
Sponsor: Human Resources

Meeting Date: 9/19/2023

Title: Insurance Benefit Terms in Collective Bargaining Agreements with all Bargaining Units and Non-Represented Classified and Unclassified Employees for the Year 2024

File Number: 2023-407

Background and Rationale:

Every three to five years, the county issues a solicitation for medical insurance in compliance with state law and to ensure the best options are provided to employees while managing costs. The current five-year contract for medical insurance ends December 31, 2023. The county provides medical and dental insurance to approximately 8,000 employees, retirees, spouses, and children annually, and the premium contributions for medical and dental insurance are negotiated with its labor partners.

Human Resources issued a competitive solicitation for medical and dental insurance plans for eligible employees and retirees under 65 (Early Retirees) for plan year beginning January 1, 2024 for up to five years. In anticipation, the Joint Insurance Labor Management Committee for Insurance established goals as follows:

- Offer competitive, equitable benefits to attract and retain employees.
- Provide additional plan and enrollment tier choices with meaningful premium differences.
- Provide a high deductible with Health Savings Account (HSA) plan option.
- Better incentivize wellness activities and health outcomes.
- Manage cost and viability in the long term and keep pace with inflation.
- Align with the county's strategic priorities for racial equity.

The Joint Insurance Labor Management Committee met thirteen times throughout the solicitation process, including participation in medical and dental vendor presentations. Labor Relations erroneously did not seek consensus from the Joint Insurance Labor Management Committee before the county made its final selection of medical and dental vendors. As an effort to rectify the misstep, the Joint Insurance Labor Management Committee met on July 19, 2023 to review final vendor bids, including rates. The Joint Insurance Labor Management Committee engaged the consensus process relative to the employer's selected medical and dental providers. The result was all labor groups choosing to abstain from taking a position on the employer selected medical and dental vendors. This was communicated in part for some as a neutral position on the selected vendors and one group made clear the abstention was not a neutral position, instead it was a position based on insufficient information.

The parties worked collaboratively throughout the entire solicitation process which had been modernized from prior years and was far more robust in its engagement with solicitors. While consensus may not have been reached between the parties, there was greater information sharing in advance and throughout the solicitation process with labor than prior years.

All 2022-2024 collective bargaining agreements include a provision to reopen and negotiate the medical and dental premiums in the applicable insurance article due to the December 31, 2023 expiration of the current medical and dental provider contracts. These bargaining units represent

approximately 2,672 employees (approximately 63% of the county workforce).

Tentative agreements were reached on August 3, 2023 with Teamster Local 320 bargaining unit and August 15, 2023 for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, International Union of Operating Engineers Local 49, Law Enforcement Labor Services, Technical Employees Association, and Ramsey County Deputy Sheriff's Federation bargaining units as listed above. The tentative agreements address the medical and dental premium contributions for active employees and subsequently impacts the retiree contributions. Each unit has engaged their respective member ratification process resulting in approvals of the tentative agreement.

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners has historically maintained comparable benefit policies between represented and non-represented employees. It is recommended that benefit changes for non-represented employees be consistent with the proposed tentative agreements with the labor groups for benefit year 2024. There are approximately 1,101 non-represented employees, comprising approximately 26% of the workforce.

The negotiated insurance terms for benefit year 2024 require Ramsey County Board approval. The proposed settlement is the successful result of negotiations between the parties. This agreement reflects the diligent efforts of union and management participants in the bargaining process. Although the challenges were significant, the proposed settlement agreement reflects the interests of both union and the county while honoring the fiscal limitation expressed by the Ramsey County Board.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Approve the negotiated terms for insurance benefits in collective bargaining agreements with all Bargaining Units for Year 2024:
 - American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
 - Local 8 (General County)
 - Local 8 (Professional)
 - Local 8 (Public Health Registered Nurses)
 - Local 8 (Assistant County Attorneys)
 - Local 8 (Public Defenders)
 - Local 151 (Social Services, Financial Assistance Services and Health and Wellness Administrative Division)
 - Local 151 (Licenses Practical Nurses)
 - Local 151 (Workforce Solutions)
 - Local 707 (Lake Owasso Residence)
 - Local 1935 (Parks & Recreation)
 - Teamsters Local 320 - Chief Correctional Officers
 - International Union of Operating Engineers Local 49
 - Technical Employees Association
 - Law Enforcement Labor Services
 - Local 184 (Commanders)
 - Local 349 (Dispatchers)
 - Local 353 (Emergency Communications Supervisors)
 - Local 423 (Deputy Sheriff Sergeants)
 - Ramsey County Deputy Sheriff's Federation
2. Authorize the Chair and the County Manager to execute the agreements incorporating these terms into the 2022-2024 collective bargaining agreements.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Ortega, seconded by Commissioner Reinhardt.
Motion passed.

Aye: - 6: Frethem, Martinson, Moran, Ortega, Reinhardt, and Xiong

Absent: - 1: McGuire

By: 

Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board