March 1, as is stipulated in the rules.

Bob Wolfe, Assistant City Attorney Section Supervisor, asked if the moratorium is in the rule. Ms. De Gioia-Keane responded that it is.

Mr. Wolfe pointed out that this request asks the board to violate its own rule and said that adequate notice was not given.

Ms. de Gioia-Keane stated that she is simply asking for an exception to the rule since there is no merit program this year.

Ms. Taylor clarified that she thinks the lack of notice is what Mr. Wolfe is emphasizing. Mr. Wolfe agreed and said the process is problematic since the request was not properly on the agenda to let the board know there could be a vote required.

Kathy Nesbitt, Executive Director of OHR said this exception would result in no penalty to the employee base. She explained that the reduced moratorium is actually helpful to employees because classification and compensation requests would be processed more quickly.

Ms. de Gioia-Keane indicated that several city agency leaders had asked her to end the moratorium early.

Ms. Taylor stated that, as a public entity, it is important to adhere to the process, but recognized that reducing the moratorium benefits everyone involved. She then questioned whether it is fair to put OHR and agencies in a position where they are violating the Career Service Board's rules. She suggested it is the board's responsibility to acknowledge that the rule is being violated for everyone's benefit. This way, the board bears the burden of the risk of violating the rule.

Ms. Nesbitt said she's discussed with Ms. de Gioia-Keane and others about whether the length of time for the moratorium even needs to be in rule. She suggested that perhaps in the future it should be something that is managed internally for the purpose of more flexibility.

Ms. de Gioia-Keane also provided an update on the Workplace Safety and Industrial Hygiene classification study. She reminded the board that in May 2025, three leaders and several employees contested the joint recommendations by OHR and the City Attorney's Office (CAO) to change the Safety and Industrial Hygiene Professional II and Safety and Industrial Hygiene Administrator job classifications from exempt to non-exempt.

She explained that, due to the difference of opinion, Ms. Nesbitt and the board agreed that one classification and compensation team member and one OHR business partner would conduct eight hours of job shadowing to better understand the work being performed. The shadowing began in October and concluded in early December 2025. Each of approximately 30 employees were job shadowed for two 4-hour sessions.

Ms. de Gioia-Keane said that Allison Moore, Assistant City Attorney, and her team are reviewing the job shadowing documentation and she anticipates they will provide recommendations to OHR and workplace safety leaders in February.

Any necessary modifications to the classifications would be drafted and discussed with workplace safety leaders in March so that OHR and CAO could provide updated recommendations to the board in April.

Ms. Nesbitt took a moment to acknowledge that Ms. de Gioia-Keane would be leaving her position due to a relocation to another state and she thanked her for her knowledge and service over the years.

Ms. Nesbitt then introduced Heidi Schramm, OHR Director of Labor Relations, to report on the current status of collective bargaining.

Ms. Schramm began by reminding the board that voters approved ballot initiative 2U on November 5, 2024. This initiative authorized an amendment to the city charter and granted collective bargaining rights to most city employees. The charter amendment went into effect on January 1, 2026.

Ms. Schramm said the board's responsibilities and the way in which they conduct their work will remain the same. However, the city's ability to implement board-mandated changes and decisions will be different.

She stated that the Career Service Rules establish conditions of employment, but pointed out that collective bargaining is an alternate means of establishing these conditions.

She said that, although negotiated collective bargaining agreements may not conflict with the law or the city's charter, they may conflict with the career service rules. When this

occurs, the collective bargaining agreement will govern.

For employees not represented by union, there will be no change to how rule updates will be implemented.

If a rule change creates a conflict with a collective bargaining agreement, the revised rule will not apply to employees in that bargaining unit

Ms. Taylor asked how grievances will be handled since there is no labor relations board in place. Ms. Schramm responded that the ordinance outlines different dispute resolution procedures, but most will be handled by a city-appointed arbitrator.

Ms. Hutton asked if the board should keep potential conflicts in mind when considering rule changes. Ms. Schramm responded that she recommends they consider the implications of making a rule change that may not apply to some employees. She said OHR will point out these types of issues when proposing rule changes.

Mr. Avendaño-Curiel asked about anticipated timelines and if they have an idea of how many bargaining units there will be. Ms. Schramm responded that the charter and ordinance went into effect on January 1 and that the number of unions expected is unknown. However, in the charter, there is a limit for the number of unions that can be formed in the first four years. Between now and January 1, 2030 the city can recognize up to five bargaining units. Although, that limitation only applies to agencies that report directly to the mayor.

Ms. Nesbitt introduced Jack Davies, Senior HR Director, to provide a citywide employee turnover review.

Mr. Davis said that agency leaders are ultimately responsible for employee retention. However, OHR tries to do its party by hiring the right employees and encouraging agencies to focus on the key drivers of retention.

He said voluntary turnover consists of resignations and retirements and that the city's total was 12% in 2025, the same as it was for 2024. He explained that voluntary turnover costs about \$40k per employee due to recruitment, time spent training, etc. Total voluntary turnover cost for 2025 was \$31,440,000.

Total turnover which includes both voluntary and involuntary, increased from 14% in 2024 to 17% in 2025. He pointed out that some of this was due to layoffs.

Mr. Davies explained that every employee who leaves the city receives an exit survey. In 2025 the survey had a 67% response rate and it was 54% positive. He said senior leadership had the highest impact on an employee's decision to leave the city.

To help reduce turnover, OHR has been sponsoring quarterly new-hire events. At these events, Mayor Johnston and Ms. Nesbitt speak to new employees. There are also representatives from other areas of the city, such as Technology Services, OHR's Benefits and Wellness team, Denver Employees Retirement Plan, etc. so that new hires can connect and ask questions.

Mr. Davies said that many agencies also hold their own orientations for their new hires.

Due to nationwide statistics, he expects a flat to declining turnover rate in the future.

V. Executive Director's Briefing

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

Ms. Nesbitt informed the board that Kat Barker, OHR Director at the Denver International airport, retired at the end of December. She expressed her appreciation for Ms. Barker's expertise and service. Mike Doss, HR Manager, will serve as the interim director until Ms. Barker's replacement is hired.

She said Tony Gautier, OHR Director of Technology and Innovation, also retired at the end of December after more than 30 years of employment with the city. She expressed appreciation for his many years of service. Tara Eckberg, OHR Director of Talent Acquisition, will serve as the interim director until Mr. Gautier's position is filled.

Ms. Nesbitt introduced Amy King as the new OHR Deputy Director

She also introduced Marisa Pacheco as OHR's new Classification and Compensation Director.

VII. Executive Session

The board went into executive session at 10:07 a.m. to discuss personnel matters.

VIII. Pending Appeals

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

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