

**City of Stevens Point
SPECIAL COMMON COUNCIL MEETING**

**Council Chambers
County-City Building**

**November 18, 2013
5:30 P.M.**

Mayor Andrew J. Halverson, presiding

Roll Call: Ald. Doxtator, Suomi, O'Meara, M. Stroik, Slowinski, Trzebiatowski, Patton, Philips, Moore
Excused: Ald. Wiza, R. Stroik

Also Present: City Atty. Beveridge, Clerk Moe, C/T Ladick, Directors Schatschneider, Lemke, Schrader, Ostrowski, Emergency Mgt. Director McGinty, Police Chief Ruder, Fire Chief Kujawa, Human Resources Manager Jakusz, Chris Jones-Stevens Point Journal, Nathanael Enwald-Portage County Gazette, Brandi Makuski-Stevens Point City Times

2. Minutes and actions of the Personnel Committee meeting of November 11, 2013.

C/T Ladick commented on a correction on page two of the Personnel Committee Minutes which references a letter sent out by the Mayor and the Comptroller/Treasurer endorsing implementation of the pay plan study findings. C/T Ladick stated that he has not taken an official position on the pay plan. His role with that letter was to explain the financial and budgetary implications of implementing the pay plan.

Ald. O'Meara **moved**, Ald. Phillips seconded to approve the Minutes and actions of the Personnel Committee meeting of November 11, 2013.

Roll Call: Ayes: All.
Nays: None. Motion carried.

3. Implementation of the Pay Plan Recommendations.

Mayor Halverson explained the packet contained an executive summary provided by Mr. Carlson along with a breakdown of the overall averages of public and private sector comparables reviewed as well as a further explanation of the presentation that was given to the Personnel Committee. He further explained the material distributed containing the structure of the overall rating grid and how it transforms into the point value associated with the grades along with the material needed for the appeal process.

Mayor Halverson read an email from Ald. R. Stroik regarding his thoughts on the pay plan recommendations. Ald. R. Stroik stated he is supportive of the implementation of the pay plan as presented and he further stated the compensation received by City of Stevens Point employees is fair and equitable.

Ald. Moore read a statement from Ald. Wiza who was not present. Ald. Wiza stated he expressed opposition due to the lack of information provided.

Ald. Slowinski expressed disappointment with his request for solid numbers that back up this plan. He said he asked for examples so he could examine the numbers and prove they are accurate. Ald. Slowinski stated the executive summary did not give any new answers. He said he does not want to delay the pay plan but he is not comfortable it.

Mayor Halverson said it is difficult to create a pay plan in which all comparables are reviewed internally and that is the reason Carlson/Dettman was chosen to compose the pay plan and furthermore is why their recommendations are being followed. Mayor Halverson feels the amount of information provided, from a mathematical basis, is well done in terms of a pay plan that is representative of fiscal challenges and compensates employees.

Ald. O'Meara said it appears the wage rates are in line; however, he questioned the Carlson/Dettman work plan being subject to open records regarding the private sector comparables once that information is given to the City.

Mayor Halverson explained everything received from Mr. Carlson has been provided to the Council members. He said Mr. Carlson may be taking what are public records and applying them into a work product that would have protection under the law.

Ald. O'Meara stated Carlson does not have protection under the law if he is performing work for the City. He cited Attorney General Van Hollen's work product which states anything produced while making a product for a municipality are open records.

City Attorney Beveridge said he would look into the matter.

Ald. Trzebiatowski said he was given the impression that Council would have the ability to either include or exclude the private sector numbers. He is concerned about numbers being skewed depending upon how they are applied. Ald. Trzebiatowski also expressed his concern regarding the appeals process being the responsibility of the Mayor.

Mayor Halverson said the consultant will be making those decisions and he intends to stay out of them completely as any concerns should be heard objectively. He said those concerns can be handled best by a third party. Mayor Halverson said there is a pay plan that can be provided which excludes private sector comparables. He said that pay plan will cost about \$50,000 to \$60,000 more and he feels that this plan is not an accurate, fair or appropriate review. Mayor Halverson went on to state that Act 10 allows the use of private sector comparables and it would be a disservice to the community not to use private sector comparables in the mix. He restated this is a good work product that makes sense as it is built on a lot of research and data.

Ald. Trzebiatowski said he wished police and fire personnel would have been included in the comprehensive study plan which would have given bargaining leverage in future negotiations.

City Attorney Beveridge cited the public record statute has an exception that protects the release of trade secrets.

Ald. Patton stated this company was hired by Council to perform this study and there needs to be trust that the proper data was provided.

Mayor Halverson said Carlson/Dettman's work product has stream-lined the pay plan process for the City. He stated the pay plan is based on the average of the comparables gathered and it is right for the City's financial situation as the inequities are being corrected. Mayor Halverson said the pay plan is not a position to position comparison. It is a bulking of similar graded and type positions.

Ald. Patton feels there are a lot of emotions that are guiding decisions.

Mayor Halverson said he feels compensation should be correct for the different jobs that are performed.

Ald. Phillips asked how much Carlson/Dettman will charge for each appeal process.

Mayor Halverson said all of the appeals are a part of the process; however, for any job review or job placement there is a \$250 charge.

Ald. Phillips then questioned Human Resources Manager Jakusz if she felt anything in the documentation or plan seemed out of place to her.

Human Resources Manager Jakusz reiterated that private sector data has been incorporated in the plan for the first time ever in the review of positions and she would not say anything in particular stuck out. She stated she feels it is a fair pay plan.

Ald. Phillips asked if a mandatory review of the plan can be put in place in 2 to 3 years.

Mayor Halverson said it cannot be made mandatory, but on-going review should be continual. He said a future Council cannot be bound to review the plan.

Ald. Phillips questioned if the motion could state to adopt the pay plan for three years and then it would be renewed after review.

Mayor Halverson stated at that time, the Council could review it and if a Council wants to take action to eliminate the play plan, they have that ability.

Ald. Trzebiatowski voiced further concern over the fact the pay plan does not reflect longevity of employees and the respective differences of duties among those employees with the same job titles. He also mentioned the concern of morale issues for those employees who are not expected to see a wage increase for years.

Mayor Halverson said that should be taken into consideration and at some point in the future if the Council decides to offer a cost of living adjustment to those employees, it can be done. He said there will be varying view points as it is sensitive in nature but the data is hard to ignore.

Ald. Moore stated he disagrees with Ald. Patton's analysis of the Council's perspective on the matter. He said the difficulty is not having the source of numbers available and seeing wide-spread differences in freezing or raising salaries. Ald. Moore also mentioned the challenge of answering questions of constituents without having all of the information.

Mayor Halverson reiterated Mr. Carlson has been pushed for the data but he can only provide so much.

Ald. Moore said what the Council has been getting is not sufficient in the form of a study.

Ald. Patton asked how it could be explained if a City employee starts at the same grade and higher level for the same type of job than a neighboring community.

Mayor Halverson stated the average of the comparables in all grades is the control point. He said when Eau Claire, La Crosse and De Pere were removed from the pay plan as comparables, it dropped salaries by about \$2,000 on average. Mayor Halverson believes with adoption of the pay plan, questions regarding salaries will be significantly less. He would like to adopt the plan, work through the appeal process and figure out if jobs are graded correctly.

Ald. Slowinski again stated he does not want to hold up the pay plan and he wants everyone to be treated fairly and compensated for what they do. He questioned the decrease in salary numbers due to removal of the Eau Claire, La Crosse and De Pere comparables.

Mayor Halverson said excluding the Eau Claire, La Crosse and De Pere comparables dropped the mid-grade steps and above approximately \$2,000.

Ald. Slowinski questioned if there was additional information distributed to the Mayor that the Council did not receive.

Mayor Halverson referenced the first draft of the pay plan before those comparables were removed.

Ald. Slowinski said he reviewed the management pay plan from 2008 and he noticed that some positions have increased in points. He further questioned the change in some positions that have bumped up a grade.

Mayor Halverson stated there were significant changes in the Fire Department, Police Department and Parks Department in regard to consolidation of duties and shifts in positions where there was a substantial change in duties.

Ald. O'Meara repeated his thoughts that the pay plan is an accurate representation. He compared salaries of the Water Maintenance Worker and the Storm Sewer Worker and asked that those be reviewed.

Mayor Halverson reviewed and explained the difference in grades of the two positions in regard to their salaries. He said job titles are not representative of the work the positions do.

Ald. O'Meara felt this is an area where an appeal is warranted.

Mayor Halverson stated he would not debate it and the appeal could modify the process.

Ald. O'Meara said if something stands out, it should be looked at. He feels not every employee has the personality to launch a successful appeal.

Mayor Halverson said in reviewing the job descriptions, they are well placed and if any employee and their department head want to move forward with an appeal, the process is in place to do so.

Ald. O'Meara said the administration, acting in good faith, should initiate appeals and not wait for an employee to make the appeal.

Mayor Halverson stated he will not make any of those proactive decisions until he hears from the department heads who understand what those positions do on a day to day basis.

Ald. O'Meara asked those department heads to review it.

Mayor Halverson said those department heads have already initiated numerous proactive steps for various positions.

Chief Ruder said he was disappointed by the debate and he is in support of the pay plan implementation because there needs to be a starting point.

Ald. Slowinski **moved**, Ald. Phillips seconded, to approve the pay plan with an amendment to the appeal process with the final decision of the appeals to be the responsibility of the Personnel Committee and Common Council.

Ald. Patton questioned the responsibility of the Personnel Committee.

Mayor Halverson explained the process would be for him to wait for reviews to come in from the department heads, which will then be forwarded to Mr. Carlson for his review and analysis, with those results being forwarded to the Personnel Committee and the Council.

Ald. O'Meara said he would like a procedure in place where the decision from Mr. Carlson could be appealed to the Personnel Committee and Common Council.

Mayor Halverson stated that is fine.

Ald. O'Meara said if there is a reasonable review and both sides are happy, it does not have to be brought to the Council.

Mayor Halverson stated if everyone is comfortable with that process, it can be done.

Ald. Slowinski said he wants the option for the Common Council to hear the final appeal.

Mayor Halverson said that is how it was handled the last time with the management pay plan.

Ald. Suomi stated this is the type of discussion and study -- post Act 10 -- that municipalities are contemplating and it is uncomfortable. She further stated the pay plan is the direction the City needs to go and she supports the motion. Ald. Suomi said people need to remember that this pay plan does not eliminate positions and that is the step in the right direction.

Ald. Moore stated fairness is the reason for the push in getting the numbers from Mr. Carlson and taking some comparables out of the plan was a part of getting true numbers. Ald. Moore stated the differences between the City of Eau Claire and the City of Stevens Point. He said the Alderpersons have a constituency to be fair with too and that is the hard part to balance.

Mayor Halverson restated the motion is to approve the pay plan as presented with the Mayor having the discretion to approve grade review changes as suggested by the consultant. If those are denied and the individual(s)/department head(s) are not comfortable with the decision, they can appeal the decision to the Personnel Committee and Common Council.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ald. Phillips, Patton, Slowinski, M. Stroik, O'Meara, Suomi, Doxtator
Nays: Ald. Moore, Trzebiatowski
Excused: Ald. R. Stroik, Wiza. Motion carried.

4. Public Hearing on the General Local Municipal Budget for 2014.

Mayor Halverson declared the public hearing open.

Dave Schleih, 1026 Smith Street, President of the Police and Fire Commission requested Council vote in favor of the budget as proposed. He said the Police and Fire Commission passed a resolution supporting the funding levels for public safety and would appreciate support.

Mayor Halverson declared the public hearing closed.

5. Adjournment.

Adjournment at 6:32 p.m.