

**RESOLUTION**

**ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Public Works Committee -  
Supervisor Mary Mawhinney  
INITIATED BY



3/5/2024  
DATE DRAFTED

**Updating Wage Grid Implementation Criteria Related to Positions at the Department of Public Works**

**WHEREAS**, in April 2023, the County Board approved a new wage grade to be effective October 1, 2023, and set criteria for implementation; and

**WHEREAS**, one such criterion was to place staff on the first step on the grid that does not result in a decrease in pay as compared to their current compensation; and

**WHEREAS**, included in the implementation of the wage grid, the previous position titles of Highway Worker and Heavy Truck Driver were combined into one position title called Highway Technician I; and

**WHEREAS**, due to factors including the spread between steps and each employee's previous compensation, and under the rules governing implementation that require employees to be placed at the first step on the wage grid that does not result in a decrease in pay, 12 of these employees that were previously Highway Workers were placed on a lower step than Heavy Truck Drivers with similar years of service; and

**WHEREAS**, while consistent with the implementation rules approved by the County Board, this unforeseen consequence is inconsistent with the spirit of providing consistent wages for staff performing like work at their years of service level; and

**WHEREAS**, implementing this resolution will result in an annual increased cost totaling \$29,004.96 for 2024. Additionally, retro pay for the time frame between October 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023 will result in an increased cost of \$3,069.84. This results in a total cost impact of \$32,074.80.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Rock County Board of Supervisors duly assembled this 28th day of March, 2024, does hereby update the wage grid implementation criteria to place employees as follows: employees in previously titled Highway Worker positions will be placed at a step in Pay Grade G equal to the step occupied by employees in previously titled Heavy Truck Driver positions with the same number of years of service without resulting in a decrease in compensation for any employee.

FISCAL NOTE:

The cost of implementing this resolution can be absorbed in the 2024 budget and will need to be added to future budgets.

Sherry Oja  
Finance Director

LEGAL NOTE:

The County Board is authorized to take this action pursuant to § 59.22(2), Wis. Stats.

Richard Greenlee  
Corporation Counsel

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:

Prior to the implementation of the current wage grid, the position of Highway Worker was in Classification III and Heavy Truck Driver was in Classification III(C), both in the 1077 wage grid. The separate classification ranges for these positions were collectively bargained prior to 2011 Act 10 under the agreement that the Heavy Truck Driver position was a more difficult job and should earn more than Highway Worker position. The difference between these two positions at Step 1 of each pay range was 20 cents per hour. The relationship between these pay ranges is shown in the excerpt from the 1077 wage grid below.

			Start	6 Mos	5 Years*	10 Years*	15 Years*	20 Years*
Classification III	1/1/2023		23.71	24.99	25.34	25.70	26.78	26.99
Highway Worker								
Classification III(A)	1/1/2023		23.71	24.99	25.34	25.70	26.78	26.99
Classification III(B)	1/1/2023		23.71	24.99	25.34	25.70	26.78	26.99
Classification III(C)	1/1/2023		23.91	25.16	25.52	25.86	26.97	27.19
Heavy Truck Driver								

As part of the development of the current wage grid, McGrath reviewed all positions to determine whether they were performing similar duties and could be consolidated into the same pay grade or title. Overall, 45 positions that were previously in separate pay ranges were consolidated into 14 new titles. While the majority of these positions were administrative, clerical, and Human Services positions, Highway Worker and Heavy Truck Driver positions were also consolidated into the new Highway Tech position, in Pay Grade G.

As shown in the excerpt above, and unlike the current wage grid, the spread between pay ranges, the spread between steps, and the number of years to advance between steps in the old wage grids was not uniform. As a result, due to the wage grid implementation rules under which all staff were placed at the next step that gave them a wage increase, Heavy Truck Drivers, who were already making more than Highway Workers with the same years of seniority, may have received a larger wage increase than some Highway Workers.

This resolution would advance 12 former Highway Workers one step in Pay Grade G so that their hourly rates of pay are equal to former Heavy Truck Drivers with equal years of seniority. If the County Board chooses to adopt this resolution, it should explicitly do so with the understanding that this action is predicated on the fact that the Department of Public Works is unique in that it has only hired new staff in positions on the former 1077 pay grid at step one for many years. Consequently, applying the criteria in this resolution only to DPW staff is relatively straightforward and could be justified as making the new wage grid fairer for staff with the same title (now Highway Tech) with the same number of years of seniority.

However, over the years, the majority of County departments have not always hired all new staff at step one of their respective pay ranges, due largely to competition for staff. For example, the Human Services Department may have hired a therapist with 15 years of experience with another county at a higher step to account for their years of experience. Because of this practice, there are numerous staff with less years of service with the County who are at a higher step than someone in the same position with more years of service, whether or not their position was combined in the current wage grid. As a result, the placement criteria in this resolution could not be equitably applied to all County staff. If the placement criteria in this resolution were applied to all County staff with consolidated new titles, more than 200 staff would have to be advanced some number of steps in their respective pay grades to be paid at the same wage rate as any other staff with the same title with the same number of years of service with Rock County. This would cost about \$1.1 million in additional wage costs alone.

The Public Works Department has calculated that the \$32,074.80 cost of this resolution, which includes \$3,069.84 in back pay to October 1, 2023, when the new wage grid was implemented, can be absorbed in the Departments budget due to a re-estimation and careful management of overtime that will be needed in 2024.

Josh Smith  
County Administrator

**Committee Action**

Public Works Committee

Public Works Committee recommended this resolution for approval by a unanimous voice vote.

County Board Staff Committee

County Board Staff Committee recommended this resolution for approval by a unanimous voice vote.  
Supervisor Beaver was absent.