



Laura M. Hicklin, Director
Joe Parisi, Dane County Executive

Administration • Land Conservation • Parks • Water Resource Engineering

April 8, 2020

Susan Sandford, Strategic Engagement Coordinator
Land & Water Resources Department

Joe Parisi, Dane County Executive

Subject: Reclassification Decision Appeal

Dear Mr. Parisi,

I am writing to appeal the decision to reclass my position at the Land & Water Resources Department to a P7. I feel this classification does not accurately reflect the amount and importance of the work I do for Dane County.

I was hired as the Strategic Engagement Coordinator (P5) for the Department's Office of Lakes and Watersheds division. I have since moved into the Administration division and work closely with all divisions. In June of 2017, I agreed to serve as acting Marketing and Outreach Coordinator (P9) for the department until they could fill the position. I have been occupying that role ever since, but lost my acting class pay when the position was eliminated in the 2020 budget. At my request, Employee Group Representative 1871 has filed a pending grievance regarding acting class pay during this period. In a separate action, the Department of Administration recently reclassified my position to P7 after Department Director, Laura Hicklin, requested a reclass.

The Department of Administration cited a lack of a major fundraising component in my position as a reason for not classing it at the same level as the Marketing and Outreach Coordinator class specification. However, I still serve an important role in fundraising efforts for Dane County Parks. For example, I have been one of the main organizers of the annual Barks for Parks fundraiser since it began in 2016. I am responsible for recruiting corporate sponsors for this event, as well as organizing event details and advertising it to the community. I also work on other fundraisers as needed, such as a new Parks on Tap partnership with Karben4 Brewing, which will raise money and awareness for the Dane County Park system by drawing in visitors, and creating new ties to local businesses. Furthermore, I continue to help with the Foundation for Dane County Parks' fundraising efforts as needed.

I also believe DOA overlooked additional duties I took on which were neither part of my original job description, nor that of the Marketing and Outreach Coordinator class

specification. I was a leader in developing our department's [Equity and Inclusion Plan](#) in 2018, and have continued to take a lead role in helping staff implement portions of the plan, coordinating our department's Equity and Inclusion team, and serving as our representative on the Office of Equity and Inclusion's Racial Equity and Social Justice team. In this role, I also oversee the work of summer interns from the Simpson Street Free Press and the Boys & Girls Club. In 2019, I directed six interns between these two programs.

The success of the Department's mission depends on building community support, and I have worked hard to build a skill set to help generate that support, both as a volunteer in the Peace Corps, and through my master's degree in Community-based Environmental Management from Duke University. I use the skills gained from those experiences to develop strategies to better engage Dane County residents and communicate the important work our department does. A good example of this is the [Flood Facts and Initiatives webpage](#) I helped to develop, which explains the complexities of lake level management using accessible language that the public can easily understand.

I have seen how organizations often undervalue outreach positions, believing them to be something that is nice to have but not critical to the work they do. I have also seen many environmental projects fall apart when they fail to effectively engage with communities in a meaningful way. I have been filling the Marketing and Outreach role in our department for almost three years now. To eliminate the position from the budget and ask me to absorb the duties while reducing my pay is unjust and undervalues the community engagement work that I do. My increased department-wide duties and leadership role in our equity and inclusion work more than make up for the fundraising component of the Marketing and Outreach Coordinator class specification. I hope you will reconsider the reclassification level of my position and place the appropriate value on these skills.

I look forward to your decision on this matter. Please schedule this for consideration before the Reclassification Appeals Board at your earliest convenience, and let me know when this will appear on their agenda. Please also copy Brian Standing, EGR 1871 Steward, (standing@countyofdane.com) on any correspondence regarding this reclassification appeal. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Sandford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan Sandford
Strategic Engagement Coordinator
Dane County Land & Water Resources Department