

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 21, 2021

TO: Chair and Members of the Personnel and Finance Committee

FROM: Doug Voegeli, Director of Environmental Health

SUBJECT: Environmental Health Services Supervisor (Position #3209) and Sanitarian I (Position #3212)
Vacant for More than Six Months

County Ordinance 29.52(15) requires the Personnel and Finance Committee and the County Executive to approve filling positions that are vacant longer than six (6) months. Position #3209, an Environmental Health Services Supervisor, and Position #3212, a Sanitarian I, have been vacant for more than six months after a recruitment was postponed due changes in the Licensed Establishment program budget due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

What is the nature of the work or what is the essential function of the position?

Position #3209, and all Supervisor positions within Public Health Madison and Dane County (PHMDC), are highly responsible leadership and supervisory positions within the department. This position will be responsible for supervising a staff of Sanitarians in the Licensed Establishment program. There is an expectation for leadership, planning, collaboration, coordination, policy development, budget management and commitment to PHMDC's and Dane County's Health and Racial Equity values and practices.

Position #3212, Sanitarian I, is responsible for regulatory public health sanitation, environmental health fieldwork, and other related activities for PHMDC. The Sanitarian independently performs field inspections and investigates complaints related to environmental health.

These positions will immediately support COVID-19 education, outreach, and compliance efforts with establishments and will be funded via the Enhancing Detection COVID grant from the WI Department of Health Services and other COVID grants until at least 2023.

How has this function been fulfilled without this position?

These positions were created in the 2020 budget and were funded by a scheduled increase in licensing fees for establishments. The request for additional positions was due to a growing and unsustainable workload per sanitarian and the number of establishments to sanitarian ratio not being in alignment

with FDA guidance. The positions were intended to bring workload into line with this guidance and address span of control issues for the current supervisor in the program.

Due to the COVID pandemic and related mandates, many licensed establishments were closed temporarily and the fee increase was suspended due to the financial impact of COVID on these establishments. Filling the two positions was also put on hold, however the conditions that prompted the creation of the positions still exist today.

In Dane County, we have not seen a reduction in the total number of licensed establishments as a result of the pandemic, despite initial estimates. As of March 15, 2021, there was an increase of 49 more licensed establishments in the County than there were prior to COVID. Consequently, the anticipated workload per sanitarian is the same as 2019-2020, with the addition of COVID-19 education and compliance functions as part of the work.

What will be the impact on the Department's function and mission if the position remains vacant?

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Licensed Establishment program is taking on more work per Sanitarian and per inspection/re-inspection to support the education and compliance of establishments with COVID-19 safety measures, recommendations, and guidelines. In addition to each inspection taking longer, the Sanitarians are taking the lead on all of the compliance checks and follow-up related to complaints regarding compliance with public health emergency orders. The workload was unsustainable prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and the program will be at risk of not meeting State mandates without this additional support.