

CITY OF STEVENS POINT

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday, April 14, 2014 – 8:13 p.m.

Lincoln Center ~ 1519 Water Street

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

EXCUSED: Alderman Moore

OTHERS

PRESENT: Mayor Halverson; C/T Ladick; Clerk Moe; Attorney Beveridge; Alderpersons Suomi, Doxtator, R. Stroik, M. Stroik; Directors Ostrowski, Schrader, Schatschneider, Lemke; Assistant to the Mayor Pazdernik; Dennis Laidlaw; Chief Kujawa; Lorna Whalen; PFC President Schleihs; Jim Feigleson; Dana Haberman; Michael Haberman; Steve Shepro; Bob Fisch; Dave Worzalla; Ernie Quesada; Mary Ann Laszewski; Barb Jacob; Carrie Freeberg; Steve Louis; Todd Jacowski; Nate Enwald, Portage County Gazette; Brandi Makuski ~ SPCT; Human Resource Manager Jakusz

Chairperson O'Meara called the meeting to order.

1. Request to fill Bus Operator Vacancies

Human Resource Manager Jakusz stated that one vacancy is due to a resignation and the other is due to a retirement.

Alderman Patton moved to approve the request to fill the vacancies; Alderman Slowinski seconded. Ayes all, nays none. Motion carried.

2. Request to fill vacancy in Streets Division

Human Resource Manager Jakusz stated that an employee is retiring at the end of May and the request is to fill the resulting vacancy.

Alderman Slowinski moved to approve the request to fill the vacancy; Alderman Patton seconded. Ayes all, nays none. Motion carried.

3. Request for donation of time for employee

Motion by alderman Patton to approve the request per the recommendation of the Human Resource Manager [Based on prior practice my recommendation would be for the Committee to approve the donation of vacation, compensatory or holiday time after the employee has exhausted all of their accrued benefits and to direct me to

approach the Police and Fire bargaining units to see if they would be interested in participating as well], Alderman Slowinski seconded. Alderman Phillips stated that he is OK with this so long as sick leave cannot be donated. Ayes all, nays none. Motion carried.

4. Notice of Employee Participation in Political Activity

Alderman Slowinski moved to accept the notice and place it on file, Alderman Phillips seconded. Ayes all, nays none. Motion carried.

5. Pay lift for wing and tri-axle drivers, when operating those vehicles

Chairperson O'Meara stated that Alderman Wiza had requested this item being placed on the agenda and because he wasn't present to discuss the item, perhaps it should be postponed.

Alderman Slowinski moved to postpone the item; Alderman Phillips seconded. Discussion ensued.

Alderman R. Stroik stated his opinion that it would be appropriate to hear from the union.

Steve Louis stated that the use of a plow truck with a wing and a tri-axle increase productivity and are more difficult to operate. He added that this differential was added to the labor agreement in 2000. He added that staff were advised that no one would have wage cuts as a result of the pay study; he views this as a wage cut.

Alderman R. Stroik stated that the cost is minimal and feels it is more the principle of it; he feels it is right to re-implement and recommends taking action.

Mayor Halverson stated that the .18 differential is not an element of base wages. He added that it is a goal to have wings on all the trucks at some point. The majority of functions in the Streets Department can be contracted for, but the City wants to have employees and equipment on hand to perform snow removal.

Alderman Slowinski moved to approve the .18 differential for the operation of wing and tri-axle; Alderman Phillips seconded the motion stating that no wages were to be cut as a result of the pay study. Ayes all, nays none. Motion carried.

6. Amendment to Administrative Policy 3.01(11) (per Chief Kujawa)  
Police and Fire Commission President Schlehs spoke in support of the amendment indicating it had been reviewed in depth and had the unanimous support of the Police and Fire Commission. He added that he had just become aware of the additional information included in the packet that was submitted by the Comptroller/Treasurer and Human Resource Manager.

Chief Kujawa also supported the amendment indicating that it is important to have her in uniform for all the reasons spelled out in her cover memo. She added that the Administrative staff always fell under the Local 484 contract for uniform reimbursement and all purchases fell under the 484 contract.

Chief Kujawa also requested consideration of the uniform articles purchased prior to the change in policy.

Comptroller/Treasurer Ladick referred to a purchase order from 2012 that included a note that indicated a note referencing, "after staff meeting the last time", and the requests and reimbursements continued to occur. The reimbursement for two shirts and a badge reached in November of 2013 was a solid compromise. He added that no the uniform allowances or reimbursements exist for other City Administrative Assistants; we wanted to be fair so we contacted area communities and found that those holding similar positions in Wausau, Wisconsin Rapids or Marshfield do not receive any uniform reimbursements for their Administrative Assistants. We are already more generous than our comparable municipalities.

He added that he has one of the best staffs; they are diligent in their duties and don't turn a blind eye; they don't "go along to get along", that's not the right thing to do. We fight for the City tax payers and make sure that expenses are appropriate. I'm asking you to support my staff in our efforts to make sure we're accountable to the City taxpayers.

Human Resource Manager Jakusz stated that based on the wording of the March 18, 2014 PFC agenda item relating to this matter it was not clear that a City Administrative Policy was being addressed. Had it been,

she would have attended and voiced her concerns to the Police and Fire Commission.

The issue first came to light several years ago, when Peter Ugorek was the Fire Chief it was discovered that this employee received an annual allowance for uniforms. At that time, the practice was amended to provide a uniform and discontinue providing the annual monetary stipend.

She read excerpts from e-mails between Sally McGinty (former Director of Emergency Management) and Chief Kujawa regarding concerns over a request for reimbursement for the Administrative Assistant and the Chief acknowledging the denial of the reimbursement request from last fall, as well as an e-mail she had received from Sally McGinty detailing proposed language for a City Policy governing uniforms for the Administrative Assistants in the Police and Fire Departments. She added that this was the language that was implemented.

Alderman Slowinski moved to deny the request to amend the City Administrative Policy 3.01(11), Alderman Phillips seconded.

Discussion ensued over the ability to take action on the reimbursement for the 2013 expense that was initially denied based on the wording of the agenda item.

Lorna Whalen, SPFD Administrative Assistant addressed the Committee voicing her concern over the changes to the clothing allowance. She stated that when she was hired nineteen years ago, Chief Ugorek put her in uniform he put her in uniform for a reason. She added that she may have, in listening to instructions by prior Chiefs of what she can order and what she should do, she may have been misled about what she could do but that was set straight and she has not done that since. To take it away would be somewhat detrimental; to wear a shirt five days a week would require her to do laundry every night. She would request that the City allow two shirts, two pairs of pants, shoes and a belt ~ she added that she doesn't wear these items anywhere but for work; these small significant items per year.

Action on the motion: Carried with a vote of 3 – 1; Alderman Patton dissenting.

Chairman O'Meara suggested that the item relating to reimbursement from last fall be placed on the May agenda.

7. Discussion regarding the appointment of Directors

Alderman R. Stroik stated that he requested this "discussion only" item be placed on the agenda.

Item relates to feedback given to the Mayor about his function between the Council and the Directors, as one past Director had told him that he was fired every two years and spent almost all his time trying to reapply for his job. He added that he has had some direct and indirect contact with former Directors, Don Popoff, Mike Morrissey, John Gardner and Jon Van Alstine and all of these former Directors felt the same way. This is not a good way to be competitive; at last week's Special Council Meeting, it was stated that we messed up not setting ourselves up for good staff in the future.

The City Clerk obtained information from the comparables used in the pay study and no one does it like we do.

He feels the Mayor should have the power to appoint, but firing should require a second signature. He suggests keeping the hiring and appointment process the same, but changing from a two year term to an unlimited term. If an issue arises with a Director, the Mayor can have a closed session meeting with the Personnel Committee to discuss the issues and merits of a termination, just as we would with other employees.

He stated that this has nothing to do with the current Mayor. He reiterated the Mayor's prior comment that this group works well together. He feels that makes this the perfect time to change it because there is no pressure as there would be if a Director were on the verge of not being reappointed, so what better time to address this in order to remain competitive and be able to attract and retain good quality Directors that know they won't face re-appointment every two years. The change

would protect the City from a new Mayor stepping in and wanting all new Directors; that wouldn't be good for us.

Chairperson O'Meara stated that a rogue Council that disliked the Mayor could reject all appointments brought forward by the Mayor. This gives an inordinate amount of power to the Council if the Council wants to do mischief. Under what you are proposing, the Mayor is the only one who could initiate termination; right now the Council has that authority every two years.

Alderman R. Stroik stated that the Council was told that the future competitive ability to attract and retain employees is in question due to wages. I will contend that wage is an issue for about one week after a wage adjustment or hire then it always goes back to job duties, job satisfaction comfort level, familiarity with surroundings – many things go into job satisfaction. Alderman R. Stroik suggests that the Personnel Committee look into this further. Future competitiveness is a concern for our salaries; this should be as well. Past Directors have indicated that any Council members can contact them to discuss this. It's not an effort to protect current Directors either; Mayor Halverson shouldn't any offense at this, it's trying to better the City.

Alderman Patton questioned Alderman Stroik regarding his statement, "nobody does it like we do", it referring to the terms. Alderman R. Stroik replied that is referring to the two-year terms.

Alderman Phillips stated that it's a worthwhile discussion.

Alderman Slowinski thinks it's a good idea and merits consideration. He stated that he's heard comments from potential candidates concerned about the two year appointment process.

Chairman O'Meara stated the topic warrants additional thought and consideration.

Mayor Halverson stated that in practicality, his style and the way he looks at this office is the reasoning for this discussion, although he appreciates Alderman R. Stroik's attempt to make him think otherwise, we know

differently, the style and the way in which we go after projects is important. He does not apologize for that. The Mayor in current form has the ability to set vision and articulate that vision.

If we move to other structure it will change the office of the Mayor.

Requiring a majority vote of the Common Council for just cause to remove those individuals will result in a worse situation as it relates to getting objective information. The Council feels they are not getting objective information today; that communication is distorted you will have a worse situation with department heads addressing Alderpersons and in essence telling them anything they wanted to hear, in essence to protect their employment.

The two year term is an anomaly but it allows for significant performance evaluation on an on-going basis. The two year term is referenced in job descriptions for these positions and is addressed during interviews so candidates are aware of this. The Mayor can choose to not appoint; the Council can choose to not affirm; it allows flexibility for both parties.

He stated that the current mix of department heads are remarkably smart and work well as a team. He recognizes the concern over checks and balances, however that works both ways.

In forty years no department head under two year term has not been reappointed or been released.

Directors hold a separate edge for effectiveness and responsiveness based on their two year appointment, there is an added element to the performance the Mayor could command of those he or she is appointing. The Council has a say with every project that is brought forward. It's not our role to exclusively protect those employees in their jobs. It is clearly not surprising that past Directors would say their jobs would have been easier if not for the appointment process.

He stated that this shouldn't be about him and it obviously is. He added that this change would be a monumental shift. If the Council is going to go that far, they may as well go to a part time ceremonial Mayor and hire

a City Administrator or City Manager that they could have complete control over. If the Council wants to look at the authority that rests with the Mayor, you should go the whole way.

Alderman Phillips stated that he is accountable every two years as an Alderman.

Former Mayor Jim Feigelson stated that serving a community increases your love for the community and he thanked the Alderpersons for their service.

He stated that the City has had a two year appointment process for the last forty years and there's nothing wrong with it. Open-ended appointments allow time to slip by; keep governance as it has been as it allows for a natural review process.

Former Mayor Mike Haberman indicated that former Mayor Gary wanted to be here as well. He also voiced his opinion that the proposal is indeed tied to the current Mayor. He recognized that he is a very aggressive Mayor. He added that this shouldn't be about the Mayor, it should be about how the City has been governed for the last forty years; the current system allows for checks and balances, and works very well.

8. Motion by Alderman Slowinski, second by Alderman Phillips to adjourn into closed session at 9:28 p.m. pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes 19.85(1) (e) [conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session] for an update on bargaining with Fire and Transit Units.

Roll Call: O'Meara, Phillips, Patton, Slowinski

Ayes all; nays none. Motion carried.

9. Motion by Alderman Patton, second by Alderman Slowinski to return to open session (9:41 p.m.).

Roll Call: O'Meara, Phillips, Patton, Slowinski

Ayes all; nays none. Motion Carried.

10. Recommendation of ratification of 2013 – 2015 IAFF Local 484 Tentative Labor Agreement

Motion by Alderman Patton, second by Alderman O'Meara to recommend ratification of the 2013 – 2015 IAFF Local 484 Tentative Labor Agreement. Ayes all, nays none. Motion carried.

11. Adjournment ~ 9:44 p.m.