

Benefits Focus Group Minutes
(12/11/02)

Committee members, alternates and staff advisors present:

Benita Saldutti
Linda McKinney
Dick Minster
John Glanden
Robert Blinch-Edwards
Stacey Monroe
Gil Fernandez
Andy St. John
Bill Tatum
Joyce Dolan
Veda Mahadi
Linsley Pietsch
KayKae Thomas
Pat Horan
Janice Cox
Joe Munyak
Kevin Stiff
Casey Humpert
Karen Lusk
Dolly Gamble
April Bryan

Benita Saldutti called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., December 11, 2002. Roll was called.

Linda McKinney passed out a member list and asked the Group to notify April Bryan of any changes, additions or deletions.

A schedule of meeting times and locations through June 2003 was distributed.

The minutes of November 6, 2002 were approved as written.

Ms. McKinney passed out the monthly comparison of costs through the month of July, showing the comparison of charges incurred and paid through November 2002 against the past two years. At this time, the City's costs are running approximately \$400,000 less than last year. Considering that the nationwide trend shows costs as going up, the Groups' efforts are being shown on this report.

Ms. McKinney then passed out a brief draft mission statement for the group to develop. Ms. Saldutti asked everyone to look at it and come back with ideas for discussion at the next meeting.

Ms. McKinney said she had talked with the City Manager for some indication of keeping the 2003 plan changes intact for 2004. He said nothing would make him happier, but he doesn't want to get into promises that cannot be kept or send any miscommunication. This Group is partially responsible for achieving that goal by investigating different options. He does keep the Commission aware of the costs and how the fund is doing. However, even though the fund is doing a little bit better, until it is much healthier than it is now, we are going to have to keep a very vigilant eye on the status of where we are. Our claim experience will be the issue that will dictate what we will or will not be able to do. Ms. Saldutti stated that in order to meet budget deadlines, if changes are needed, they would have to be decided early next year. Ms. McKinney said that was correct and right now it would be a reasonable recommendation that the Group would not have to make changes unless they are to make improvements in the plan. Right now it looks like we are holding our own.

Ms. Saldutti brought up the subject of getting an "idea" person, meaning someone other than Group members, who has the ability and experience that the Group needs. Perhaps the Group could look at the possibility of bringing a consultant on board to give them the kind of ideas and innovative suggestions that might bring about desired changes.

Kevin Stiff asked if there was a possibility that some members of the Group could attend a conference or conferences to gather ideas and get educated. Mr. Blinch-Edwards said there was one scheduled for February in Orlando. Ms. Saldutti asked him to bring information to the next meeting so possibly a few members could volunteer to attend and the finances could be worked out.

Ms. McKinney said that if the Group decides to hire a consultant, they need to identify what is available the consultant can be directed to some outcome.

Ms. McKinney reported that Wakely would be doing the annual actuarial report on the fund. She has requested a report to be provided to the Group after the first of the year.

Ms. McKinney said that the HIPAA law is being modified greatly beginning in April of 2003. The impact to the Group should be minimal and the impact to the City will be procedural. Training will be offered after the first of the year. The new law will change how we share information. The Group needs to be aware of the changes and understand the new law. Mr. Blinch-Edwards said there is a class set up for the County in Pinellas and the City's privacy officer should attend. Ms. McKinney said she will be the privacy officer for the City. She will be attending and she would like KayKae to attend also. Mr. Blinch-Edwards will send them the information.

Mr. Blinch-Edwards said the City's draft wellness plan, samples of wellness plans from other entities and the gastroenterology flyer will be presented at next meeting.

A Draft Healthcare Sarasota Notice of Health Plans Privacy Policy was distributed. It is a legal requirement for every covered entity under federal laws. This document has to be provided to each employee by April 13, 2003 in order to be compliant with HIPAA.

Ms. Saldutti asked about the continuation of wellness screenings if Ms. McKinney had been able to get an estimate the cost. Ms. McKinney said that would be a goal for the next meeting. This is something that they hope to institute at some point during the 2003 year.

Ms. Saldutti asked for a clarification of post-retiree benefits for individuals hired after October 1, 1993. The City's Summary Plan Document states that individuals hired after that date will not be offered post-retirement health benefits. Ms. McKinney said that was incorrect. If the retiree chooses to pay the full cost (the City's portion) they can continue the benefit. If they are past 65, they will still have to pay the full cost and not get the benefit of the 50% reduction. If they have any dependents, that coverage would also be available at the COBRA rate.

Linsley Pietsch asked the Group about the possibility of sending out a flyer to employees stating how fortunate we are to have our health benefits. Ms. Saldutti said that in the past a letter had been sent out by Human Resources once per year stating the employee's wage plus the dollar value of the fringe benefits. That has not been done for a few years. Ms. McKinney said that perhaps that could be done again. The recommendation for the City to send out a letter should come from the Group.

Ms. Saldutti asked if the City has aggregate stop-loss insurance. Mr. Blinch-Edwards said they used to, but it was never used, so the City stopped it. Ms. McKinney said that could be looked at again, but at this time there weren't any indicators to justify the extra expense.

The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m. Next meeting is January 8, 2003, 1:00 p.m. at Public Works, 1761 12th Street.

Items for next meeting:

- Mr. Blinch-Edwards to prepare a one-page draft wellness plan for discussion, stating estimated costs and explaining phase I
- Mr. Blinch-Edwards to provide samples of wellness plans from other entities
- Mr. Blinch-Edwards to prepare draft gastroenterology flyer for approval
- Mr. Blinch Edwards to provide information about Health Conference in Orlando in February (dates, availability, expense)

Minutes Approved: January 8, 2003

Benita Saldutti, Vice-Chairperson