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## Task Force on the Modernization of the State Personnel Management System

### Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 9/19/2023, 10:00am-11:30am (Meeting #3)

**Location:** Web: Microsoft Teams Meeting

**Video Conferencing:** [Meeting Recording Link](#)

**Presentation link:** [Link to Presentations](#)

**Members Present:** Secretary Tisha Edwards, Chair  
Secretary Serena McIlwain, Member\*  
Dianna Rosborough, Member\*\*  
Cindy Kollner, Member  
Erin McMullen, Member \*\*\*  
Rianna Matthews-Brown, Member  
Aaron Jacobs, Member  
Gwen Schindler, Member  
Tara Nelson, Member  
Denise Gilmore, Member\*\*\*\*  
Jerry Smith, Member  
Rose Wertz, Member  
Joel Martinez, Member  
Kimberly Prescott, Member

\*June Dwyer substituted for Secretary Serena McIlwain from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).

\*\* Lisette Smith substituted for Dianna Rosborough from the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT).

\*\*\*Jordan Fisher substituted for Erin McMullen from the Maryland Department of Health (MDH)

\*\*\*\* Stuart Katzenberg substituted for Denise Gilmore from the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

**Members Absent:** Secretary Serena McIlwain, Dianna Rosborough, Denise Gilmore, Erin McMullen

**Staff Present:** Raquel Coombs  
Laura-Vykol Gray  
Max Pierce

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**Presenters:** Mark Townend, Director of Recruitment and Examination Division, Department of Budget and Management  
Joel Martinez, Director of Human Resources, Amazon.

**Call to Order:** Secretary Tisha Edwards, Chair, called the third meeting of the Task Force on the Modernization of the State Personnel Management System (SPMS) to order at 10:00am via Microsoft Teams web video conferencing. The Chair introduced herself and the members of the Task Force and welcomed all participants and members to the meeting. The Chair reminded all attendees that this meeting is being recorded and introduced Mark Townend. The Chair asked for the body to focus on the applicant experience and how do we get people through the hiring process quickly.

**Old Business:** None.

**New Business:**

**Presentation on Recruitment Practices in the SPMS System:** Mark Townend, Department of Budget and Management's (DBM) Director of the Recruitment and Examination Division (RED) presented on the State's key priorities in the hiring process, identified known issues, and went more in depth around how preference points currently work in the State recruitment process. He also gave a workflow overview comparing the candidate and hiring manager experience during the current process. The Chair opened the floor to discussion.

**Task Force Discussion:** Stuart Katzenberg asked for clarification that we are only examining the SPMS process and not the MDOT process. Kimberly Prescott asked for clarification on unintended consequences of the point system. The Chair asked Mr. Townend to go into further detail around the point system. Mr. Townend explained that candidates are first reviewed to be qualified or not based on the job's minimum qualifications. Qualified applicants are given a base score (70) and then all supplemental/preference points are added to this base score to determine the best, better, and qualified randomized score bands. Mr. Townend further explained that supplemental points can elevate candidates between the different score bands. Gwen Schindler clarified that the State can use selective qualifications to further filter candidates who will be the best fit

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for the job. The Chair then asked Mr. Townend for further clarification on what pieces of this ranking process are automated and which are manual. The Chair further stressed the importance of getting high quality candidates to the interview stage. Tara Nelson explained that the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services uses the streamlined hiring process and phone screening metrics when needing to sort large applicant pools, particularly for entry-level positions. The Chair asked for clarification around the use of the streamline recruitment process and was answered that DBM has allowed for agency flexibility in using the streamlined process. The Chair expressed interest in returning to the streamline hiring process at a future meeting and brought up the possibility of Tara Nelson to present at a future meeting on her experience with this process. Aaron Jacobs agreed, supported Tara's position and encouraged the formalization of candidate pre-screening statewide. Mr. Jacobs further supported the continued use of preference points, particularly for the veteran community.

The Chair then closed the discussion and asked the record to reflect that Lisette Smith was here as a substitute for Dianna Rosborough with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and that Jordan Fisher was here as the substitute for Secretary Serena McIlwain with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).

### **Task Force Member Presentation - Current Hiring Practices of**

**Amazon:** Joel Martinez, Human Resources Director for Amazon, presented on their hiring process and company best practices. Mr. Martinez gave an overview of the four stages of hiring and the timelines associated with each stage in the hiring process: stage one brings all Amazon stakeholders together to set expectations and internal parameters; stage two the candidates are reviewed; stage three the candidates are interviewed; and stage four a candidate is selected and an offer is made. Mr. Martinez in his presentation stressed the importance of having this hiring process match the company's core leadership principles and that applicants are treated like customers. Mr. Martinez further emphasized that sourcing diverse candidates from the onset is essential to a diverse employee base. In Amazon's recruitment process, the hiring manager helps ensure that the right person is selected, the client lead takes ownership of the full recruitment process, the sourcer helps bring in quality candidates, the recruitment coordinator support with scheduling and technical logistics, and the bar raiser serves as an outside perspective

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during stage 3-4 and maintains the integrity of the process. Mr. Martinez further explained that all jobs are hired on a rolling basis due to the high number of candidates and vacancies and that all candidates (if possible) are recycled and filtered to roles most appropriate for them, even if it is not the position they applied for initially. The whole process is also guided by Service Level Agreements (SLA) that set best practices and benchmarks for how recruitment must be conducted. Amazon has found that by keeping candidates informed in the process and empowering them with choice leads to better long term recruitment outcomes.

**Task Force Discussion:** Joel Martinez stated that the average time to hire for Amazon non-tech jobs is 30-45 days and tech based jobs are an average of 70 days. The Chair expressed her interest/support of SLAs. Mr. Martinez further explained that candidate pooling isn't necessary due to the sheer number of positions Amazon has, and that Amazon uses internal processing systems and staff to constantly move and filter candidates to/from different job source pools as needed. This allows candidates to not have to start over when their resume is recycled from one job posting to the next. The Chair asked for clarification as to what happens if a candidate is being interviewed for two jobs. Mr. Martinez answered that the process is left to finish and, if need be, joint interviews are conducted and candidates are left to choose which role is best for them. Cindy Kollner asked for clarification around centralization and bias. Mr. Martinez answered that recruiters oversee the whole recruitment process and different recruiters specialize in different roles. Mr. Martinez further explained that recruitment centralization works to build trust with other hiring staff by demonstrating aptitude, clear communication, and extensive training. Recycled candidates also do not get favoritism in the process. Gwen Schindler, asked for clarification about bar raisers and their training. Mr. Martinez answered that they receive one year of on-the-job training through shadowing/mentorship and that their role isn't focused on bringing a technical perspective but are instead focused on fidelity and internal priorities. Ms. Schindler further asked what the feedback process is like for SLAs. Mr. Martinez stated that, if any member of the team is not meeting expectations, corrective action (such as retraining) is instituted. Lisette Smith asked about the salary negotiation process and ranges. Mr. Martinez answered saying that they utilize market data, look at internal equity, and set standard salary ranges. If faced with exceptional talent, they can go outside of the salary range with additional approvals from a manager, but still want to keep equity and long term progression in

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mind when implementing exceptions. The Chair then thanked Mr. Martinez for his presentation and introduced Kimberly Prescott.

**Task Force Member Presentation – Best Practices in the Private Sector Market:** Kimberly Prescott, President of Prescott HR, Inc., presented on best practices in the private sector market. Ms. Prescott agreed with the best practices that Mr. Martinez explained in his presentation. Ms. Prescott emphasized the need for recruitment and human resources to remain separate as this allows for specialization. Hiring managers identify the requirements and core competencies and then return to the process once candidates are screened by recruitment staff. Ms. Prescott explained that recruitment staff do not need the full range of technical competencies to recruit for specialized roles, all staff should be trained on best hiring practices.

**Task Force Discussion:** Kimberly Prescott asked what the State does with previous qualified candidates at the end of a recruitment process. Mark Townend explained that the State can pass along previous recruitment lists to hiring managers on request and they can interview straight from this list.

**Closing Discussion:** The Chair asked for follow-up in a future meeting on the best way to support and hire diverse candidates. The Chair asked that Joel Martinez and Kimberly Prescott remain available to participate in these discussions. The Chair further asked that the body discuss later the best way to keep candidates engaged and how we can practice robust communication.

**Minute Approval:** The meeting minutes from 9/5/2023 were unanimously approved, excluding Lisette Smith and Jordan Fisher, who abstained due to not being present for the September 5, 2023 meeting. Secretary Serene McIlwain, Dianna Rosborough, Erin McMullen and Denise Gilmore were absent for approval of the meeting minutes.

### **Next Meeting Dates (10:00am-11:30am):**

- October 3, 2023
- October 17, 2023
- October 31, 2023
- November 14, 2023

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**Adjournment**