

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, August 13, 2012 – 7:12 p.m.
Lincoln Center ~ 1519 Water Street

PRESENT: Chairperson Moore; Alderpersons Slowinski, O'Meara, Patton, Phillips

OTHERS

PRESENT: Mayor Halverson; C/T Schlice; Clerk Moe; Attorney Molepske; Alderpersons Suomi, M. Stroik, R. Stroik, M. Stroik, Wiza; Directors Schatschneider, Lemke, Ostrowski, Schrader; Assistant Chief Zenner; Assessor Siebers; Carrie Freeberg, Joe Senn, Assistant to the Mayor Pazdernik; Barb Jacob; Cathy Dugan; Reid Rocheleau; Matthew Brown ~ Portage County Gazette; Brandi Makuski ~ SPCT; Human Resource Manager Jakusz

Chairman Moore called the meeting to order.

1. Request to fill vacancy ~ Streets Division.

Alderman O'Meara moved to approve filling the vacancy; Alderman Slowinski seconded. Ayes all; nays none. Motion carried.

2. Request to fill vacancies ~ Transit Division.

Alderman Slowinski moved to approve the vacancies; Alderman Patton seconded.

Alderman Phillips suggested that in order to save money relating to benefits, etc. the Transit Division utilized part-time employees. Human Resource Manager Jakusz indicated that the Bus Operator position before the Committee this evening is a part time position and that there are a number of part-time Bus Operators in City Transit. The part-time positions allow for more flexibility in back-filling full time positions for coverage for vacations and sick leave. Benefits for the part-time employees are pro-rated.

Action on motion: ayes all; nays none. Motion carried.

3. Discussion and possible action on elected versus appointed for the Offices of City Attorney and City Comptroller/Treasurer.

Chairperson Moore reviewed the motion forwarded to the Personnel Committee from the Special Committee and asked for input from the Personnel Committee members.

Alderman Patton stated that he is leaning toward favoring appointed positions due to training.

Alderman O'Meara stated that he is in agreement with Alderman Patton. Both positions are professional and must have certain credentials. He urges the Council to review his process as it allows for shared responsibility and power in the appointment process. He further urged approving a referendum to allow public input.

Alderman Slowinski stated that now is the time to do it.

Alderman Phillips stated that he spoke with a bunch of people about this subject. 100% of the people he spoke with want the process to remain the same. He also voiced concern that the time table isn't right.

Alderman Moore stated his opinion that the Special Committee meetings yielded interesting debates. He added that he spoke with his constituents and they want the process to remain the same. He also voiced concern over the number of Public Works Directors the City has gone through within a relatively short period of time; he feels this is another reason to maintain elected positions as candidates elected for a term aren't as likely to leave for a better job offer. They have to face those who elected them and are likely to stay through at least their first term.

Alderman Moore moved to approve the action taken by the Special Committee; Alderman Phillips seconded.

Discussion ensued.

Alderman Wiza indicated that a number of the questions and concerns regarding elected positions, such as the credentials were addressed by the responses received from both the City Attorney and the attorney at the Wisconsin League of Municipalities.

He added that what's been in place for over two-hundred years works. He stated that this was shown today through the audit report.

His constituents want the positions to remain elected, which are the same findings experienced by Joanne Suomi, Jerry Moore and Mike Phillips.

That's our referendum; nobody wanted appointed rather than elected. We have addressed concerns raised and heard from the constituents. Alderman O'Meara voiced his opinion that the referendum is the only poll that counts.

Chairperson Moore called on City Clerk Moe to address the cost of the referendum. Clerk Moe indicated that he had spoken with the County Clerk and the cost is estimated to be \$2,800 to \$3,000.

Barb Jacob stated that she has spoken with a lot of people and none want it appointed. She stated that she was in the military and if you take away people's right to vote, you take away right they fought for as part of the military.

Alderpersion Suomi stated that she echoes the comments made by Alderman O'Meara. She indicated that the sample size was very small and based on hearsay. It is the right of the community to get involved in this decision. She stated that she was disappointed that the Special Committee didn't get further into the appointment process ~ that the closest they got was Alderman O'Meara's draft.

Reid Rocheleau stated that he is happy to hear the discussion. He voiced his opinion that this process should have started a year ago. He feels the opportunity to make the elected process better has been squandered. He stated that Joe Schmo on the street wants a say.

Alderman Wiza indicated that when an incumbent is running unopposed, it is because the incumbent is doing a good job. When an elected position is vacated, there are more candidates. He urged fellow council members to knock on doors and solicit input from constituents. Let's save the City the cost of the referendum and apply those savings to some other budget item.

Cathy Dugan stated that she attended all of the Special Committee meetings. She voiced her opinion that the charge by the Mayor to set up an appointment process for these positions was putting the cart before the horse. She indicated the "why" needed to be addressed before the "how". She stated that the Mayor's charge seemed like a maneuver.

Alderman R. Stroik stated that he was the Special Committee Chairperson. He added that he understood what the Committee was tasked with, however, the members could get past whether it was needed or not. He stated that the committee hadn't heard from those who could sell the appointment process ~ those in city management. He felt this group could help the Special Committee members understand why doing it differently would better sustain the City for the future.

Mayor Halverson indicated that he has purposefully not spoken on this issue. He indicated that the charge for the Special Committee was laid out specifically and was meant to presuppose these positions were appointed, to consider an appointment process that preserved the appropriate reviews to ensure a strong connection of the Council to the process. He further indicated that he did not alone create or charge the committee, the Common Council voted and agreed to the charge and creation. He added that it would be inappropriate to ask Directors to speak and sell the idea of appointed versus elected. He felt he was in the best position to speak on the matter and that it was not about who holds these positions now, but rather about how they could look in the future. Mayor Halverson also said, that it is our responsibility as elected officials to challenge commonly held beliefs and think about new ways things can be done.

He stated that it is a best practice among other communities to appoint these important positions and that they handle it in that manner for a reason.

He agrees that no Mayor should singlehandedly have sole authority over the appointment process. He stated that if the input from the Mayor's office is what is of greatest concern, then take the Mayor out of the equation totally; he would abdicate authority over these positions. He stressed the importance of education and experience for those stepping into these positions.

He stated that Stevens Point doesn't need to be like everybody else, but maybe there's something we're not seeing.

He stated that the Council will be discussing the question of a referendum on the matter at the upcoming meeting.

It is not the intent to stack the deck but to preserve the best possible way to fill the vacancies and place the city in the best position for the best outcomes in the future.

Action on the motion: Ayes 3; nays 2. Motion carried.

4. Adjournment ~ 8:00 a.m.