



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 1 Issue 5 October 2020

WEEKLY OPEN MEETING UPDATES

The proposed NMPRC Telework Policy was adopted by the Commission at its October 21st meeting. This would include employee teleworking agreement which would also regulate teleworking after the COVID-19 Emergency Executive Order(s) is rescinded.

Jim Williamson, Administrative Services Division Director, introduced Mike Braniff at the October 21st meeting. Mike is the new Fleet Procurement Manager in ASD and began his role on October 19th. He will also be a PRC P-card holder. Mike previously worked at DOH and for the ABQ Water Utility Authority in procurement, contracts, and fleet.

Communication with Chief of Staff Jason Montoya

Chief of Staff Jason Montoya announced that there are nine vacant positions that have been advertised and/or candidates interviewed. The exemption requests seems to be gaining some momentum – and the PRC is on track to continue to implement the critical hire plan with the target vacancy of 10%.

Chief Montoya mentioned a copy of the executive memorandum is on the commissioners' desks pertaining to the early termination tenant agreement and the impending office move to a new space. He reminded everyone regarding the open enrollment and the good news regarding the annual leave which has been extended through July 2021 - due to travel restrictions during the pandemic. Employees will be awarded two personal leave days effective January 1, 2021, and employees will be able to use these days during the 2021 calendar year.

A very busy agenda schedule is anticipated at PRC's upcoming open meetings, with only a few weeks left this calendar year.

Updates from Human Resources Bureau Chief Rene Kepler

- Deadline for Open/Switch Enrollment was October 31, 2020. To access recorded webinars please visit: www.mybenefits.com
- On Friday, October 16, 2020 the State Personnel Board approved three amendments to State Personnel Board Rule, 1.7.7 NMAC.

The changes are underlined below and include some explanation.

1.7.7.8 – ANNUAL LEAVE:

E. A maximum of 240 hours of annual leave shall be carried forward after the last pay period beginning in December. However, there shall be no limit to the number of annual leave hours that shall be carried forward after the last pay period of December 2020. Any annual leave hours above 240 that are carried forward past December 2020 and are not used prior to the pay period ending July 9, 2021, shall not be carried forward beyond that pay period. (Six additional months were given in order to provide employees to use, rather than lose, annual leave they may have accrued and been unable to use during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Separation or retirement payout is unchanged and shall not exceed 240 hours.)

1.7.7.9 – DONATION OF ANNUAL AND/OR SICK LEAVE:

A. Employees may donate annual and/or sick leave to another employee in the same agency for a medical emergency with approval of the head of the agency. Employees may also make and receive donations of annual leave to and from employees in the exempt service in the same agency for a medical emergency with approval of the head of the agency, as set forth by the department of finance and administration's policies for Governor Exempt Employees. (The rule had only allowed for Exempt employees to donate or receive annual, and not sick leave).

1.7.7.17 - PERSONAL LEAVE DAY:

A. Employees in career status are entitled to **two** personal leave days each calendar year. The personal leave days will be consistent with the employee's normal workday. Such leave must be requested and approved in advance. (In the 2021 calendar year, non-probationary employees will receive two personal leave days.)

- The Civil Rights training has been revised for FY21. This training is mandatory for all staff to take each fiscal year. Below is the URL to access the training. <https://www.spo.state.nm.us/civil-rights.aspx>

Please complete the training by **October 30, 2020**. Once you've completed the training, please submit your Certificate of Completion to HR.

To view the latest updates on COVID-19, go to: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)



Stay Well Health Center

FLU SHOT CLINIC



DRIVE THRU



Human Services Division

Flu Season is upon us once again and the Stay Well Health Center (SWHC) is prepared to get you Flu-Season ready by providing a **FREE Drive-Thru Flu Shot Clinic** at the **HSD** for all covered members. Face masks and Social Distancing REQUIRED.

Date: **Wednesday, November 4th**

Time: **1:00PM – 3:00PM**

Location: **Human Services Department
1 Plaza Prensa, Santa Fe**

Parking Lot



THE STAY WELL HEALTH CENTER (SWHC) IS HERE FOR YOU!

Members and their covered family (2yr+) can always receive a flu shot at the Stay Well Health Center Monday – Friday, 7AM – 6PM with an appointment.

Call 827.2485

PRC Employee Highlights

Robert Lennon, Hearing Examiner



PIO: How long have you been with the PRC? Please briefly describe your position and role.

RL: I've been with the PRC for only one year. I am a hearing examiner; we preside over hearings, admit and consider evidence, and applying the law to the credible evidence, issue recommended decisions.

Before the PRC, I was the Administrative Law Judge for CYFD for four years. Before that the Assistant General Counsel, then General Counsel for ALTSD. And before that, Assistant General Counsel at the HSD. Before joining New Mexico state government, I was a private practitioner with a general trial practice for about 25 years in Maryland.

PIO: How has it been for you since the work-at-home mandate? How are you doing?

RL: I'm always grateful for the opportunity to serve, and to earn an income. There has been no change except I'm a bit more aware of how fortunate I am. Specifically, there are good and less-than-good changes resulting from the work-at-home mandate. I've come to appreciate the benefits of working from home.

PIO: How has COVID19 affected you personally & your family?

RL: I don't know anyone who actually tested positive, so COVID-19 has not directly affected my family. Personally, I normally work on the weekends as a professional musician; the music business has been extinguished by the closures of live-music venues.

My wonderful wife, Anne, is a pharmacist. She is a bit more fatigued because as a front-line essential worker her responsibilities have increased; she is continuously consulted regarding Covid-19.

PIO: What keeps you up at night or worry about in today's world?

RL: I sleep very well; nothing keeps me up at night! In today's world, I'm concerned about the gradual diminishment of personal liberty and of personal responsibility.

PIO: How do you manage stress and/or worries? What is your top stress reliever?

RL: Activities which require intense focus help me manage stress. In the winter I teach skiing, and sometimes get a chance to blast through the trees! I ride motorcycles. I am a private airplane pilot. My sanctuary is my garage, where I keep all my vehicles running and sort nuts and bolts.

PIO: After the pandemic passes, what is the first thing you would really like to be able to do/or what do you miss the most during the pandemic? What are you looking forward to after the pandemic?

RL: I miss performing for audiences. I hope the live music venues will survive and quickly recover.

Peggy Martinez-Rael, Paralegal



Peggy is a paralegal in the Legal Division. She assists attorneys with filing of pleadings and motions for the Transportation, Utilities & Telecom Divisions. The Legal Division also assists the State Fire Marshal's Office and the Pipeline Safety Division on legal matters. Peggy also assists the IPRA (Inspection of Public Records Act) attorney with the first cut of IPRA review and redaction. Peggy also worked at the Department of Transportation as a legal assistant.

PIO: How has it been for you since the work-at-home mandate?

PMR: Actually it took me a while to adjust to this new way of doing business because I never actually worked from home before. It's definitely been very interesting for me and I feel that I've adjusted pretty well. I know that working from home has its perks – I enjoy it, but I do miss seeing familiar faces at our legal division and also in the building. I would go down to records quite a bit and I miss the interaction with others.

PIO: How has COVID19 affected you personally & your family?

PMR: Fortunately my family and I have not been affected by COVID-19. We try to be really careful about using masks in public and sanitizing. I carry a sanitizer bottle with me when I go shopping, so I'm very careful.

PIO: What keeps you up at night or worry about in today's world?

PMR: I think what I worry about most is the economy and I wonder how the U.S. is going to rebound from this economic and public health crisis. That's going to be something I'm really interested in and worry about. I worry about restaurants and how they'll be able to stay afloat with all the restrictions.

PIO: How do you manage stress and/or worries? What is your top stress reliever?

PMR: My best stress reliever is walking. I take long walks and that clears my head and help me refocus again. The second part of that is just attitude adjustment.

PIO: After the pandemic passes, what is the first thing you would really like to be able to do/or what do you miss the most during the pandemic?

PMR: I would say traveling, and visiting restaurants because I love trying new foods. I love going to California and just hang out there, try the restaurants over by the beach.



Justin has been with the PRC for five years. He is the Administration Secretary, and he assists different departments on a variety of tasks. He considers himself a people person, so he truly enjoys his job, and gets along well with everyone at the PRC. Justin worked as a purchasing agent for a year prior to becoming the Secretary for the PRC.

PIO: How has it been for you since the work-at-home mandate?

JG: I like it, it hasn't been too bad. The first couple of months were kind of nice, but being home longer after a couple of months was an adjustment. I've been busy, I've been on my toes, and so all in all, it's been good. Trying to get used to people being at home, meeting up with staff and making sure all the orders are completed.

PIO: How has COVID-19 affected you and your family?

JG: It really hasn't affected me and my family too much. I've been staying home a lot, visiting with my Mom a lot.

PIO: In terms of the current state of our world, what keeps you up at night or worry about?

JG: Nothing really keeps me up at night. What worries me is this thing with COVID-19 – the new numbers going up and the protocols that the Governor has put in place like the social distancing, wearing of masks, but nothing really stresses me out too much.

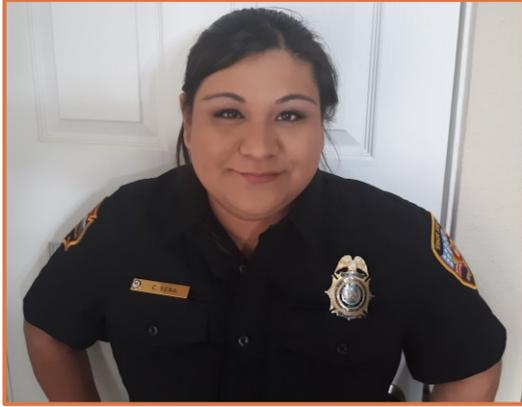
PIO: How do you manage stress and/or worries? What is your top stress reliever?

JG: By the end of the day, after staring at the computer all day, what I like to do is get up and go for a walk - just to get out and get some air, see some of my neighbors in my neighborhood, and wave to them from a distance. What's keeping me sane is getting out of the house, talking and seeing other people. With my job as secretary I was used to talking and seeing a lot of people. The hardest adjustment has been not seeing or talking to people like I used to. Even though I talk to people over the phone here and there, it's just not the same. I'm a very friendly person and I ask people how they're doing and how their family is doing, and making sure they're hanging in there.

PIO: After the pandemic passes, what is the first thing you would really like to be able to do/or what do you miss the most during the pandemic? What are you looking forward to after the pandemic?

JG: I'm looking forward to be able to travel again to Denver. My aunt, my uncle and my brother live out there. That will be my first priority once everything gets back to normal – to see my family.

Candice Sena, Code Enforcement Inspector



Candice works as a Code Enforcement Inspector for the State Fire Marshal's Office and she's been in her position since last February. She travels quite a bit for her job inspecting schools, prisons, day care centers, other businesses and institutions. She makes sure that devices that have been installed are actuating properly -- such as water sprinklers, making sure they have the correct water pressure, etc. Because of her job she has visited places she's never been to or heard of in New Mexico.

PIO: How has it been for you since the work-at-home mandate?

CS: I was really impressed with how supportive our leadership and how together my department was in terms of transitioning to work-at-home. My boss was checking in with us every week and making sure that we had what we needed, making sure that we're emotionally okay, and that whatever troubleshooting problems we were having that it was getting worked out. I really appreciate the support end of that, and the protection that are given to us individually.

PIO: What type of adjustment did you have to do initially with the stay-at-home mandate?

CS: Travel was halted at first and once we started traveling again we had our vehicles; they made sure that we had all the PPEs we needed – extra masks, gloves, sanitizers. Our division was really prepared in that respect, and I really appreciated that. We actually had a staff meeting recently and our supervisor asked if we had enough PPEs, who needs more mask, etc.

PIO: How has COVID-19 affected you and your family?

CS: It's been weird not seeing my family as much. My Dad and I are very close, but now with COVID-19 he won't leave the house and he lives in Silver City which is five hours away. He doesn't want to come to Bernalillo County which I completely understand. It's been kind of hard not to see him as much especially during the summer when we would typically meet up once or twice to go fishing.

PIO: In terms of the current state of our world, what keeps you up at night or worry about?

CS: I just kind of worry what the new normal is. Things I didn't use to think were particularly hard to do have now become impossible tasks, like getting your driver's license updated. You have to get an appointment with the DMV and hope that it will be scheduled sometime within the next three months. I worry about my neighbors too. Do they have enough food or do they have enough to pay rent? A lot of community stress.

PIO: How do you manage stress and/or worries? What is your top stress reliever?

CS: So I actually do bead work and make jewelry from seed beads. In the Southwest we have a lot of Native American jewelry and I tend to do more modern types. It's a great stress reliever for me and there are tons of online community to share it with – there's always a new pattern or technique to learn. I just appreciate that as one of my main stress relievers.

PIO: That's wonderful and creative. Do you sell them?

CS: I do sell them, but that's one of the things this time too that I haven't been able to do. I have a lot of stuff now, but no craft shows to go to.

PIO: What do you miss the most, and what are you looking forward to after the pandemic?

CS: Movie theater. I just miss the popcorn and soda. It tastes different at the movie theater. There's something about sitting in that reclining chair that moves – because I'm a huge movie buff!