

Personnel Department 2023 Annual Report

Narrative:

Daily activities in the Personnel Office primarily involve civil service administration, fringe benefits administration and labor relations matters. For 2023, much time has been devoted to recruitment, examination administration, Civil Service HELP Program, reclassification requests, employee benefits consultations, contract negotiations, and new hire orientations due to the uptick in retirements and resignations. Unfortunately, the office had a provisional rate of 14%, up from the previous year by 1%. The continuous turnover, retirements, and the NYS Civil Service Department delays in the testing system make a lower provisional rate a challenge.

The Personnel Department is mandated to provide Civil Service administration to all County Departments as well as the Towns (9), Villages (6), Schools (5) and Special Districts (3) within Tioga County. This means in addition to all County employees, the hiring of Custodians, Bus Drivers, Food Service Helpers, Secretaries, etc., at the schools and Typists, Equipment Operators, Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators, etc., in the Towns and Villages, as well as EMTs in the Fire Districts and Soil & Water Conservation District employees are all overseen by this office. In all, 1502 classified civil service positions exist amongst all public entities in Tioga County, an increase of 102 from 2022.

Highlights:

The Personnel Department has a lot of new faces again in 2023! The Benefit Manager, and the Sr. Civil Service Technician, both retired. We promoted from within to fill a Civil Service Technician Trainee, which led to hiring a new Civil Service Assistant (Christie Farnham). Our Civil Service Technician (Kelly Quick) was promoted to Sr. Civil Service Technician.

In June, our Civil Service Technician Trainee (Karen Weston) graduated from the Civil Service Institute.

Throughout 2023, the office administered 100 different civil service examinations, and 255 candidates participated in those exams.

In 2023, NYS invited us to participate in the Hiring for Emergency Limited Placement Program (HELP). The HELP has helped remove the barriers that come with having to take a Civil Service exam to get a permanent position. This program helps address the statewide workforce shortage, and our hopes are that NYS will open it up to all titles – not just health & safety titles.

The Personnel Department administers the Tioga County Self-insured Workers' Compensation Plan, in which all Towns and Villages participate as well as the County; the annual budget for this program was \$1 million in 2023, appropriated between all the municipalities.

The collective bargaining agreement with the Tioga County Law Enforcement Association expired December 31, 2020, and the negotiations began in the Fall of 2021. After declaring an impasse in December 2022, and going to arbitration, a successor agreement was finalized in the Summer of 2023.

The collective bargaining agreement with the Tioga County Corrections Association expired on December 31, 2022, and negotiations began in the late Fall of 2022, a successor agreement was finalized in the Summer of 2023.

Throughout 2023, we had 16 retirements, 64 resignations, 4 removals, and a termination. As was true for all employers, recruiting still proves to be challenging throughout 2023 for all positions, with an average of over 39 full time vacancies being carried at any time, which is down from the previous year by 4. Staffing shortages have resulted in several areas, compounded by COVID related absences.

The I4A program collaborated again with the Employee Recognition program to offer an Employee Recognition & Appreciation Week – September 18th-20th, to thank employees for their dedication and service throughout the year. Pin ceremonies were held for all departments, and lunch was provided by Country Boys Kitchen.

The Employee Recognition Program held its annual recognition ceremonies and luncheon on September 28th, at Donoli's, which recognized 1 employee for their 25 years, 2 employees for 30 years, 1 employee for 35 years, 1 employee for 40 years, and 1 employee for 45 years of service to Tioga County.