

**GREENE COUNTY
HUMAN RESOURCES
DEPARTMENT AND CIVIL
SERVICE COMMISSION**

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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April 18, 2024

GREENE COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
AND
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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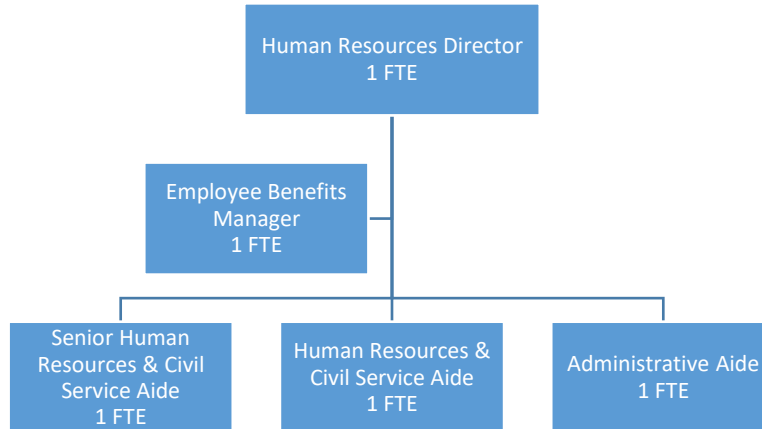
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HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

HR Mission Statement: To provide the highest quality personnel services to our employees, retirees and other customers, while promoting effective and efficient County government.

HR Vision: To support the work of the Greene County community toward achievement of its strategic goals.

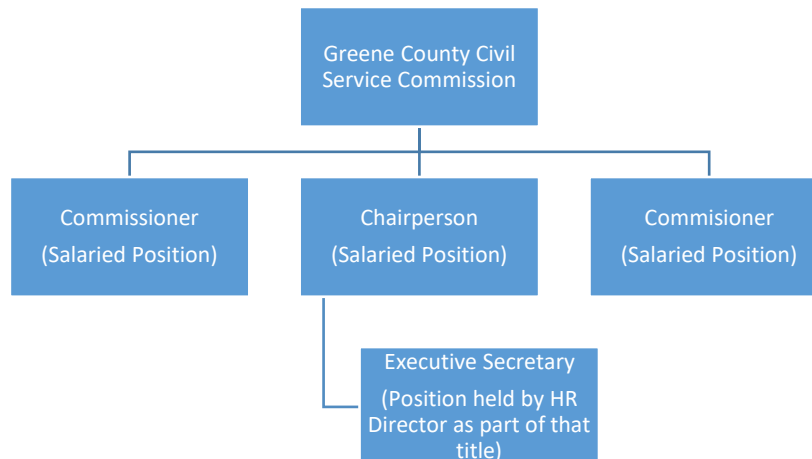
HUMAN RESOURCES ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Civil Service Commission Mission Statement: To uphold the standards of The New York State Constitution as provided through Article V, Section 6, that "...all appointments and promotions in the civil service of the state of New York and all civil divisions including the county, towns, villages, etc., are *made according to merit and fitness...*"

Civil Service Commission Vision: To ensure the merit system is adhered to, guarantee that all public service positions are filled based on merit and fitness through the exam process and to provide appointing authorities a list of qualified candidates from which selection will be made.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF 2023

Greene County Human Resources (HR) plays an important role in Greene County Government and that role continued to be vital as the County endured the challenge of extreme recruitment and retention difficulty and the continuation of long-term employees retiring. The HR team continued to deliver employment and benefit-related resources and address the information needs of staff, as well as serving our retirees, prospective employees, and other customers.

The Greene County Civil Service Commission ensures compliance with all Civil Service Laws, Rules and Regulations for the following appointing authorities: all Greene County departments, fourteen towns, five villages, six school districts, five public libraries and two special districts. Included in the job description for the Human Resources Director is the role of Executive Secretary to the Civil Service Commission.

The HR team has the unique opportunity to work together with all employees throughout their County careers, from recruitment of candidates for vacancies through assisting our retirees with their continuing benefits. We enjoy our interaction with the more than 580 active County employees and over 500 retirees we serve. In addition, we work with the administrators and employees covered by New York State Civil Service in all Greene County municipalities, school districts, libraries, and special districts, equaling approximately 1170 employees for 2023. In total, the HR team works together to provide civil service and personnel services, information and assistance to approximately 1750 active employees and over 500 retirees. While the numbers vary minimally from year to year, for 2023 they remained about the same from our numbers in 2022.

During 2023, many of the required changes to operations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic were eliminated or transitioned to pre-pandemic levels. Civil Service at the state level began to consider modifications to testing administration that began to trickle down to the local level during 2023, as discussed later in this report. The HR team continued to work to fill vacancies for our County departments while combatting an extreme recruitment difficulty, some of which is still a result of the pandemic, some of which is a result of apathy regarding working and some of which is a result of the number of employees entering the workforce being far below that of those exiting the workforce. As was the case in 2022, the HR team worked through changes to staffing in our own department while ensuring there was no interruption to serving our employees and retirees. The HR team is comprised of rock stars who worked tirelessly so that you'd never know from all that we accomplished this year that we were doing more work with less people. While not sustainable as a practice, I'm overwhelmingly grateful to the HR team for their dedication in going above and beyond to serve Greene County. Read on to see just how we did that!

COVID-19

Although the State of Emergency in Greene County related to COVID-19 was rescinded on June 4, 2021, COVID related work for the Human Resources team continued in 2023. HR continued with the responsibility of conducting and processing the COVID-19 intake interview for all Greene County employees. In doing so, HR was able to notify department heads quickly in order to help prevent large outbreaks within departments and satellite locations and to allow departments to find coverage for absent employees quickly. As COVID has become part of the "new norm" and federal and state guidelines have been adjusted, the HR team continued to adapt and streamline many processes as you will see below.

New York State Paid COVID-19 Sick Leave (aka NYS EPSL)

New York State passed a law on March 18, 2020 providing paid sick leave and job protection to employees quarantined or for whom isolation is recommended. Under the NYS law, public employers (regardless of size) are required to provide up to 14 days calendar/10 work days of paid sick leave to employees who are subject to isolation due to COVID-19. This leave can be utilized by employees for up

to three separate occasions: the first allotment for isolation due to testing positive or quarantine due to exposure; the second and third allotments for isolation due to testing positive only. We saw a number of employees utilize this leave for a second and third allotment in 2023. Late in 2023, due to changes in guidelines, Greene County began requiring medical documentation of a positive COVID-19 test in order to be eligible for EPSL.

One of the most important provisions of the state law is that there is no expiration date so Greene County will be required to provide this leave to employees until the state law is repealed. During 2023, there was proposed legislation to end EPSL that did not pass both houses of the NYS Legislature. In the Governor's proposed 2024 budget, there is a provision for the end of EPSL in July 2024. We await final determination on this matter.

The HR Team continued to utilize our system to track the requests, the documentation required for the leave, the time frame of the leave, and the confirmation of the return from leave for employees entitled to COVID leave. This system allows us to track employees and assist departments with scheduling and entering payroll. Tracking was extremely important as many employees were requesting EPSL for a second or third time.

During 2023, the HR team processed 105 **reports of employees subject to an order of isolation or quarantine**. A total of **102 requests were approved**, down from 222 requests that were approved for employer paid leave during 2022. One request for EPSL was denied while another employee was unable to request EPSL due to the previous use of all three allotments of EPSL. We anticipate an increase in the denial of requests in 2024 due to employees utilizing the maximum allotments permitted under NYS law.

Employer Paid Leave for COVID Vaccination

Effective March 12, 2021, in accordance with NYS Civil Service Law, as amended to add Section 159-c, Greene County employees are entitled to a leave of absence, not to exceed four hours per vaccine injection, to be vaccinated for COVID-19. The entire period of leave of absence granted is paid leave and not charged against any other leave the employee is otherwise entitled to. The four hours per vaccine injection includes travel time to and from the appointment. Any time taken in excess of the four (4) hours per vaccine injection entitlement is chargeable to available leave credits. Employees must submit a copy of their vaccination card directly to the HR Department as proof of proper use of this leave. The documentation is placed in the employee's medical file and the HR Director notifies the Department Head that proper documentation has been received. This leave entitlement was set to expire on December 31, 2022. However, Governor Hochul signed legislation that extended the expiration date to December 31, 2023.

COVID-19 Vaccination Mandate

NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) Vaccination Mandate for all Article 28 Facilities and Diagnostic Treatment Centers: On August 26, 2021, NYSDOH mandated COVID-19 vaccination for all Diagnostic and Treatment Centers and Article 28 Facility staff, which included the staff employed in or assigned to work with or at Greene County Public Health. NYSDOH defined personnel for the purpose of this mandate as "all persons employed or affiliated with a covered entity, whether paid or unpaid, including but not limited to employees, members of the medical and nursing staff, contract staff, students, and volunteers, who engage in activities such that if they were infected with COVID-19, they could potentially expose other covered personnel, patients or residents to the disease." All personnel within this definition were required to receive their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine by October 7, 2021.

NYSDOH sent notification on May 24, 2023, to affected facilities that this mandate was being recommended for repeal subject to consideration by the Public Health and Health Planning Council

(PHHPC) and that effective immediately, NYSDOH would not enforce compliance with the mandate while the repeal was under consideration. On October 4, 2023, the mandate was officially repealed effective immediately.

COVID-19 Vaccination Tracking/Status for Active Employees & Outside Agencies

Pursuant to the need to track vaccination status due to the NYS DOH mandate and the employer paid leave for COVID-19 vaccination, the HR team continued recording all COVID-19 vaccination records for employees and non-employees from outside agencies who volunteered to submit their immunization record to our department. This consisted of 31 departments and 15 satellite locations; accounting for approximately 590 employees. In addition, we tracked approximately 43 non-employees from outside agencies. In total we collected and entered data for approximately 380 immunization records received.

Updates to COVID-19 Guidelines

Isolation & Quarantine Guidance:

Early in 2023, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated their guidance for quarantine and isolation orders for COVID-19 from 10 days of isolation to 5 days of isolation followed by 5 days of using a mask. When NYSDOH adopted this same guidance, the HR Team adjusted our intake process for issuing isolation dates for employees.

The CDC's updated guidance also no longer recommended quarantining for exposure to COVID-19. Instead, the CDC recommended wearing a mask and self-monitoring for symptoms. As a result of this change, quarantine orders were no longer issued and EPSL was not granted for exposure to COVID-19.

Late in 2023, Greene County Public Health discontinued issuing "Health Order of Mandatory Isolation" for COVID-19 positive employees. As a result, the HR Director drafted a memo that was sent to all employees from the County Administrator on November 27, 2023 stating that proof of a positive COVID-19 test from a medical provider would now have to be provided if EPSL was being requested. Additionally, the HR Team discontinued use of the Request for EPSL form, which was based on an isolation order from a public health department and moved to the use of the Affirmation of Isolation form. The Affirmation was developed by the NYS Department of Labor (NYSDOL) for employees to complete to satisfy the requirement that they have an order of isolation from a duly authorized government authority to be eligible for EPSL.

Pursuant to all of the changes to CDC and NYSDOH/NYSDOL guidance, updates were made to the interview/intake process that the HR Team was conducting for employees and those who no longer needed to quarantine were notified at that time. Effective 12/1/2023 employees were required to submit proof of a positive COVID-19 test from a medical provider and we no longer accepted positive at-home COVID-19 test results to receive the EPSL.

As has been the case since March of 2020, COVID-19 continued to present challenges to all Greene County departments and employees, but we are hopeful that the end is in sight. With the legislative proposals from 2023 and the Governor's proposal within her proposed 2024 state budget, our goal is to move towards treating COVID-19 as we treat any other illness encountered by our employees.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

Commission Meetings

The Greene County Civil Service Commission meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 10:00 a.m. The Commissioners conducted 12 regular monthly commission meetings in 2023 and held three public hearings regarding proposed changes to the Greene County Civil Service Rules and Appendices and the new NYS Civil Service program known as the Hiring Emergency Limited Placement Program

(HELP Program). As outlined below, many actions take place during the Commission meetings such as: review of requests for reallocation or reclassification of positions, adoption of new job descriptions; approval of revisions to existing job descriptions; adoption and/or extension of eligible lists; approval of appointments from eligible lists; review and action on applications and appointments to positions in the non-competitive, labor and exempt classifications. Exam applications are reviewed when a disqualified candidate provides additional information regarding the required education or experience that would qualify them for participation in an examination. Additionally, various personnel issues regarding Greene County Departments, municipalities, school districts, libraries and special districts are discussed, reviewed and addressed.

Position Classification

The Greene County Civil Service Commission has the power and duty to:

1. Classify and reclassify all positions in the civil service of all civil divisions under its jurisdiction.
2. Prepare and maintain job classification specifications for each class of positions in the competitive, non-competitive and labor jurisdictional classes and establish appropriate minimum qualifications for each class.
3. Prepare and maintain a classification specification for each class in the competitive, non-competitive and labor jurisdictional classes of the civil divisions under its jurisdiction.
4. Investigate all matters affecting the classification and reclassification of all positions and from time to time review the duties, responsibilities and qualifications requirements of all positions under its jurisdiction and to make revisions in the classification of positions.

These duties apply to all positions that fall under its jurisdiction for Greene County departments, villages, towns, school districts, public libraries and special districts. Classification of positions consists of creating a job specification/description and assigning it to a jurisdictional classification (defined below). The job specification provides an overall view of the position and is broken down into four sections: Distinguishing Features of the Class; Typical Work Activities; Full Performance Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, Personal Characteristics, and the Minimum Qualifications with each section providing an outline of what is required.

The five jurisdictional classifications of Civil Service are:

1. **Competitive:** requires a formal examination in the form of a written, performance or training and experience evaluation. All positions are classified as competitive unless the NYS Civil Service Commission has approved them for an alternate classification.
2. **Non-Competitive:** formal written exam is not required. Pursuant to NYS Civil Service Law §42, candidates are subject to review to ensure that they meet the minimum qualifications of the position/job specification.
3. **Labor:** no examination or minimum qualifications required for positions in this classification.
4. **Exempt:** appointed positions as defined in NYS Civil Service Law §41
5. **Unclassified:** not subject to examination. This classification includes elected positions; all officers and employees of any other legislative body whose principal functions and duties are directly related to the performance of the legislative functions of such body; the head or heads of any department of the government who are vested with authority, direction and control over a department, and who have power and authority to appoint and remove officers and employees therein; all members, officers and employees of boards of elections, all persons employed by any title whatsoever as members of the teaching and supervisory staff of a school district, board of cooperative educational services or county vocational education and extension board as noted in NYS Civil Service Law § 35.

Creation of positions or the revision of positions varies from year to year pursuant to the needs of the appointing authorities and the changing duties of certain positions. Additionally, revision of positions can be the result of directives or a change in guidelines from New York State Civil Service. In July of 2022, NYS Civil Service issued a Policy Advisory Report with guidance regarding the amended federal regulations governing the recognition of accrediting agencies provided by the United States Department of Education. Pursuant to this report, all job specifications containing a requirement for a postsecondary education needed to be revised with updated verbiage for accreditation. This continues to be an ongoing project that coincides with our continuing goal of reviewing and updating all job specifications. This review is part of the HR team’s goal of having all job descriptions available on our website.

The following chart reflects the Commission’s actions on position classification over the last three years:

	2023	2022	2021
Positions Created	10	14	12
Positions Revised	17	33	33

As noted in the 2022 Annual Report, our office completed the digitization of the history of all job descriptions, which was roughly 2,045 records. The next stage of this project is to update the current version of all active job descriptions, some requiring revisions to be approved by the Greene County Civil Service Commission. This task has been assigned to a new part-time position in the HR office. Once that is complete, the next step will be to have current job descriptions available on the Greene County website.

Hiring Emergency Limited Placement Program (HELP Program)

On January 13, 2023, NYS Civil Service sent a Policy Advisory Report (PAR) to all municipal Civil Service Agencies regarding a “temporary program to help local government employers address the current staffing issues for critical health and safety titles” known as the HELP Program, which was established by the NYS Civil Service Commission on January 11, 2023. Under the HELP Program, local civil service agencies were able to request, through submission of Rules Resolutions, that Competitive class titles be placed in the Non-competitive class on a temporary basis (12 months) to aide in recruitment efforts at the local level. Initially, all Rules Resolutions for the HELP Program had to have been submitted to the NYS Civil Service Commission by December 31, 2023, but in January 2024 that deadline was extended to December 31, 2024.

As noted in the January 13, 2023 PAR, the HELP Program Criteria was as follows:

“Titles appropriate for hiring under the local HELP Program will be limited to positions that provide critical services, which if left unfilled, would result in the basic health, safety, and daily needs of New Yorkers being unmet.” “To ensure the integrity of the merit system, titles for which agencies can make appointments under the HELP Program must meet all the below criteria:

Criteria 1: Titles are deemed to be critical, direct care, health and safety titles. Employees serving in these titles provide services or care directly to clients, consumers, patients, or the public. Titles tested in the examination holdings listed above meet this criterion.

Criteria 2: A severe shortage of candidates exists, evidenced by an inability to attract sufficient qualified candidates to fill vacancies despite extensive and exhaustive recruitment efforts. It is the responsibility of the civil service agency to demonstrate this criterion.

Criteria 3: Titles are filled via open-competitive examination only. Titles are excluded from this program if they can be filled via promotion examination. It is the responsibility of the civil service agency to demonstrate this criterion.”

On June 14, 2023, the NYS Civil Service Commission approved the Greene County Civil Service Commission’s Rules Resolution for the following titles to be included in the HELP Program: Mental Health Specialist, Emergency Operations Dispatcher, Emergency Operations Dispatcher Trainee, Community Services Worker and Social Welfare Examiner. With that approval, all provisional employees in those titles were appointed non-competitively and no longer were required to test for their positions. Additionally, all recruitment material was updated to note that these titles did not require a test. In 2023, Greene County utilized the HELP Program to hire candidates in the approved titles as noted below:

- Mental Health Specialists (HELP Program) – **3 appointed** with continued advertising to fill additional vacancies
- Emergency Operations Dispatchers (HELP Program) – **1 appointed*** with continued advertising to fill additional vacancies
- Emergency Operations Dispatcher Trainees (HELP Program) – **1 appointed*** with continued advertising to fill additional vacancies
- Community Services Workers (HELP Program) – **1 appointed** with continued advertising to fill additional vacancies
- Social Welfare Examiners (HELP Program) – **5 appointed** with continued advertising to fill additional vacancies

*There were two other candidates approved for hire in these titles, but they were not actually appointed until 2024 due to the training schedule required for dispatchers.

At the end of the 12-month period, employees occupying positions filled through the local HELP Program will be granted competitive class status without examination. The January 13, 2023 PAR stated that local Civil Service Agencies would need to submit a rules resolution to delete the HELP Program titles from the non-competitive class and in doing so, that would have the effect of conveying competitive class status upon individuals appointed pursuant to the HELP Program. However, in early 2024, the HELP Program was modified, and the details of those modifications will be detailed in our 2024 Annual Report, so stay tuned!

Civil Service Examinations

Greene County Civil Service administers two categories of examinations for titles utilized by County departments, municipalities, school districts, public libraries and special districts: centralized or decentralized. Centralized exams are scheduled and rated by New York State Civil Service. Decentralized exams are scheduled and rated by the Greene County Civil Service Commission and include Information Technology Training & Experience and Continuous Recruitment Training & Experience exams. Training & Experience exams consist of demonstrating the minimum qualifications on an exam application and receiving a rating based upon an evaluation of your training and experience against the duties of the position being tested.

The creation and revision of job descriptions, as well as vacancies and provisional appointments/promotions reported by appointing authorities and the expiration of existing eligible lists, resulted in a number of requests for examinations in 2023.

Exam Information:

Centralized Exam Requests Submitted to NYS Civil Service

2023	2022	2021
66	60	53

Centralized Exams Administered by Greene County

Exam Type	2023	2022	2021
Open-Competitive	34	42	20
Promotion	25	11	13
ATAP (Library Series)	3	1	4
Corrections Officer Training & Experience*	2		

*2023 was the first year that NYS Civil Service permitted local Civil Service agencies to have Corrections Officer candidates participate in an online Training & Experience exam rather than sitting for a written multiple-choice exam. The state implemented this change for state Corrections Officers a few years ago but this option wasn't available at the local level until 2023. We anticipate that the state will further revise this program sometime during 2024 to allow local Civil Service agencies to hold the online Corrections Officer Training & Experience exam on a continuous recruitment basis. Our office awaits guidance from NYS Civil Service on the implementation of this program on a continuous recruitment basis. The HR team is hopeful that testing on a continuous basis will allow us to fill the outstanding vacancies for this position that we have been trying to fill since the new correctional facility opened. The recruitment difficulty for this position is a statewide problem and one of the driving factors in the change to the way the exam is administered.

Decentralized Exams Scheduled, Administered and Rated by Greene County

Exam Type	2023	2022	2021
Open-Competitive	4	7	2
Continuous Recruitment: Caseworker/Caseworker Trainee*	3	5	4
Information Technology Training & Experience	0	0	1
Continuous Recruitment Training & Experience	0	1	2

*2020 was the first year the Caseworker/Caseworker Trainee exam was held as a continuous recruitment exam. The exam is scheduled for the second Tuesday of every other month beginning with February. This allows for an active eligible list at all times and has provided a sufficient number of candidates for the appointing authority when a vacancy occurs.

As of December 31, 2023, 67 exams requested from NYS Civil Service had yet to be administered, which is down from the 78 that were outstanding at the end of 2022. Of those 67 outstanding requests, 34 have been assigned exam dates in 2023 by NYS Civil Service. NYS Civil Service has increased the number of exam series being given on exam days leading to an increased number of exams held and scheduled. With that said, the time frame for the release of exam results is still between four and six months due to a continued reduction in NYS Civil Service staff working on-site and the state's claim of difficulty in their staffing level. Additionally, some provisional candidates are waiting over 6 months, and in some cases years, to sit for their exams. Along with other counties throughout the state, the HR Director continues to lobby NYS Civil Service to make substantial changes to the Civil Service testing system. It is my belief that the difficulties with the existing testing system is a driving force in local governments' recruitment difficulty.

Candidate Information

Candidates who applied for exams with Greene County Civil Service for the last three years are categorized as follows:

	2023	2022	2021
Total Candidates (all exams)	244	396	198
Total: Centralized (Open-Competitive & Promotion)	227	343	158
Centralized – Passed	158	226	103
Centralized – Failed	30	38	15
Centralized – Disqualified/Withdrew	4	15	7
Centralized – Failed to Appear	34	44	33
Centralized – Awaiting Results	1	20	
Total: Decentralized	9	43	22
Decentralized – Passed	7	30	15
Decentralized – Failed	2	3	2
Decentralized – Disqualified/Withdrew	0	0	1
Decentralized – Failed to Appear	0	10	4
Total: Continuous Recruitment	8	9	15
Continuous Recruitment - Passed	7	8	12
Continuous Recruitment – Failed	1	1	0
Continuous Recruitment – Disqualified/Withdrew	0	0	1
Continuous Recruitment – Failed to Appear	0	0	1
Information Technology Training & Experience	0	0	3

The number of candidates participating in Civil Service exams has dropped dramatically across New York State over the last few years and Greene County’s numbers reflect that trend. As stated previously, NYS Civil Service and the local Civil Service agencies are working together on recruitment strategies such as on-line testing and more Training & Experience evaluations, including the possibility of conducting the Corrections Officer exam as a continuous recruitment Training & Experience exam as is done at the NYS level. The Greene County Civil Service Commission is continuing to collaborate with NYS Civil Service staff and increase the number of candidates participating in Greene County Civil Service exams for 2024.

Exam Fees

Pursuant to New York State Civil Service Law Sections 23.2 and 50.5(b), Greene County assesses an exam filing fee for all Centralized, Decentralized, Continuous Recruitment and Training & Experience exams as follows:

- NYS Civil Service Law §23.2 states that NYS Civil Service can charge a reasonable fee as a condition of rendering services for and in providing exam materials as well as scoring the exams they provide to all local civil service agencies.
- A \$25.00 exam fee is assessed for uniformed exams. Uniformed exams are administered for all uniformed positions within municipal police agencies and the Sheriff’s Office, including Corrections titles.
- A \$15.00 exam fee is assessed for all non-uniform centralized, decentralized, continuous recruitment and training and experience exams.
- Pursuant to NYS Civil Service Law §50.5(b) under certain criteria candidates are eligible to apply for an exam fee waiver.

Per NYS Civil Service Law §23(2), the Greene County Civil Service Commission is required to complete and submit to NYS Civil Service an Annual Exam Fee report for services provided by them for rating centralized exams and providing exam material and the rating chart for decentralized exams. The Commission must submit a payment to NYS Civil Service within the first quarter of the year for the state's portion of the exam fees assessed in the previous year. The HR Director, in her role as Executive Secretary to the Commission, submitted the 2023 Exam Fee Billing Report to NYS Civil Service on February 7, 2024. NYS Civil Service certified the report on February 7, 2024, and a check in the amount of \$1,802.50 was submitted to NYS Civil Service on February 8, 2024. This amount represents \$12.50 for each uniformed exam applicant, \$7.50 for each non-uniformed centralized exam applicant, and \$5.00 for each decentralized exam applicant.

The exam fees collected by the Greene County Civil Service Commission are categorized as:

	2023	2022*	2021
Total Exam Fees Collected	\$3,700.00	\$6,500.00	\$3,015.00
Uniformed Exam Fees Collected	\$475.00	\$2,875.00	\$1,075.00
Uniformed Exam Fee Waivers	0	2	0
Non-uniform Exam Fees Collected	\$3,225.00	\$3,625.00	\$1,940.00
Non-uniform Exam Fee Waivers	7	6	3

*The large increase in fees collected for 2022 is due to the holdings of the Deputy Sheriff and Police Officer exams. These high candidate exams are traditionally held every two years in Greene County. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions regarding exam room occupancy, the Commission extended the Deputy Sheriff and Police Officer eligible lists for an additional year and held the exams in 2022.

Eligible Lists

Candidates who achieve a passing score on a Greene County Civil Service examination will have their names entered on an eligible list for the title that they were examined for in order of their final rating. If two or more candidates receive the same final rating on the examination, the Commission has prescribed that the last four digits of the candidate's social security number break tied scores for the purpose of rank on the eligible list. This method was determined for use pursuant to the random nature of the last four digits of social security numbers.

The date the eligible list is established is the date fixed by Commission resolution and is entered on each list. The duration of all eligible lists is fixed by Commission resolution prior to the establishment of such lists but shall not be less than one nor more than four years. The date of establishment of a list and its duration is given to all successful candidates at the time when notice of standing on the eligible list is given to each candidate. When the duration of an eligible list is less than four years, by resolution the Commission may, prior to the list's expiration date, extend the list up to the maximum limitation of four years. All eligible candidates remaining on such list are notified in writing of the extension of the eligible list.

Eligible lists are open to public inspection at the office of the Commission. The names of the candidates who failed to receive a passing grade on the examination are not disclosed on the eligible lists.

Establishment and extension of the Greene County Civil Service eligible lists are broken down as follows:

	2023	2022	2021*
Total Eligible Lists Established	66	47	34
- Open-Competitive	46	39	21
- Promotion	6	7	7
- Non-Competitive Promotion	14	1	6
Eligible Lists Extended	5	12	14

***The numbers for 2021 are significantly lower pursuant to the number of exams that were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Canvassing and Certification of Names

When a vacancy for a competitive title occurs in an appointing authority, the Commission determines the eligible list appropriate for the vacancy to be filled (in most cases the title for the vacancy and title of the eligible list will be the same). A certification of names is sent to the appointing authority containing a sufficient number of eligible candidates from which selection for appointment may be made. When the name of any eligible candidate is included in a certification for appointment, the names of all other eligible candidates on the list having the same score will be included in such certification.

A certification of names issued by the Commission to an appointing authority is valid for 30 days from the date of its issuance. Certifications issued for the titles of Probation Officer, Probation Officer Trainee, Caseworker, Caseworker Trainee, Corrections Officer, Deputy Sheriff or Police Officer are valid for a period of 60 days from the date of their issuance. After the expiration date of such period, no appointment can be made except from a new certification. The Commission, for good cause shown, may extend a certification for an additional 30 days upon request of an appointing authority.

When the canvassing process is completed in order to establish a certification of names, if a candidate fails to indicate his/her willingness to accept such appointment within five business days of the date of the canvass letter, s/he is considered ineligible for selection for appointment. When a candidate fails to respond to two successive canvass letters, his/her name is restricted from consideration from the eligible list. The candidate may request that his/her name be restored to active status on such list prior to the expiration of the list.

The name of a candidate who declines appointment is eliminated from further consideration from the eligible list unless declination is for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Insufficiency of compensation offered when below minimum of grade of the position for which the examination was held;
2. Location of employment;
3. Temporary inability, physical or otherwise, which must be satisfactorily explained by the eligible in writing.

Appointments or promotions to Competitive positions must be made from those candidates willing to accept such appointment and whose exam score is equal to or higher than the score of the third highest ranking candidate on the list indicating willingness to accept such appointment. Whenever a vacancy exists in a position in the competitive class and an open-competitive exam results in two or fewer candidates on the eligible list, the list is considered non-mandatory. The appointing authority may choose from one of the candidates, but they are not required to do so and may appoint a candidate provisionally pending the next exam for the title.

The Commission administers the canvassing process and/or provides certification of names for all Greene County departments, municipalities, school districts, libraries and special districts who have vacancies for a title in the Competitive Classification. In 2023, the Commission conducted the canvassing process for 50 vacancies within the appointing authorities served, down 47% from the 95 conducted in 2022, and issued 38 certifications of names, down 37% from the 60 issued in 2022. The discrepancy in the number of certification of names and the number of canvassings is a result of a few factors:

1. The implementation of the HELP Program in mid-2023 reduced the number of requests for canvassings to fill positions that previously needed to be filled on a competitive basis.
2. Fewer candidates on eligible lists resulted in the lists being exhausted quicker and provisional candidates needing to be appointed.
3. A higher number of Non-competitive promotion vacancies that do not require the canvassing process.

Requests for Examination Appropriateness

The Commission can make a request to NYS Civil Service to support the appropriateness of various merit system administration transactions including transfers/reinstatements, non-competitive promotion, eligible list, and preferred list usage.

Non-competitive promotion 52(7): Non-competitive promotion requests are related only to the examination taken by the candidate and therefore do not require a comparison of minimum qualifications. If the examination scopes are not identical, the Testing Services Division (TSD) is asked to review scopes for the examination taken by the candidate versus the scope of the examination given for promotion to the higher-level title.

Transfers/Reinstatements: Section 70(1) of Civil Service Law prohibits the transfer of an employee to a title for which there is an examination involving essential tests and qualifications that are higher than or different from the essential tests and qualifications involved in the examination for the title held. Municipal civil service rules prescribe reinstatement to the same title once held or to any title an employee was eligible to transfer to; therefore, section 70(1) also applies to reinstatements. This includes reinstatement following resignation, retirement, or layoff. Therefore, transfers and reinstatements involving transfer require a review of the open competitive minimum qualifications for the position by NYS Civil Service staff.

Use of an eligible list or preferred list (pursuant to CSL 23(4); 61; 81): The substitution of an eligible list or preferred list for the purpose of filling a title for which there is an established examination requires the same principle of comparable minimum qualifications. The minimum qualifications for the substitute eligible list or preferred list must be the same as or higher than the minimum qualifications for the title being filled. If the minimum essential test and qualifications are not consistent, an individual could qualify for the examination for the eligible list title and not qualify for the examination that would be held for the position to be filled.

While submission of these requests can be time consuming and require substantial documentation, approval of such requests saves the appointing authority and the candidate time in that the candidate does not have to sit for an exam and the appointing authority does not have to wait for exam results to appoint the person from an eligible list. During 2023, the Commission submitted nine requests for examination appropriateness to NYS Civil Service, up from the five that were submitted in 2022. Seven of the requests were approved in 2023, up from the three approved 2022. The Commission will continue to utilize this tool when appropriate to avoid unnecessary examinations and the long wait time for exam results.

Certification of Payrolls

Pursuant to NYS Civil Service Law §95, §97(1), §97(2), §100 and §101, the Commission has the responsibility of certifying payrolls for all appointing authorities under its jurisdiction to ensure that appointments and employment are in compliance with Civil Service Laws and Rules, identify discrepancies, and provide for resolution of discrepancies. The Commission requires the certifications of payroll for the appointing authorities according to the following schedule:

CIVIL DIVISION	PAYROLL TO BE CERTIFIED:
County	First Full Payroll in January
Towns (14)	First Full Payroll in January
Villages (5)	First Full Payroll in June
School Districts (6)	First Full Payroll in October
Public Libraries and Special Districts (7)	First Full Payroll in January

The certification of payroll consists of reviewing employees' names, position titles and salaries to verify information listed on the wage report matches Civil Service records. Additionally, certifying the payroll involves creation of roster records for newly hired employees and updating existing employees' records including title changes, salary increases and any other relevant employment information.

The Commission investigates any discrepancies between the payroll and the official roster or any other instances where the Commission finds the employment of a person may be in violation of the law and rules. When the Commission finds satisfactory evidence that the employment of a person is in violation of law and rules, or the Commission finds satisfactory evidence of intent to evade the provisions of law or rules, the Commission will refuse certification.

Although our goal is to complete payroll certification for every appointing authority each year, at times there are circumstances that prevent that from happening. In 2023, the turnover of staff in our own department as well as the turnover of staff in many of our appointing authorities continued to result in a lower number of certifications being completed. The HR Director has assigned this task to a different team member for 2024 and our continued goal is to get all of our appointing authorities up-to-date regarding certification of payroll.

New York State Civil Service Annual Report

NYS Civil Service Law § 26(1) requires all municipal civil service agencies to complete and submit an Annual Report. These local reports are the basis of NYS Department of Civil Service's "Municipal Civil Service in New York State Summary of Annual Reports." On February 26, 2023, Greene County's 2023 Annual Report was submitted to NYS Civil Service.

The local report consists of the local Civil Service Commission's staffing information, finances, meeting information, exam administration information, projects, and goals. Additionally, the bulk of the annual report contains the total number of full-time, part-time and provisional employees classified under the Greene County Civil Service Commission's jurisdiction in all Greene County departments, villages, towns, school districts, libraries and special districts. The figures contained in the table below were outlined in the annual report and were based on the employees' status as of December 31, 2023.

	Greene County Departments	Public Libraries & Special Districts (7)	School Districts (6)	Towns (14)	Villages (5)
Total Employees	489	61	557	392	155
Permanent Competitive	294	26	96	30	27
Provisional	47	11	12	2	2
Non-Competitive	121	22	273	230	86
Exempt	20	1	17	51	7
Labor	4	1	159	79	33
Temporary	3	0	0	0	0

As you can see from the table above, the Greene County Civil Service Commission has jurisdiction over 1,654 employees, a decrease of 1.2% over the 1,674 employees in 2022.

STAFFING AND EMPLOYMENT

Personnel Changes

One of the HR Team’s most significant responsibilities is to process personnel changes. These changes include, but are not limited to processing employment applications, completing the onboarding process and paperwork for new hires, and processing promotions, inter-departmental transfers, appointments of current County employees to different titles in different departments, retirements, resignations, and terminations.

Posting/Advertising: HR worked closely with Department Heads to post, advertise, and fill vacancies in compliance with NYS Civil Service Law, Greene County Civil Service Rules and Regulations, applicable provisions of the seven CBAs and County policies/procedures. When filling vacancies for titles covered by a CBA, HR is required to post within an agency, on a countywide basis or to refer to an existing eligible list generated by Civil Service examination. Job announcements are sent to the departments for posting in accordance with Civil Service Rules and applicable union contract language, placed on the HR website and posted on the HR Facebook page. In 2023 HR continued to send the job announcements to departments via email for distribution when possible or posting on a bulletin board when all department employees do not have access to email. This procedure was implemented in 2021 as part of the County’s initiative to go paperless when possible. When, and if, the search for candidates requires external advertising, we utilize as many free alternatives as possible, before consulting with a Department Head about paid advertising options.

Due to the ongoing recruitment difficulty facing all employers, the HR team spent a lot of time posting and advertising for vacancies. In some cases, multiple advertisements were needed over the course of months to fill a vacancy. Free advertisements are listed on a number of different websites dedicated to recruitment, such as Indeed, NYS Job Bank, LinkedIn, etc. as well as different educational websites. When paid advertising is utilized, the HR team provides the department with several different paid options. The department then decides which option they feel will work best for them from a recruitment standpoint as well as from a budgetary standpoint. The four paid advertisements in 2023 consisted of an ad in the Times Union newspaper and their online platform.

The chart below shows the 2023 numbers as compared to 2022:

	2023	2022	Percentage Change
Notice of Vacancy	43	39	10.25% increase
Job Announcement – Free	81	102	20.60% decrease
Job Announcement - Paid	4	4	0%

The significant decrease in free Job Announcements could be attributed to an increase in the number of vacancies filled during the posting period for the Notice of Vacancy, from a decrease in the number of times a vacancy needed to be advertised before it was filled or a change in procedure where the HR team began advertising certain vacancies without a deadline to file an application and used the phrase, “The vacancy will be posted until a successful candidate has been chosen.”

During the annual review of procedures for 2022 a decision was made that the HR team would keep track of when a vacancy is filled by posting, free advertising or paid advertising to assist the HR Director in

making needed changes to our recruitment process. In 2023, 22 vacancies were filled from a Notice of Vacancy or in-house posting, 31 vacancies were filled from Job Announcements (free advertising) and no vacancies were filled from paid advertising. As our team tracks this information moving forward, we will evaluate any necessary changes to the existing recruitment process and the platforms that are utilized (i.e. use of QR codes, modification to existing templates, etc.).

Processing Personnel Changes: Typically, vacancies are filled from a Civil Service eligible list or an internal posting at a higher rate than those filled as a result of advertising. Hiring from an eligible list is preferable to hiring a candidate provisionally since there is a risk the incumbent may not pass the test or be “reachable” on the list. This outcome can be devastating to the employee, and an unnecessary use of resources by the employer. When possible, appointing authorities are encouraged to wait for an eligible list to be established rather than appointing provisionally.

2023 again saw the HR team processing a higher number of new hires than was the case during the pandemic. The chart below demonstrates our work processing personnel changes showing a slight overall increase in the number of transactions processed.

	New Hires	Change in Title	Rehired	Resigned	Retired	Terminated	Declined/ No Show	Deceased	Total
2022	80	53	9	51	19	5		3	220
2023	78	50	15	50	15	11	2	1	222

Pre-employment Screenings

Upon a conditional offer of employment to a candidate, HR orders a background check as well as a physical and drug screen for all prospective new hires, including elected and appointed officials. The background checks ordered by the HR Department are conducted by the Greene County Sheriff’s Office. (Note: Sheriff’s Office, Jail, Mental Health, Probation, and DSS complete their own background checks and forward the results to HR.) Once HR receives an appropriate background check, physical and drug screen, the candidate is contacted, and an appointment is scheduled for them to come to HR to complete the onboarding paperwork with one of our team members.

As an addition to the background check for prospective employees holding a commercial driver’s license, a query of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse is conducted as required by federal regulation. The Clearinghouse is a secure online database that gives employers, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), State Driver Licensing Agencies (SDLAs), and State law enforcement personnel real-time information about commercial driver’s license (CDL) and commercial learner’s permit (CLP) holders’ drug and alcohol program violations. The Clearinghouse contains records of violations of drug and alcohol prohibitions in [49 CFR Part 382, Subpart B](#), including positive drug or alcohol test results and test refusals. When a driver completes the return-to-duty (RTD) process and follow-up testing plan, this information is also recorded in the Clearinghouse.

Promotional Opportunities

The HR Director collaborated with Department Heads, the County Administrator and the Civil Service Commission on promotional staffing needs as the County continued to backfill vacancies that had been put on hold and fill vacancies created by the high number of retirements in 2023. As part of this process the HR Director continued to evaluate the need for newly created bargaining unit titles and assigned pay grades accordingly. Additionally, the HR Director participated in establishing appropriate salaries for any newly created management/confidential titles. In total, the HR team processed 33 promotional appointments during 2023, an increase of 43% from the 23 processed in 2022.

Employment Outreach

The HR team continued efforts towards outreach to local high school students regarding employment opportunities with Greene County, completing employment applications and the Civil Service examination process. As part of this process HR team members attended the Cocksackie-Athens Central School District's Annual Readiness Day on March 7, 2023.

On July 13, 2023, the Capital Region Virtual Career Fair was created, implemented and successfully attended by Greene County Human Resources & Civil Service. Success was so great, team members attended a second virtual career fair through New York State Department of Labor on August 10, 2023.

For the first time in 2023, the HR team participated in the Greene County Youth Fair from July 27-July 30, 2023. The team enjoyed manning our table with information on HR and Civil Service opportunities, as well as interacting with other Greene County agencies in attendance. However, the most meaningful part of this event was interacting with the public, providing them with information and answering their questions. We look forward to participating in this event again in 2024.

HR team members also attended the "Connect to Protect Guardians Suicide Prevention and Awareness Resource Event for Active and Veteran Military and First Responders" event on August 10, 2023. During this event, the team provided information to interested people regarding employment opportunities with Greene County and through the Civil Service process. We look forward to continuing to attend this event in 2024 and finding opportunities to attend similar events.

Additionally, on October 2, 2023, employees from the HR team attended the Columbia Greene Community College Job Fair with allowed for guidance and educational outreach to college students and the community regarding available positions within Greene County and Civil Service exams being offered in Greene County. We are thankful to the Columbia-Greene Workforce for their collaboration with our team and for inviting us to events such as this one. We anticipate a continuation of this relationship and look forward to working with their organization moving forward.

Reclassifications/Reallocations

NYS Civil Service Law Section 22 and Greene County Civil Service Rule XXIII provide the Civil Service Commission with the authority to reclassify or reallocate positions/titles. In 2023, two requests for reallocation of a title to a higher pay grade were submitted to the Civil Service Commission. The HR Director, working in her capacity as Executive Secretary to the Civil Service Commission, presented the requests and supporting documentation to the Civil Service Commission for review. The Commission recommended approval of one request and denial the other request. The County Administrator acted upon the recommendations of the Commission.

Additionally, in 2023 seven requests were submitted to the Commission for reclassification of a position. Upon review of the supporting documentation, the Commission recommended reclassification of six of the positions to different or new titles at a higher pay grade within the pay rate scale. The HR Director worked with the Department Head and the applicable collective bargaining unit to determine an appropriate existing title or to create a new title, which was adopted by the Commission and assigned the corresponding pay grade.

By comparison, there were five requests for Reclassification/Reallocation submitted for consideration in 2022.

Salary Analysis

The HR Director works very closely with the County Administrator and the Deputy Budget Officer with regard to the salary for Management/Confidential (M/C) employees. Any requests for salary adjustments

or setting salary for new titles go through a salary analysis conducted by the HR Director. The analysis may include comparison of salary, duties and qualifications of similar titles used by the County or may require comparison to titles used by other counties in New York. Once the analysis is complete, a recommendation is submitted to the County Administrator who issues the final determination. In 2023, the HR Director conducted nine salary analyses (excluding those required for encroachment) for existing or newly created M/C titles.

Encroachment of employees covered by a bargaining agreement and their closest non-union member supervisor is another situation that requires salary analysis. The HR Director works with the County Administrator to correct encroachment as soon as possible upon full ratification of any collective bargaining agreements or when subordinate union employees are promoted to a higher-grade union title. There were no encroachment issues due to CBA ratification during 2023 but there were two issues that arose due to promotions. The HR Director anticipates review of encroachment issues due to CBAs that were settled early in 2024. More to come on this topic in next year's annual report.

Random Drug Screens

A random drug screening program initiated for employees in the Managerial/Confidential (M/C) group in 2017, was expanded to members of the CSEA General and CSEA Dispatch/Probation Units in 2018. Resulting from contract negotiations in 2019, the UPSEU random drug screen program, which previously only applied to nurses at the Jail, was expanded to all members of the bargaining unit effective 1/1/2020. During 2021 and 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the contractor who performs our random drug screening for these groups of employees from coming on site. The HR Director contacted our vendor to resume these services during 2023. Unfortunately, due to the staffing level in the HR Department, we were not able to conduct the screening in 2023. This remains a priority for the HR Director to complete in 2024.

Employees of the County's Highway and Solid Waste Management Department, the Sheriff's Office/Jail and certain employees of the Human Services Department participated in separate, agency-specific random drug screen programs.

License Event Notification Service (LENS)

The Senior Human Resources & Civil Service Aide monitored the LENS Program through the NYS DMV, checking the system daily, entering new hires and deleting employees who have retired, resigned or were terminated. LENS is a data service that gathers information daily from the DMV's files and reports any new information to us regarding the status of a license (e.g., suspensions, expirations, renewals, accidents etc.). Accordingly, we can monitor the NYS license records of CDL holders and other employees that drive for the County in the course of their work duties or are required to maintain a valid NYS driver's license as part of their job description. When our team member is alerted to an issue, the employee and Department Head are notified and given a specific deadline to rectify the situation. This service is free to government agencies and helps reduce the County's insurance rates.

Employee Performance Appraisals

Employee performance appraisals are a valuable tool used to recognize an employee's strengths and encourage that employee to continue to strive for improvement. They can also be used to assist employees in addressing deficiencies in the performance of their duties, and to assist departments with performance needs. An ongoing goal for the HR team has been to increase the number of employee performance appraisals. To address this goal HR sent out quarterly reminders and monitored the completion of employee performance appraisals by department managers and supervisors. The HR Director also continued to stress the importance of the completion of performance appraisals during monthly Department Head Meetings. Performance Appraisals were also part of the outline for the

Corrective Action training for Supervisors and Department Heads provided by the County's Labor Relations Counsel in January 2023.

As noted above, one of the HR team's goals for 2023 was to continue to increase the number of appraisals completed. **The HR team is delighted to announce that in 2023, 214 performance appraisals were submitted to HR, almost a 4% increase from the 206 submitted in 2022. Even more exciting is that we have seen a 71% increase in submissions since 2020.** The HR team appreciates the department heads, managers and supervisors who collaborated with us to make this a reality. We will continue in our efforts to increase that number even more.

Employee Exit Survey

HR provides employees the opportunity to complete a survey upon retirement or voluntary separation from employment. The procedure for distribution is to provide employees with the survey as soon as HR is notified of an intention to separate from County employment. This approach is based on the idea that the initial feeling of emotion has eased but we are catching the employee before they completely "check out." The Employee Benefits Manager then follows up with a phone call to the employee to see if there are any questions, or if the employee would prefer to meet with an HR team member in person rather than completing the survey. The HR Director provides Department Heads with three key points concerning the survey process:

1. The Exit Survey is an HR function, not a departmental function.
2. The Exit Survey is **confidential**.
3. The Exit Survey provides employees leaving County employment with an opportunity to provide beneficial data/information.

Of the 76 surveys distributed in 2023, 16 were returned compared to 2022 where 75 surveys distributed and 14 were returned. The number of surveys returned was slightly higher in 2023, compared to 2022 showing a 14% increase. The HR team will continue to think "outside the box" for creative ways to generate a higher return rate.

New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) Annual Salary Survey

The HR Director responded to a request in June to assist in updating the NYSAC Annual County Official Salary and Employee Benefits Surveys. The request included logging into a secure website and updating the information for Greene County. As a result of our participation, the 2023 NYSAC County Salary Survey and Employee Benefits Report contained accurate information for Greene County.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO-4) Reporting

In accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) requires biennial reports in odd-numbered years from public employers which indicate the composition of their workforce by sex and by race/ethnic category. The reporting agencies provide information on their employment totals, and employee job category and salary by gender and race/ethnic group, as of June 30th of the survey year. HR generated the data necessary to complete the EEO-4 survey instrument on-line, then submitted it to the federal government electronically on December 1, 2023 in advance of the December 5, 2023 deadline.

Miscellaneous Policies and Forms

In 2023, the HR team developed and/or amended the following policies and forms:

1. Developed the Religious Accommodation Request Form to allow employees to make a request for reasonable accommodation based on a religious belief and/or practice, i.e. job change, schedule change, dress/appearance code exception, vaccination exemption, etc.

2. Developed the Greene County Affirmation of Isolation form to correspond with a change to the NYS DOH guidance on the issuance of Public Health Isolation Orders.
3. Updated all HR forms that include gender identification with the following options: Male, Female, and X. This follows directives provided by the NYS Department of Labor.
4. All new or revised policies, rules, guidelines, agreements, contracts, job descriptions, etc. were updated to include gender neutral language pursuant to NYS legislation directing local governments to make such changes.

Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) Requests and Police Discovery Requests

The HR Director collected data for the County Attorney in response to seven Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests received during the year. Additionally, as a result of various police reform legislation, HR has the additional duty of collecting data for the District Attorney's office in response to discovery requests for information contained in the personnel files of the employees of certain County departments. In 2023, the HR Director responded to 10 such requests from the DA's Office.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Affordable Care Act (ACA)

Greene County continued in 2023 with the same self-insured health insurance plan. The HR team continued to fully implement all necessary measures to make sure we were and continue to be ACA compliant. This includes the tracking of "Covered Individuals" in detail (which had formerly been done by the insurance carrier) in addition to the "Offer and Coverage" information for 1095 reporting. Careful tracking, review and entry of *all covered employees and dependent(s) information* into the personnel/payroll system for individuals subject to the reporting requirements, is completed on a monthly basis. Additionally, HR continued updating the records of all staff in the County's database as employment status and/or health insurance coverage changes occurred throughout the year.

HR continued to closely monitor activity at the federal level concerning possible amendments or repeal, replacement, and/or repair plans. Beyond that, HR persisted in managing the myriad of tasks needed to successfully achieve compliance with the ACA's many mandates, including:

1. Monitoring the hours worked of all on-going part-time and per diem employees during the County's "Standard Measurement Period" in order to evaluate their eligibility for health insurance
2. Monitoring the hours worked of all newly hired variable hour part-time and per diem employees during their "Initial Measurement Period" in order to evaluate their eligibility for health insurance
3. Conducting "Affordability" calculations for each of the health plans offered by the County
4. Regularly re-evaluating the "Offer and Coverage" and "Safe Harbor" codes being used to ensure our selections are appropriate for each individual's circumstances, in order for our end product to be as precise as possible.

Health Insurance

HR continued to administer the following health insurance plans in 2023 for **approximately 1,442 Greene County employees, retirees and dependents**:

- 1) Empire BCBS Medicare Advantage Plan with Senior Rx
- 2) Empire BCBS Non-deductible PPO and EPO
- 3) Empire BCBS Deductible PPO and EPO

Note: The Teamsters Health and Hospital Fund Select Plan is managed by the Greene County Department of Highway and Solid Waste for Teamsters bargaining unit members.

Non-Deductible PPO and EPO plan for Retirees: The carrier for our retirees still on the active health insurance plan (not Medicare eligible) and part of the Non-Deductible group remained the same. The mail order pharmacy remained the same with CarelonRx. Prescription drugs remained consistent with 3-tier rate intervals of \$10/ \$30/ \$45. Mandatory mail order remained in place unless a member preferred to use CVS Pharmacy, Walmart Pharmacy and/or Greene Medical Arts Pharmacy for their maintenance medications and have medications prescribed as a 90-day refill. Office visit copays for Primary Care Physician and Specialist copays remained the same at \$20 per office visit.

Medicare Advantage Plan (MAP): The carrier for our MAP plan, Empire BlueCross BlueShield MediBlue Freedom PPO with Senior Rx remained the same. There were no plan changes. There were approximately 396 active members enrolled in this plan in 2023, an increase from the 371 active members enrolled in 2022.

HR continues to monitor when benefit eligible retirees and their benefit eligible dependents become qualified for Medicare Part B in order to appropriately transition them to the County's Medicare Advantage Plan. Notification is sent to retirees and spouses 2-3 months prior to their eligible date, to begin the process of applying/registering for Medicare. This can be a cumbersome process. The Employee Benefits Manager works with retirees and their eligible dependents to ensure as smooth a transition as possible.

Creditable Coverage Notices: HR sent annual compliance notices to all Medicare eligible actively working individuals and their dependents, Medicare eligible COBRA individuals and their dependents, Medicare eligible disabled individuals and their dependents, and retirees and dependents covered by the Greene County Prescription Drug Plan, informing them that the Greene County plan is a creditable plan so they need not join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. This resulted in a total of 523 mailings by 09/30/2022 for the 2023 plan year. The HR Department also fulfilled the on-line 2023 Notice of Disclosure to CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) requirement by 1/19/2024.

Health Insurance Buyout: HR continued to process applications and maintain records for the Health Insurance Buyouts for employees providing proof of alternative health care coverage. Total number of employees enrolled for 1/1/2023 was 108, but with dependent tracking added, the total number of enrollees in the County Health Insurance Buyout was 305, down from 114 and 327 in 2022. A buyout cap continued to be set for bargaining units, now including AFSCME. Rather than the health insurance buyout being tied to health insurance premiums which continually rise, the caps are fixed dollar amounts. The Teamsters do not have a buyout option.

Dental Insurance

The dental insurance carrier, MetLife Dental, remained the same for plan year 2023. Dental rates remained the same.

Vision Insurance

The Vision insurance carrier BlueView Vision remained the same. In the plan year 2023 we had approximately 1,385 members enrolled both active employees, retirees, spouses and dependent children under the age of 19 (unless full time students and then covered up to the age of 25), a slight decrease from the 1,392 members enrolled in 2022.

Open Enrollment

HR developed, coordinated and successfully reinvented our in-person Employee Benefits Fair after 3 years of virtual fairs due to COVID-19. Our open enrollment period ran the whole month of November. Our team sent advance notice to employees by email and through payroll, notifying them of our onsite and in-person Benefits fair, with 14 outside vendors, information takeaways, raffle prize giveaways and what to expect. We then began sending out information biweekly through email to all employees, including links for all

insurance/benefit related carriers for quick access. We posted all insurance and benefit related information with quick links on the Greene County employee portal as another method of outreach.

HR also processed all enrollment changes made during Open Enrollment for a January 1st start date.

Life Insurance

HR continued to oversee the life insurance plan through TheStandard for members of the Management/Confidential (M/C) group, including generating COBRA notices for those terminating employment. Our carrier remained the same and the retirement benefit remained in place. In the plan year 2023 we had approximately 134 active members and 14 enrollments in the retiree subgroup, compared to 125 active members and 13 in the retiree subgroup in 2022.

Flexible Spending Plan (FSA)

HR continued to administer the FSA in 2023. Enrollees enjoyed an approved increase in the 2023 annual medical FSA designation to \$3,050 from \$2,850. There was a total of 143 initial enrollments in 2023, a slight 4% decrease from the 149 initial enrollments in 2022. COBRA notices continued to be administered by HR, as applicable.

The Dependent Care FSA for 2023 the dependent care allowance continued to be \$5,000 if single or if married and filing jointly; \$2,500 if married and filing separately. There were a total of 7 enrollments in the Dependent care account, which remains the same as 2022.

COBRA Administration

HR routinely extends health, dental and vision insurance coverage under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) to covered employees and their family members when there is a “qualifying event” that would result in a loss of coverage under an employer’s plan (e.g., resignation, loss of dependent care status, divorce, death, etc.). The COBRA amount is equal to the full cost of the monthly insurance premiums. HR continues to use separate and distinct COBRA notices for the Flexible Spending Account (FSA) and Life Insurance Plan.

Premium Assistance Program

HR updated and posted a mandated notice on the employee portal, and sent the same to all departments for posting, regarding potential employee eligibility for a program available through New York State that can help those struggling to pay their insurance premiums. NYS uses funds from its Medicaid or Children’s Health Insurance Programs (CHIP) to help people who are eligible for employer-sponsored health coverage but need assistance in covering the cost of their health premiums. This premium assistance program became effective for local government employees on September 1, 2010.

NYS Statutory Disability Insurance

Greene County’s short term disability carrier, TheHartford, remained the same for the 2023 year. **A total of 21 claims were filed in 2023, a 61% increase from the 13 claims filed in both 2021 and 2022.**

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

As co-ADA Coordinators, the HR Director and County Attorney processed 7 requests for accommodation and 2 updates to existing accommodations in 2023, which was an increase of 133% over the previous year’s 3 requests but equal to the number of requests in 2021.

Employee Assistance Program

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a free, confidential service available to Greene County employees and their immediate family members that provides a way to cope with issues such as stress,

grief, anxiety, family/marital concerns, substance abuse and work-related issues. A report of aggregate data received for the 2023 plan year revealed utilization decreased in 2023.

	2021	2022	2023
Greene Co. Employees Utilization	1%	2.5%	0.5%

Note: 3% is slightly above the national average.

Paid Family Leave vs Family and Medical Leave Act

The County opted not to participate in the New York Paid Family Leave program, which became effective in 2018. The program is optional for public employers in New York State. There is currently no collective bargaining obligation to provide the Paid Family Leave benefit to Greene County employees. Employees are extended leave benefits under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Greene County Administrative Manual and the CBAs covering County employees.

The FMLA entitles eligible employees to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons with continuation of group health insurance coverage under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave. Eligible employees are entitled to:

- Twelve workweeks of leave in a 12-month period for:
 - the birth of a child and to care for the newborn child within one year of birth;
 - the placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement;
 - to care for the employee’s spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition;
 - a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job;
 - any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee’s spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on “covered active duty;” **or**
- Twenty-six workweeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness if the eligible employee is the service member’s spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin (military caregiver leave).

HR processed a total of 59 new requests for leave under the FMLA in 2023, which was an increase of approximately 9% from the 54 requests the previous year. As in 2022, **all** requests in 2023 met the criteria for the leave and were approved.

	2023	2022	Percentage + or -
Total FMLA Requests Approved	59	54	+9.25%
- Full-time	37	23	+60.9%
- Intermittent	22	31	-29.03%
FMLA Military Leave	0	0	0%

Workers’ Compensation

HR continued to guide claimants and department representatives through the Workers’ Compensation claims process, transmit paperwork to the County’s Third-Party Administrator (TPA), and follow-up as needed. In January 2024, HR completed the SH900 and SH900.1 forms for 2023, distributed them to County departments in compliance with posting mandates, and sent copies to the NYS Department of Labor. HR also maintained records of all existing and new work-related injuries and illnesses that occurred throughout the 2023 calendar year. In 2023, Greene County had the following experience:

- 0 deaths (no change from 2022)
- 65 cases of missed work (161 cases reported in 2022)
- 0 job transfer or restriction cases (1 case reported in 2022)
- 11 other reportable cases (8 cases reported in 2022)

These occurrences resulted in 76 total incidents reported for 2023, versus 170 reported in 2022. Due to the national COVID-19 pandemic, 59 of the 76 incidents reported were related to COVID-19 (raising the number of incidents significantly). It should be noted that although the number of incidents rose related to COVID-19, no claims filed related to COVID-19 were approved for payment.

Unemployment Claims

HR and the County Attorney’s office processed all claims for unemployment insurance benefits in 2023. Beginning in 2021, a result of the pandemic was a huge increase in the number of fraudulent claims received by the County, and in some cases notifications to the employees directly. We were very pleased that 2023 saw zero inquiries submitted for fraudulent claims.

	2023	2022	2021	Percentage + or -
Total Unemployment Claims Received	12	10	66	+20%
- Legitimate	12	8	13	+50%
- Fraudulent	0	2	53	-100%

Retirement: New York State Voluntary Defined Contribution Program

The HR Department continued to offer this alternative to membership in the NYS and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS) to all eligible new hires. (General eligibility: Non-union employees hired on or after 7/1/13 that make \$75,000 or more and are not already enrolled in the NYSLRS.) Defined contribution plans are retirement savings vehicles that provide benefits “defined” by employer and employee contributions to the plan and the investment earnings on those contributions. Participants are responsible for managing the investments in their account. Their retirement benefits are based on the success of their investments. This is different from the NYSLRS which is a defined benefit plan that provides a fixed and predictable lifetime monthly income at retirement. **In 2023, there were no employees who elected to participate in this alternative program, no change from 2022.**

Compliance Postings

HR conducted its annual audit of federal and state employment posting mandates and distributed new and updated postings to all departments at that time and as required throughout the year.

HR continued with our goal in 2023 of ensuring all department bulletin boards are fully up to date with regard to compliance posting. Working together with the Safety Officer, an in-person audit was conducted of each department’s boards, including satellite locations. Once the audit was completed by the Safety Officer, he contacted HR to receive any missing materials from department boards. Those materials were taken by the Safety Officer to the location and placed on the board bringing all department boards up to date.

Employee Wellness

Wellness Committee: Unfortunately, the Wellness Committee’s meeting schedule continued to be on hold due to staffing levels in HR and Public Health (the two main departments involved in the Wellness committee). One of the goals for the HR team is to revamp the Wellness Committee in 2024 and offer new programs to County employees.

Be Well Incentive Program: The *Be Well Incentive* program was in full effect throughout the 2023 year. This incentive program allows employees who had physicals completed to receive a \$25 gift card. The incentive program is based on an idea the County Administrator has been promoting for some time for all active employees enrolled in the County's primary health insurance plans. For 2023, there were **199** employees who participated in the program, an **approximate 30% increase** from the 152 participants in 2022.

Operation Affirmation: This Wellness program continued with full force and tons of enthusiasm from employees! The program focuses on the importance of overall wellbeing including mental health. HR set up a bulletin board titled "Appreciation Station" located on the 3rd floor of 411 Main Street. The board is used as an opportunity for employees to acknowledge each other. Submissions are collected via email to hr@greenecountyny.gov or for those who don't have access to email, there is a drop box for anonymous submissions located beneath the board on the 3rd floor. The person submitting the affirmation remains anonymous however their name is entered into a monthly raffle drawing. An email is sent to all staff on the first workday of each month with the names of those acknowledged for the previous month, a picture of the board (with a new theme each month), and a link to the HR website where each individual "shout out" is posted. HR's goal was to make this positive, uplifting and cheerful, while recognizing the employees who shine through their hard work and dedication to their job. We have received nothing but positive feedback on this program and you can see from the numbers below, the employees are enjoying acknowledging their coworkers.

- January – 21 acknowledgements
- February – 7 acknowledgements
- March – 12 acknowledgements
- April – 17 acknowledgements
- May– 32 acknowledgements
- June – 16 acknowledgements
- July – 16 acknowledgements
- August – 21 acknowledgements
- September – 17 acknowledgements
- October – 16 acknowledgements
- November – 15 acknowledgements
- December – 12 acknowledgements

Thank you to the amazing Greene County employees who have shown their appreciation for each other. The HR team continues to truly enjoy this program. In addition to positive "shout outs" we have incorporated informative and educational information related to each month. For example, acknowledging historical events or medical awareness initiatives that may have occurred in each given month.

Miscellaneous: Assistance continued throughout 2023 in helping employees enroll in the telemedicine program through Empire BlueCross BlueShield, and travel size first aid kits continued to be dispersed to all new employees participating in the County's primary health insurance plans during 2023.

Onsite Events

- Human Resources & Civil Service set up an informational table at the Greene County Historic Point during the Veteran's Day Event. It was an all-day event with many vendors and great opportunities for career outreach and recruitment for Greene County.

- HR organized and implemented visits from NYS Deferred Compensation by scheduling (2) all day events in Catskill at 411 Main Street and also in Cairo at Greene County Mental Health and Emergency Services to offer one on one sessions with employees to plan/prepare for retirement.
- HR organized and implemented visits from AFLAC by scheduling (3) all day events in Catskill at 411 Main Street and also in Cairo at Greene County Mental Health and Emergency Services to offer one on one sessions with employees.

Blood Borne Pathogens

The Blood Borne Pathogens committee resumed their meeting schedule in 2023. HR continued to work with the Public Health Department and the Safety Officer to coordinate and track training for County employees in 2023.

LABOR AND EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Union Contract Negotiations

The HR Director maintains an active role on the management teams for union contract negotiations, including assisting with development of the County's proposals and analyzing the proposals of each union. The HR Director is also responsible for preparation of the employee data sheets for each bargaining unit, including hire and longevity dates, leave time accrued and taken, overtime earned, health insurance enrollment information, etc. Upon ratification of each contract, the HR Director assists in checking the final document for accuracy, works with the Payroll Department to establish the pay schedules, and implements new or amended terms of each CBA, as required.

AFSCME: The current CBA is not due to expire until December 31, 2025.

- MOA – approved by the union and adopted by the Legislature on May 11, 2023, to implement summer hours for the Highway Department of 6:00 AM to 4:30 PM, four days per week effective June 5, 2023 through September 1, 2023.
- MOA – signed on July 5, 2023, to implement use of the title Motor Equipment Operator Trainee and to establish the parameters for Greene County to provide training, free of charge to employees, for this title so the employees can obtain their Commercial Driver's License (CDL). The MOA also establishes the repayment of the cost of the training if the employee does not pass the exam for their CDL or leaves County employment prior to completing four years of employment following the conclusion of the employee's participation in the training.

Corrections Unit (Council 82): The negotiating teams for this bargaining unit began meeting in December 2021 during which the parties exchanged proposals. Additional meetings were held throughout 2022 and on August 2, 2022 the parties signed an MOA that was brought for a union vote on September 16, 2022. Unfortunately, the union voted down the MOA in an 18-4 vote. On November 7, 2022, a revised MOA was presented by the union to the County and negotiations continued. The parties met on March 2, 2023 and again April 11, 2023 when a further revised MOA was signed. The union ratified the MOA on April 17, 2023, and the legislature ratified the MOA on May 17, 2023. The CBA was signed by the parties on July 7, 2023, for the term January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2025. Noteworthy provisions of the contract that were negotiated were:

- Retroactive payments for 2022 and 2023
- Pay rate increases as follows:
 - 4.0% increase effective and retroactive to 1/1 – 12/1/2022

- \$2,000 added to the base salary, plus a 4% increase effective and retroactive to 1/1 – 12/31/2023
- 3% increase and condensing steps 8-10 to 6-8 effective 1/1 – 12-31-2024
- 2.5% increase effective 1/1 – 12/31/2025
- Health Insurance Contribution: All employees move to a 12.5% contribution rate.
- Shift Differential:
 - C-Line = increase from \$0.75 to \$1.00/hour
 - A-Line = increase from \$1.00 to \$1.50/hour
- Longevity: Effective January 1, 2023, increase to longevity amounts and the addition of new intervals
- Change to the amounts paid to future employees for buyout option on health insurance

CSEA General Unit 7000: The negotiating teams for this bargaining unit began meeting on November 17, 2023, during which the parties exchanged proposals. The parties met again on December 18, 2023, but due to scheduling conflicts and the holidays, subsequent meetings could not be held until early in 2024. More to come for this unit in the 2024 Annual Report.

CSEA Dispatch and Probation Unit 7002: The negotiating teams for this bargaining unit began meeting on November 1, 2023, during which the parties exchanged proposals. Additional meetings were held on November 6th, November 30th and on December 13th at which time a verbal agreement was reached by the parties. Due to scheduling conflicts and the holidays, the parties had to schedule a subsequent meeting to review the written terms of the MOA for early January of 2024. More to come for this unit in the 2024 Annual Report.

Deputy Sheriff's (Council 82): The negotiating teams for this bargaining unit began meeting on December 9, 2022, during which the parties exchanged proposals. Due to scheduling conflicts, the parties were unable to meet again until January 18, 2023. At this meeting a verbal agreement was reached by the parties. On January 24, 2023, the parties signed an MOA that was brought to union members on January 29, 2023, and ratified. On February 15, 2023, the legislature ratified the MOA. The CBA was signed by the parties on May 26, 2023, for the term January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2025. Noteworthy provisions of the contract that were negotiated were:

- Pay rate increases as follows:
 - \$2,500 added to the base salary, plus 4.0% for 1/1 – 12/31/2023
 - 4.0% for 1/1 – 12/31/2024
 - 3.0% for 1/1 – 12/31/2025
- Deletion of steps 2 and 3 from the Sergeant and Investigator salary schedule
- Change to the employee's contribution to health insurance rates. Per the County's proposal, all those contributing 0% to health insurance remain at 0%. All other employees move to a 12.5% contribution rate effective one month after ratification of CBA by all parties
- Change to the amounts paid to future employees for buyout option on health insurance
- Change from 75% to 80% for the payout of sick accruals at the time of separation from service
- Increase to the shift differential effective 1/1/2023: new amount is \$1.75/hour
- Addition of language to clarify how Compensatory Time is accrued and utilized – this language was added to the CBA to coincide with the current practice of the Sheriff's Office

Teamsters (Solid Waste Management): The negotiating teams for this bargaining unit began meeting on November 1, 2023, during which the parties exchanged proposals. The parties met again on November 20, 2023, during which a "handshake" agreement was made. On December 8, 2023, the parties signed an MOA that was brought to the union members on December 11, 2023 and ratified. The legislature ratified

the MOA on December 20, 2023. The CBA was signed by the parties on March 18, 2024, for the term January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2026. Noteworthy provisions of the contract that were negotiated were:

- Pay rate increases as follows:
 - \$2,500 added to the base salary, plus 4.0% for 1/1 – 12/31/2024
 - 3.0% for 1/1 – 12/31/2025
 - 3.0% for 1/1 – 12/31/2026
- Change to the employee's contribution to health insurance rates. Per the County's proposal, all those contributing 0% to health insurance remain at 0%. All other employees move to a 12.5% contribution rate effective the following month after ratification of CBA by all parties
- Addition of definition of "qualifications" for promotions, filling of vacancies and work assignments
- Establishment of parameters for mandatory training
- Establishment of Labor/Management Safety & Health Committee
- Incorporation of June 28, 2023 MOA regarding required staffing on a designated or observed holiday or the day after a holiday at facilities that have a regular scheduled day off
- Modification of paid holidays to eliminate Election Day and add Juneteenth

During negotiations, the parties also settled a long-standing grievance regarding required staffing during a declared emergency by modifying the CBA language and entering into a Stipulation of Settlement signed by the parties on December 18, 2023.

UPSEU (Nurses): The CBA for UPSEU expired on December 31, 2022. Due to the negotiating teams' schedules, the first meeting to exchange proposals could not be scheduled until January 10, 2023, during which the parties exchanged proposals. The parties met again on January 20th, January 30th, and February 16, 2023, during which the parties signed an MOA. On March 10, 2023, the union ratified the MOA and the legislature ratified the MOA on April 19, 2023. The CBA was signed by the parties on September 12, 2023, for the term January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2025. Noteworthy provisions of the contract that were negotiated were:

- Pay rate increases as follows:
 - \$2,500 added to the base salary, plus a 4% increase effective and retroactive to 1/1 – 12/31/2023
 - 4% increase and condensing steps 8-10 to 6-8 effective 1/1 – 12-31-2024
 - 3% increase effective 1/1 – 12/31/2025
- Establishment of a new hire signing bonus with half paid after 6 months of employment and the second half paid after one full year of employment. This provision includes a repayment clause if the employee does not stay employed by Public Health for a period of 3 years.
- Change to the employee's contribution to health insurance rates. Per the County's proposal, all those contributing 0% to health insurance remain at 0%. All other employees move to a 12.5% contribution rate effective the following month after ratification of CBA by all parties
- Modification of the Experiential Differential to allow newly hired employees to be placed at a step equivalent to one-half of their verifiable experience
- Increase to the Education Differential
- Increase to Longevity
- Modification of Certification Differential to clarify applicable certification

Contract Grievances

The HR Director was present at all of the Step 2 grievance meetings at the request of the County Administrator. A total of 8 on-going or new grievances were processed in 2023, which is up slightly from the 7 processed in 2022. These actions resulted in the following outcomes:

- Denied at Step 2. Demand for Arbitration by union. Stipulation of Settlement reached prior to arbitration – 1
- Denied at Step 2. Settled at Labor/Management meeting – 1
- Denied at Step 1. No further action by union – 3
- Settled at Step 2 – 2
- Denied at Step 2. Stipulation of Settlement reached during negotiation of the CBA – 1

Labor-Management Meetings

The HR Director participated with the County Administrator and/or several department heads in labor-management meetings to discuss a number of department-specific policy development issues and grievance-related matters. Many issues were settled with clear communication and mutual agreements.

Management Team Support

The HR Director continued to be regularly engaged with department heads and supervisors in a consultation and support role regarding staffing and employee relations matters. This continued to be vitally important in 2023 as we battled ongoing recruitment and retention issues while trying to maintain essential services to Greene County residents.

Disciplinary Actions

The HR Director assisted department heads in processing **15** new or continuing disciplinary actions in 2023. This represents a slight increase in disciplines from the 13 in 2022. The following is a breakdown of 2022's actions:

- Stipulation of Settlement – counseling letter and copy of settlement agreement w/ original Notice of Disciplining in personnel file, required training and 5-day suspension held in abeyance until 9/1/2024 – 1
- 30 calendar day unpaid suspension – 1
- Stipulation in lieu of discipline – Letter of Reprimand and demotion – 1
- Notice of Discipline – at Step 2 settled on loss of 3 vacation days and retraining – 1
- Stipulation in lieu of discipline – 2 day unpaid suspension – 1
- Notice of Discipline – Letter of Reprimand – 4
- Stipulation in lieu of discipline – loss of 5 vacation days, with 3 taken immediately and 2 held in abeyance for 6 months – 1
- Resignation in lieu of discipline – 1
- Referral to Employee Assistance Program in lieu of discipline – 1
- Termination – 3

Workplace Investigations, Administrative Proceedings and Hearings

The HR Director serves as the County's Sexual Harassment Compliance Officer, the Discriminatory Harassment Compliance Officer, the American with Disabilities Act Co-coordinator in partnership with the County Attorney and is a member of the Workplace Violence Hazard Reduction team. In these capacities, the HR Director participated in a number of workplace investigations, administrative proceedings, and hearings.

Employee Awards

HR produced the annual employee awards event on behalf of the Legislature in collaboration with the County Administrator's office. Pins and certificates were conferred within the departments and a ceremony was held prior to the June Legislature meeting to announce the Employees of the Year and Chairman's Award Winner. In 2023, an employee from the Probation Department was awarded Employee of the Year

recognition and the Chairman's Award was given to an employee in the Buildings & Grounds Department. HR ensured that the "Employee of the Year" sign was placed in a designated parking space for the winner.

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

HR coordinated the following on-line classes in 2023, and continued to administer a database to track employee participation in County-sponsored compliance (i.e., sexual harassment and discrimination harassment training, workplace violence prevention, Active Shooter, HIPAA, Title VI, etc.) and other training:

Sexual Harassment Prevention

In 2023, the HR department continued to facilitate compliance with the annual sexual harassment prevention training and related mandates as set forth in the 2018 New York State Budget. As was the case in 2022 HR provided the mandated training in an on-line format for all Greene County staff members and elected officials in 2023. HR staff utilized a known resource with whom the County already had an affiliation that offers access to its entire database of on-line classes and related tools at no cost.

NOTE: NYS Human Rights Law also protects those providing services in the workplace from sexual harassment. Therefore, the policies and an acknowledgement form were also made available by the County Attorney's Office to contractors, subcontractors, vendors, consultants or others providing services to Greene County. These documents can be found in the Legal Notices section of the Greene County website.

Workplace Violence Prevention Training

The HR team took over coordination of the mandated Workplace Violence Prevention Training from the County Attorney's office in 2021. Utilizing the on-line platform, this training was assigned with the Sexual Harassment Prevention training giving employees the opportunity to complete both trainings at their convenience.

Through persistence and guidance to liaisons in each Greene County Department, the following rates of completion were achieved in 2023 for the 569 employees enrolled in the mandated trainings:

- NYS Discrimination and Harassment Training: 503 completed
- Discrimination and Harassment Policy Acknowledgement: 549 completed
- Sexual Harassment Policy Acknowledgement: 430 completed
- Workplace Violence Prevention Training: 546 completed
- Workplace Violence Policy Acknowledgement: 546 completed
- Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act for Municipalities *NEW*: 459 completed

HR's goal is to continuously strive to achieve 100% completion rate for these mandated trainings.

New York State Association of Personnel and Civil Service Officers (NYSAPCSO) 2023 Annual Conference

The HR Director attended the NYSAPCSO Annual Conference held in Saratoga Springs, NY from May 7-10, 2023. The topics covered during the conference were:

- Updates from NYS Civil Service: Civil Service Administration, Special Projects/Initiatives
- Recruitment/Advertisement tools for Civil Service
- Implicit Bias
- NYS Civil Service Testing Services Update
- Training & Experience Exams

- First Amendment Audits
- Position Classification
- “Town Hall” Meeting with the NYS Civil Service Commissioner

In addition to the valuable information obtained from the various sessions held, the HR Director was able to network with her peers, which is the most valuable part of this conference as we continue to move through uncertain times necessitating new and innovative policies and procedures.

HR Team Training

The HR team participated in a number of professional development trainings throughout 2023. Topics included:

- HR Strategies
 - 4 strategies to increase employee retention
 - Economic State of the Counties
 - The ADA and Respectfully Engaging People with Disabilities
- Recruitment
 - Capital Region Virtual Career Fair Live Training
 - Headhunter zoom meetings for Public Health vacancies
 - Key Considerations for Recruiting and Hiring Job Seekers with Disabilities
- Safety:
 - Fire Extinguisher Training for All Staff
 - Day of Safety – sponsored by the Safety & Health Council of the Hudson Valley
 - Safer Jobsites
 - Preventing Injuries in the Workplace
 - Question, Persuade, Refer – Skills and Resources to Help an Employee in Distress
 - Utilizing Technology and A.I to Enhance your Safety Program
 - Safety & Health Systems: Empowering Employees
- NYMIR Training
 - Updating Discrimination Harassment Training for 2024
 - Updating Workplace Violence Training for 2024
 - NeoGov Training Webinar for “Administrators” Refreshers
 - Entering new hires into NeoGov
 - Deactivating employees
 - Entering/tracking training material
- New York State Retirement
 - NYSLRS Step 3: Instructor Led Training/Data Prep zoom
 - NYSLRS Gold Cert Meeting
- Employee Benefits
 - Compliance
 - Affordable Care Act Information reporting 1094/1095
 - Affordable Care Act Penalties
 - Affordable Care Act W-2 Reporting
 - Benefit Plan Disclosure requirements

- Health Care Changes
 - Controlling the Surge: How to effectively predict & Manage High cost claimants
 - The future of digital health & what it means for your workforce
- Flexible Spending Account
 - How HR can help employees use their FSA funds.
- Leadership
 - Own Your Growth: Women’s Leadership Series
 - Thriving Together: Lessons in Resilience and Growth
 - Supervisory Training – Corrective Action
- Civil Service
 - Implementation of the HELP Program

LOOKING AHEAD

The HR team is always striving to improve the services provided to Greene County’s employees, retirees and members of the public while streamlining our procedures. Looking ahead to 2024, our team has set the following goals:

1. Digitization:

- a. Continued goal for 2023 into 2024 is to digitize all closed roster records.
- b. In March 2022, the Legislature approved the creation and maintenance of a new digital Civil Service database. This will allow the HR team to process applications digitally, as well as Civil Service exam results and will eliminate a large amount of unnecessary paper records. The HR/Civil Service Department has began entering in all demographical information on employees. With our next goal of uploading all job specifications and then roster records for each Greene County employee first and then work on all other municipalities covered by Greene County Civil Service including School Districts, Towns, Villages, Libraries and special districts including the IDA and Soil & Water. As the team works out any issues with the program, we will expand use to outside appointing authorities. The final stage will be the electronic application and fee payment process.
- c. Continuing review and updating of all active job specifications with the end goal of having them available on HR’s webpage.
- d. Updating the Civil Service Rules for Greene County and the Greene County Civil Service Commission Rules Appendices so they can be placed on HR’s webpage.
- e. Working with the Records Management Director towards Greene County’s common goal of the digitization of all records.

2. Training:

- a. Continue training for all employees in accordance with NYS law and train as many staff as possible in an on-line format with a goal of 100% completion rate.
- b. Work with the Safety Officer to coordinate mandatory Occupational Safety & Health - Mandated Training - Active Shooter.

3. **EAP:** Think creatively of ways to rejuvenate our efforts to increase utilization of this valuable resource for employee well-being. Work with our vendor to update material and notify employees on a monthly basis of the resources available to them.

4. **Wellness Activities:** HR had to extend into 2024 our goal of working with the County Administrator, the County's insurance broker and the Wellness Committee on overhauling the program, focusing on an effort to provide activities that appeal to a wider variety of employees. Spoiler alert, the HR team has already implemented new programs in 2024 and has scheduled the first meeting of the revamped Wellness Committee for late in April.
5. **Civil Service Payroll Certifications:** A continued goal is to bring all appointing authorities up to date on their payroll certifications. With a new HR team member assigned to this task, we will work closely with the appointing authority to compare records and identify missing information, including on-site visits to the appointing authority if needed.

As the HR Director, I cannot express my gratitude enough for the HR team and all they were able to accomplish this year. This was an exceptionally busy year with impending changes to benefit carriers and all of the changes to CBAs while continuing to battle the turnover in the staff of the team. However, through it all, we continued to provide needed services to the residents of Greene County. We look forward to all that 2024 will bring as we continue to conquer challenges while improving on our success through innovative thinking and improved efficiency.