

## **Personnel Department 2021 Annual Report**

### Highlights:

The collective bargaining agreement with CSEA expired December 31, 2020 but instead of negotiating a new contract, the CSEA employee group agreed to rollover the terms of the 2018-2020 contract for one year with no salary increases and no increase in health insurance contributions for 2021; this afforded the County time to gain a better understanding of the financial impacts the pandemic was having on County finances. The Management Confidential group agreed to the same. This cooperative attitude was greatly appreciated by the Legislature.

The collective bargaining agreement with the Tioga County Law Enforcement Association expired December 31, 2020 as well. Negotiations began in Fall 2021 for a successor agreement.

Scammers were busy in early 2021 trying to file bogus Unemployment claims while the enhanced benefit was still available. The Personnel Department collaborated with the Employment Center to contact the affected employees' whose identities were compromised, advising them of the steps necessary to report to NYS Dept of Labor that the claim was bogus and also to report the identity theft. Over 50 bogus claims were reported.

Throughout 2021 we had 17 retirements and 49 resignations. As was true for all employers, recruiting proved to be a challenge throughout 2021 for all positions, with an average of over 40 vacancies being carried at any time. Staffing shortages have resulted in several areas, compounded by COVID related absences.

The NYS Civil Service Department gradually resumed operations during 2021 and rescheduled civil service exams postponed from 2020. By end of 2021, all postponed exams were offered and the testing system is back on schedule.

Tioga County opted to participate in a RFP process initiated by the Broome County Purchasing Alliance for the group purchase of Medicare Advantage Plans for Medicare-eligible retirees. The end result was a change in coverage as of January 2022 that provides equal to or better than coverage and will also save Tioga County \$770,000 in premiums in 2022, plus qualify for approximately \$700,000 in Shared Services reimbursement from New York State.

Legalization by NYS of the recreational use of marijuana required update and reinforcement of policies.

The Institute for Advancement training program offered supplemental classes during 2021, including a Real Colors/Real Solutions session for Department Heads, and also a speaker on the topic of *Attracting Tomorrow's Talent with Today's Leaders*, which focused on generational differences. The I4A program collaborated with the Employee Recognition program to offer two employee appreciation events to thank employees for their dedication and service throughout the pandemic, when many other counties remained closed or worked only remotely long after Tioga County employees were called back to work onsite. The Employee Recognition Program was also able to resume its annual recognition ceremonies and luncheon, which had been cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic.