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A service of the Genesee Intermediate School District

November 2, 2023

Kama Ross
Leelanau County Commissioner
Personnel Committee Chair
8527 E. Government Center Drive
Suite 101
Suttons Bay, MI 49682

Dear Commissioner Ross:

This proposal is being sent upon the request of Darcy Weaver, regarding your interest in initiating an Employee Climate/Culture Survey and Study.

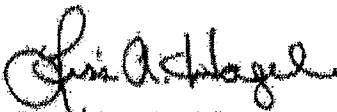
Enclosed is information regarding our proposed services to provide an independent study of employee perceptions regarding the working culture/climate within Leelanau County. Based upon discussions with Darcy Weaver, this study would provide all county employees the opportunity to provide feedback to the consultant regarding their feelings and perceptions in and of their work environment. Such input would be shared in a safe, comfortable and pledged environment of anonymity to each and every employee. This approach is set to ensure honest and candid input from employees. The feedback/study will then be shared with the Leelanau County Commissioners collectively for the creation of an effective and successful culture/climate plan moving forward.

Michigan Leadership Institute has established a strong reputation for the quality of its services to its clients across the State of Michigan. Our expertise in facilitating such work will help ensure that the outcomes of your County work will serve you well today, and, in the years to come.

The included information provides a methodology, timeline, and expected outcomes of the study.

Note that this process can be customized to meet your County's needs. For additional information and to develop a customized process, please contact Dr. John Scholten, Regional President of Michigan Leadership Institute at jscholtenmli@gmail.com. You may also contact me at lhagelmli@geneseeisd.org. We look forward to discussing this project with you in more detail.

Sincerely,



Lisa A. Hagel, Ed.D.
Executive Director, Michigan Leadership Institute



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**Climate/Culture Study
of
Leelanau County Employees**

Major Outcomes of Project:

- Individual meetings with County employees to occur over multiple days, to collect information regarding employee perceptions of their work environment and overall work climate and culture.
- Online opportunities for employees to provide input toward study if they are not able to attend an individual session or such approach is more convenient for them.
- Questions will attempt to draw out feelings/concerns including, but not limited to, work concerns, feeling valued, appreciated, respected, etc.
- Questions will also attempt to draw out any additional concerns that employees feel the Board of Commissioners should be aware of.
- Questions will attempt to draw out positives about being a Leelanau County employee.
- In essence, final report should share perceptions regarding "what works well" and "what may need attention."
- Final report will provide guidance/direction on moving forward to improve climate and culture.

Timeline:

- Data collection: Late November through mid-December 2023.
- Data analysis and report building: Late December 2023.
- Report sharing, in writing as well as verbally, by the consultant: Early January 2024.

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Leelanau County Climate/Culture Study
Background Information
John Scholten
November 2023

My name is John Scholten. I'm a retired school superintendent, having served in two districts (Glen Lake and Petoskey) for a total of 23 years. After leading the Petoskey Schools for 14 years, I retired in 2019. Shortly after retirement, I began working with the Michigan Leadership Institute as a consultant. This work has involved but not been limited to superintendent searches; superintendent preparation academies, executive coaching, governance workshops, administrative mentoring, strategic planning, succession planning, community forums and climate/culture work.

Michigan Leadership Institute was contracted by the Leelanau County Commissioners to conduct a climate/culture study. They have charged us in helping identify what works well for employees and what type of challenges and or problems employees face in their work environment.

The process I will be using is pretty basic: I meet individually with employees with a few questions and I do a lot of listening and then prepare a verbal and written report on the findings along with recommendations for improvement. We will push hard to schedule as many individual meetings as possible. There will be an on-line opportunity for those that are not able to schedule a face-to-face meeting.

The most frequent concerns expressed by individuals sharing their thoughts and opinions are confidentiality and worries about reprisals. These concerns are typical with most situations. As a result, I promise total confidentiality and will never share "Jim said this or Jane said that." I always ask after each meeting if there are responses that should not be shared, even generically. Obviously, if a particular incident is shared, the respondent could be known, whether the name is listed or not. In the report I will use superlatives and needed growth but don't do it in a way to betray a confidence.

Darcy Weaver will be scheduling the meetings to be held in your Governmental Center. They will be set up in an area that will be comfortable and confidential.

The Leelanau County Commissioners are understanding and totally supportive of your individual confidentiality and potential concerns. Please help them and yourselves with your candor about what is working well and anything that is broken. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible soon.

Leelanau County Climate/Culture Study

Introduction/Welcome

1) Positives: What pleases you most and/or makes you proud of being an employee of Leelanau County?

On a scale of 1-10 (One being broken and Ten being Healthy), How would you rate the Employee Climate Culture in Leelanau County?

2) Challenges/Negatives: What are the biggest challenges and/or negatives in being an employee of Leelanau County?

3) What is the top issue(s) about the Leelanau County Employee Climate/Culture you want to make sure this consultant includes in the report to the Commissioners?



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Leelanau County - Climate and Culture Study

Organizational climate is known as "the feeling in the air" that an individual obtains from the company. It is characterized by relationships among people - top to bottom, structure, processes, and behaviors.

Please take a few moments to share your feelings about your employment at Leelanau County.

Your responses are confidential - only the information you provide in your answers will be shared with the Board of Commissioners.

1. What pleases you most and/or makes you proud of being an employee of Leelanau County?

2. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being broken, and 10 being healthy), how would you rate the Employee Climate/Culture in Leelanau County?

1 5 10

A horizontal rating scale with a circular marker at the 1 position and a square box at the 10 position.

3. What are the biggest challenges and/or negatives in being an employee of Leelanau County?

4. What is the top issue(s) about the Leelanau County employee climate/culture you want to make sure the consultant includes in the report to Commissioners?

Done

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Positives

- **Opportunities to serve the community**
Civil servant, passion to take care of people, provide quality services to community/tax payers, love interaction with public, and being part of community grew up in and/or live in...
- **Benefits, Salary, Pension, Financial Solvency**
- **Team Members Great People/Great People in Department**
Dedicated/competent/cooperative
- **Most employees step-up and help each other**
Flexible for families, care about each other, and accommodating
- **Good Safe/Secure Place to work**
Longevity
- **Severance of Finance/HR from Clerk**
Appreciate effort to separate
- **HR/Deb Great**
- **Nothing Great----Toxic**

Response Rate

85 of 117 responded in person or on-line

73 Percent Response

Scale Score

(1-10)

(One being Broken and Ten being Healthy)

Average score

3.8

Challenges

- **Lower Pay**
Cost of Living in Michigan's Wealthiest County, need to "open pocket book" in taking better care of existing employees as well as recruitment of new employees, Median Zillow Home \$560K, need to support our families, don't care to continue to hear "to bad you can't afford to live here...you don't need to live here" or "throwing of health care benefits in our face"
- **Employees not treated equally**
Inequality with money, STIPENDS for Clerk, Chief Deputy and Interim Business (Group of Three)...everyone else "sucks it up," get necessary things done without added pay, FEDERAL COVID RELIEF \$1000 turned down...\$500 and then that amount for all out of budget...original for front line at-risk employees, Clerk's office gets whatever asked for even after duties cut...others...no staffing increases, 15-year old chairs, no added IT support...
- **Employees not valued/respected**
Need more recognition to feel valued; end negative comments toward employees at public meetings, lack of support from Board of Commissioners...Employees need to be shown more respect...
- **Losing way to many good employees**
Commissioners need to dig deeper to see why... Board hiding problem(s) (Shawn, Jared) Due largely to Group of Three?? Great amount of knowledge leaving...
- **Struggle to Control Finances**
Need to resolve...separate HR/Finance from Clerk, pull off Band-Aid and remove Clerk's office...move forward with what was voted on back in 2021, support administrator and Finance, Michelle Crocker should not be CFO

- **Rehman Report**
Should not be “pushed aside like other reports/studies

- **Clerk’s Office Vindictive/Dishonest**
Crocker and Zywicki “put their nose in everything,” note how they talk to people, mean-spirited, “peas in a pod”, bad treatment if one speaks out against the group of 3, look at turnover in their office, Board overly reliant on Clerk giving too much power, Personnel Records with Clerk not just HR, access to computers, keys to desks, Board needs to come to Administrator/Departments with questions...not simply rely on Clerk

- **First Floor Drama---Government Center**

- **Lack of Trust**
Confusion of who you can talk to, must be careful what you say, certain people with “political alliances”

- **Embarrassing PR**
Finance Director leaving, public bickering department heads/elected officials, infighting, Board embarrassing, work not being respected

- **Commissioner Lautner**
Toxic, mean-spirited, anti-employee, erratic behavior, conduit to clerk/chief deputy, doesn’t know employees or departments

- **Chain of Command**
Board lost perspective on their role, Board should follow too, and Interim Finance goes directly to Board

- **Leadership Lacking**
Need to get department heads in line/control, Board circumvents Admin and relies heavily on Group of 3, Doors closed---past admin doors more open...Apparent Board not backing current Administrator
- **Communication**
Board needs to get more information and ask questions of Admin/Dept. Heads...not rely solely on Clerk and Chief Deputy
Board well intentioned...needs to hear from more
- **Code of Conduct Training**
We need to follow how trained...maybe Board could benefit from training too
- **Support Administrator More Moving Forward**
- **Elected Officials stepping over boundaries...Governance Training**
- **"Can't touch Elected Officials"**
- **Need to work together more...Play nice...Reason we exist is to Serve the Public**

Top Issue(s)

- **Move Finance/HR**
Total Separation (Continue Course), Provide tools/resources in move, Clerk needs to let go, Interim Finance tied to Clerk, Hard reset time
- **Look at Cost of Living (Wage)**
Pay needs to be increased
Understanding/Communication of Total Budget
- **Communication**
Listen to employees, appreciate them, value them, and understand them...
Many fear retaliation from speaking up,
Keep up with communication, no more “back door conversations/decisions”
- **Trust/Confidence Employees**
Gain better understanding of what employees do, increase ability to accurately hear them, listen to them (not just two/three), dig for the truth and understand concerns about not knowing who to trust with all the infighting
- **Don't Micro-manage/Stay in Lane**
Trust departments more, know Board role, and follow Rehman Report, Policy
- **Board Behavior**
Eliminate public meeting digs on personnel, decorum, don't let special interests carry, code of conduct
- **Clerk's Office remain in duty areas**
- **Offices need to work together better**
Eyes/Ears on meddling Govt. Building Kindness/Respect/Teamwork
Support Administrator/Dept. Heads

Moving Forward...

- **Governance Work**
Commit to training and dedication to a focus upon true Governance by an elected Board
- **Code of Conduct for Board**
Commit to training and dedication to a Code of Conduct moving forward... Guiding Principles on how you function
- **Commitment to Decision to Move Forward with Separation of Finance and Human Resources**
Commitment to decision and commitment to providing ALL necessary tools to make transition be smooth and work
- **Commitment to Improved Communication**
Communication requires commitment to deep/broad listening, sharing, learning/discerning and decision-making
- **Wage scale study/review with Comparable Counties**
Employees need/deserve more information to help assess/determine fair wage for all... may include more public review/presentation of entire budget...
- **Increased/Improved Leadership from Administration**
Administrator needs strong interpersonal skills, leadership and strong finance background/understanding. Administrator needs good communication with Board of Commissioners and their mutual respect and support
- **Teamwork Training**
Training and Commitment to such training for minimally all in leadership positions along with Board. Generally departments appear to function well individually... some have minimal cross-over, all would benefit from training and commitment
**Need to work together more, play nice and remember:
Reason we exist is to Serve the Public**