

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**October 4, 2017, 5:30 p.m.**

**Community Mental Health Building, 812 E. Jolly Rd,**

**Lansing, MI 48910**

**Committee Members Present:**

Kay Pray, Jim Rundborg, Maxine Thome, Kam Washburn

**Board Members Present (non-committee members):**

None

**Committee Members Absent:**

Stephen Manchester, Chris Swope (advance notice)

**Staff Present:**

Sharon Blizzard, Debbie Heinze, Sara Lurie, Feliz Rodriguez, Laura Sandberg, Ericanne Spence

**Public Present:**

Clifford Hammond

Aaron Sanders, Local 512

Ricardo Tillery

**Call To Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 PM by Kam Washburn, Chairperson.

**Previous Meeting Minutes:**

MOVED by Jim Rundborg and SUPPORTED by Maxine Thome to approve the meeting minutes of September 6, 2017. MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

**Adoption of Agenda:**

MOVED by Kay Pray and SUPPORTED by Maxine Thome to approve the meeting agenda. MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items:**

None

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**OPEIU Local 512 Step 3 Grievance – Discharge & Discipline**

The Hearing Format was distributed and reviewed. Sharon Blizzard noted the format has been agreed to by Management and OPEIU, Local 512.

Ericanne Spence, Director of Substance Abuse Services, stated Mr. Tillery was hired on July 5, 2014, as the best candidate for the House of Commons coordinator position. Ms. Spence explained the services provided at the House of Commons and the contract with the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC). Ms. Blizzard met with Ms. Spence in 2016 to discuss concerns brought to the attention of the Human Resources department. Ms. Spence stated at that time she felt the concerns may be unfounded, but agreed to counsel Mr. Tillery regarding clinical changes, employees leaving, aggression, behaviors and threats. Ms. Spence took over supervision of House of Commons and discovered unacceptable conditions. She expressed remorse at not being aware and taking action in a timelier manner. The Program continues to struggle to regain its former high regard within the substance abuse treatment community.

Feliz Rodriguez conducted interviews of employees beginning April 2017 regarding employee complaints. Twelve employees were interviewed, and Mr. Tillery was interviewed two times. Below are some highlights of the investigation findings:

* Violations of policies and procedures regarding Abuse, Neglect and Mistreatment of clients, violation of workplace violence prevention, ethical standards and unlawful harassment towards clients, subordinate employees and interns.
* Mr. Tillery did not provide sound leadership to the team and created a dysfunctional and intimidating working environment.
* Mr. Tillery did not provide ongoing supervision to staff as required by MDOC contract and his job description.
* Mr. Tillery maintained an unpredictable work schedule, which led to staff discourse and inability to engage fully in the performance of work providing services to clients.
* Violations of CMHA-CEI policies, procedures, employment standards and repeatedly engaged in poor judgment and inappropriate behavior in the workplace.
* Mr. Tillery initiated unwelcomed conduct, as well as reportedly lewd comments and unduly offensive behaviors, towards employees, interns and clients.
* Mr. Tillery verbally degraded and shamed consumers; speaking to them in a demeaning and condescending manner that undermined their self-esteem.
* Mr. Tillery undercut the teamwork concept by splitting the department and did not foster a feeling of solidarity in the Program, and failed to appropriately manage the Program.

Ms. Rodriguez stated employees feared reprisals if their concerns were reported to the Program Director or Human Resources.

Aaron Sanders, Local 512 representative, stated their belief that employees did not follow the agency’s policy to file complaints to Human Resources. Additionally, his request for documents and proof of allegations were not fulfilled, leaving them at a disadvantage of not knowing “who” said and “what” was said. The Union’s position is that testimony must be given and then released as corroborating documentation to begin an investigation.

Sharon Blizzard assured Mr. Sanders the Public Employment Relations Act (PERA) is followed by CMHA-CEI . The discipline document, pertinent policies, a summary and the employee names were provided to Mr. Sanders for the Union to conduct their own investigation. Mr. Sanders acknowledged the receipt of documents, but denied receiving employees’ names. He also noted PERA does not allow him to investigate when there is a sub-contract by MDOC. Jim Rundborg requested the date and time of the e-mail sent to Mr. Sanders with employee names. Feliz Rodriguez responded the e-mail was sent Friday, June 16, 2017, at 4:10 PM. Following a search, Mr. Sanders was able to confirm receipt of the e-mail and extended apologies for his oversight.

Sharon Blizzard summarized points made during the Management presentation. Credible statements and multiple accounts of his improper actions and statements, sexual comments, and inappropriate behavior were inconsistent with Mr. Tillery’s responsibility as a leader and supervisor of the House of Commons and its program goals. His willful disregard for the employer, inability to meet the standards of conduct for a Coordinator and additional violations were factors of consideration, which deemed a termination to be the appropriate level of discipline. These were not trivial violations, in fact, they were egregious and Mr. Tillery was terminated on June 27, 2017.

Deliberations proceeded. Kay Pray asked if recipient rights complaints were made by consumers. Ms. Spence replied the consumers were unable to be located. When a probation or parole client leaves against medical advice, typically it takes a very long time to locate an absconder. Maxine Thome asked if Mr. Tillery acted as a clinician as well as a coordinator in his role at the House of Commons. Ms. Spence stated Mr. Tillery did not have a caseload, but was responsible for clinical supervision. Kam Washburn requested a breakdown of House of Commons employees by job category; Ms. Rodriguez provided this information. Jim Rundborg referenced the supervision dates on page 8 of the exhibits, asking if these were routine supervision appointments or sessions to address specific program problems. Ms. Spence indicated the appointments were discussions and counseling focused on program and individual performance.

**ACTION:**

MOVED by Kay Pray and SUPPORTED by Jim Rundborg to uphold Management’s decision to terminate the employment of Ricardo Tillery effective on June 27, 2017. MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

**Old Business**

None

**New Business**

None

**Public Comment**

None

**Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 6:55 PM. The next regular quarterly meeting of the Human Resources Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, December 6, 2017 at 5:30 PM, 812 E. Jolly Rd, Conf. Room G11-C, Lansing.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Debra Heinze

Human Resources Secretary