

**STATE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING
VIA WEBEX**

MEETING MINUTES – May 15, 2025

Members Present:

Members present on the Webex for the meeting were: Commissioner Dekhasta Becton Rozier, Chair, Commissioner Andrea Allard, Commissioner Ross Beamon, Commissioner Doug Boyette, Commissioner Tim Buckland, Commissioner April Page, Commissioner Phillip Strach, Commissioner Tye Vaught and Commissioner Tracy Webb.

Other Attendees:

Attendees present from the Office of State Human Resources (OSHR): Staci Meyer, Director; Tammy Penny, Special Advisor; Kristen Bierline, Chief Deputy; Amar Majmundar, Policy Director; Lanier McRee, Deputy Director of Administration; Blake Thomas, General Counsel; Anna Perkinson, Assistant General Counsel; Special Counsel Melody Hairston; Wesley Davis, Legislative Liaison; Denise H. Mazza, State Human Resources Commission Administrator; Nancy Astrike, Andrea Bennett, Megan Church, Andrea Clinkscales, Lorence Crossett, Linda Forsberg, Creshaye Graham, Clara Hazzard, Joel Jordan; Patel Irshad, Stephanie McFadden, DeShun Perry, Susan Reeves, Kimberly Whitaker, and Wayne Williams. From other agencies and the public: Donnell Adams, HR Director, Department of Administration; Sylvia Crumpler, HR Director, Department of Adult Correction; Pam Hess, HR Director, and Bancroft Neufville and Leigh Ann Woodside, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Keita Cannon, HR Director, Office of the State Auditor; Magnolia Lugo, HR Director, Department of Justice; Renathe Cotton, HR Director, Department of Labor; Davita Morant, HR Director, Department of Public Safety; Patricia Garcia, HR Director, State Budget and Management; Glenda Ellerbee, HR Director, Office of State Controller; and Chris Chiron, Associate Vice President for HR Policy, University System.

Opening

The Commission convened its open meeting pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 126-2(h) at 3:02 p.m. via Webex Teleconference.

The State Human Resources Commission (SHRC) last convened on April 17, 2025.

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute Chapter 138A and the North Carolina Ethics Act, Chair Rozier asked all attending Commissioners if there were any conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest with respect to any matters coming before the Commission. No conflicts were presented.

There were no additions or corrections to the agenda for the May 15, 2025 special meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

Exceptions Granted Since April 17, 2025 SHRC Meeting

Assistant General Counsel Anna Perkinson presented an overview of the exceptions and variances granted under 25 NCAC 01A .0104 since the April 17, 2025 Commission Meeting.

- OSHR approved an exception request to the Hours of Work and Overtime Compensation Policy for the Wildlife Resource Commission (WRC) to allow WRC to pay straight-time overtime rates for hours of work over 40 in a week to FLSA not-subject employees combating the western wildfires. Catastrophic wildfires began in Western North Carolina on March 19, 2025. Multiple fires are over 3,000 acres in size and are at various stages of containment. These staff are performing inherently dangerous work outside of their assigned duty stations. These employees have worked significant amounts of overtime to preserve human life and property. WRC is approved to pay these FLSA not-subject employees straight-time overtime from March 19, 2025 through May 31, 2025.
- OSHR approved an extension of an existing exception request to the Hours of Work and Overtime Compensation Policy for Department of Commerce (DOC) to pay straight-time overtime rates for up to 8 hours of work over 40 in a week to 12 FLSA not-subject employees who are working to support citizens in Western North Carolina who were directly impacted by Hurricane Helene. Because of the extreme devastation facing the communities in Western North Carolina and the influx of unemployment insurance claims that will be filed as a result, Department of Commerce employees have been working overtime hours to process these claims. DOC is approved to pay these FLSA not-subject employees straight time overtime up to 8 hours a week from January 1, 2025 to April 31, 2025.

Since the last SHRC Meeting, Director Meyer has made two exceptions under N.C.G.S. § 126-6.3(a3)(3):

- Approval of an exception to the 11-month limit for temporary workers (N.C.G.S. § 126-6.3(a1)) to retain a temporary Research Historian with the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources for an additional one month and six days. The exception was based on the agency's need to complete project deliverables to ensure continued federal funding to the agency.
- Approval of an exception to the 11-month limit for temporary workers (N.C.G.S. § 126-6.3(a1)) to retain a temporary Rules Review Manager with the NC Department of Health and Human Services for an additional four months. The exception was based on the agency's need to ensure the employee could attend public hearings for adult care rules and a series of meetings regarding the radiation protection rules for the RPC (Radiation Protection Commission) including public hearings as well as submissions to the RPC. These hearings and meetings were scheduled for the period the employee would have been on the mandatory break.

Perkinson closed by thanking the Commission for the opportunity to present.

Business Session

Public Comments

There were no public comments at the May 15, 2025 State Human Resources Commission Special Meeting.

Total Rewards/Classification and Compensation: University System Revision of Competency Profile for Horticultural Specialist for the Statewide Compensation Plan

Classification and Compensation Consultant Creshaye Graham presented proposed revisions to one job classification at the request of the University System to change the minimum requirement for the Horticultural Specialist from requiring a Commercial Driver's License to instead read "may require a Commercial Driver's License." This change affects only the classification system used by the University of North Carolina System. According to the University System Office, the requirement for a Commercial Driver's License is not universal for this classification and many positions in the class do not require it. The System Office has reported that while some roles in this classification operate commercial equipment and require the CDL and apply pesticides, requiring that licensure, others do not. As a result, the requirement and the competency profile are negatively impacting recruitment into roles where it is not required. In order to update the competency profile, the change is being presented to the Commission for approval at this time.

Graham closed by offering to answer any questions and requesting approval of revisions to the competency profile for Horticultural Specialist for the Statewide Compensation Plan at the request of the University System.

There being no further discussion or questions, the Chair called for a motion to recommend approval of the revisions to the competency profile for Horticultural Specialist for the Statewide Compensation Plan at the request of the University System as presented.

Motion: Commissioner Webb made a motion to recommend approval of the revisions to the competency profile for Horticultural Specialist for the Statewide Compensation Plan at the request of the University System as presented.

Second: Commissioner Beamon seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission, other than Commissioner Strach who joined the meeting after this agenda item, recommended approval of the revisions to the competency profile for Horticultural Specialist for the Statewide Compensation Plan at the request of the University System as presented.

Motion carried.

Total Rewards/Salary Administration: Revisions to the Sign-On and Retention Bonus Policy

Total Rewards Division Director Andrea Clinkscales presented the proposed revisions to the Sign-On and Retention Bonus Policy. The proposed revisions would give agencies more flexibility to provide multiple bonus programs for employees by removing the policy's eligibility requirement that the employee must not have received a bonus within the last 24 months. The revisions were first presented at the April 17, 2025 SHRC meeting before being tabled for more information regarding the revisions.

Prior to this meeting, Clinkscales, General Counsel Blake Thomas and Director Staci Meyer, met with Commissioner Ross Beamon to discuss his concerns. Then, Clinkscales shared some relevant bonus data with all of the commissioners, including a PowerPoint presentation at this special meeting. That information included the following:

- A summary of the 2024 bonus waiver requests that were submitted to OSHR showing a small number of bonus requests that were submitted to OSHR because the bonuses exceeded the flexibility or the salary grade threshold during the period June 2022 through December 2024;
- A copy of the sign on and retention bonus presentation that was presented to the commissioners at the May 30, 2024 SHRC meeting; and
- An updated PowerPoint that highlights some updated metrics for bonuses awarded during the period June 1, 2022 through December 2024.

Clinkscales stated the updated presentation provides a high-level overview of the Sign-On and Retention Bonus Policy as it was expanded to include retention bonuses in June of 2022. Since that time, several revisions have been made to the policy before this meeting, based on either feedback from the agencies as they encounter different situations while administering their bonus programs, or to provide clarity. The last update, occurring in October of 2024, clarified the system of record and employees' eligibility to receive a retention bonus once a disciplinary action was no longer active. It showed that more than 34,000 employees received either a sign-on or retention bonus again during the period of June 2022 through December 2024. Most of these requests did not require any kind of review or approval from OSHR. They were awarded within the agency's discretion. Of these bonuses, approximately 243 requests were submitted to OSHR for review because the bonus threshold exceeded the agency's flexibility in some capacity. The total cost was a little more than \$135 million with 28,921 of those bonuses being retention bonuses. The average amount of these bonuses was a little over \$3,900.

As for retention bonuses, the most reported reasons for awarding this bonus were to an individual who is at risk of leaving, followed by bonuses being offered in parallel with a sign on bonus for specific job classification, then rounded out by bonuses tied to special initiatives. The least common reason was bonuses being in parallel with a sign on bonus.

Currently, the Sign-On and Retention Bonus Policy requires that agencies request a waiver from OSHR if they want to award a bonus to an employee who has received either a retention or sign on bonus greater than \$2,500 in the last twenty-four (24) months. This policy verbiage is posing procedural barriers for some agencies. Therefore, OSHR recommended the removal of the

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\$2,500 limit, thus providing agencies with more flexibility to manage their bonus programs based on the needs within their agency.

Clinkscales closed by offering to answer any questions and requesting approval of revisions to the Sign-On and Retention Bonus Policy as presented.

There being no further discussion or questions, the Chair called for a motion to recommend approval of the revisions to the Sign-On and Retention Bonus Policy as presented.

Commissioner Beamon added comment to the SHRC that he met with Clinkscales, Thomas and the Director about the funding for this revision to make sure it would not create any additional burden on the people of North Carolina. At that meeting, he was assured that the funding is allocated from unused salaries and would not require additional taxpayer funding.

Clinkscales responded that was correct.

Beamon then thanked OSHR for its time and efforts to provide additional information to give him the full scope of the funding of the revision.

Motion: Commissioner Beamon made a motion to recommend approval of the revisions to the Sign-On and Retention Bonus Policy as presented.

Second: Commissioner Page seconded the motion, noting the excellent work and great detail OSHR provided on this agenda item.

The Chair agreed and thanked the team for its work before a roll call vote was held and all attending members of the Commission recommended approval of the revisions to the Sign-On and Retention Bonus as presented.

Motion carried.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion or questions, the Chair called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Commissioner Strach so moved.

Second: Commissioner Buckland seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held and all currently attending members of the Commission agreed to adjourn the May 15, 2025 SHRC Special Meeting.

Motion carried.

The Commission adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

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Executive Session

The State Human Resources Commission did not have an executive session at its May 15, 2025 SHRC Special Meeting.

Minutes submitted by:

Denise H. Mazza,

State Human Resources Commission Administrator