

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, September 8, 2014 – 6:38 p.m.
Lincoln Center ~ 1519 Water Street

PRESENT: Chairperson Phillips; Alderpersons Moore, Patton, Wiza

OTHERS

PRESENT: Mayor Halverson; C/T Ladick; Clerk Moe; City Attorney Beveridge; Alderpersons Slowinski, R. Stroik, M. Stroik, O’Meara, Doxtator; Directors Schrader, Ostrowski, Lemke, Schatschneider; Chief Ruder; Chief Finn; A/C Skibba; Carrie Freeberg; Kelley Pazdernik; Barb Jacob; Nate Enwald ~ Portage County Gazette; Bradley Makuski ~ SPCT; Larry Lee ~ WSAU; Human Resource Manager Jakusz

Chairman Phillips called the meeting to order.

1. Mayoral Salary for the 2015 – 2018 term of office.

Alderman Wiza suggested that a COLA (cost of living adjustment) be built into the salary. He asked C/T Ladick what amount percentage has been afforded for wages as a COLA in the recent past.

C/T Ladick replied that the City hasn’t been able to allow an actual COLA adjustment.

Alderman Wiza asked the City Attorney to clarify if the Ordinance could reference the COLA adjustment afforded other City employees rather than including an actual salary. The City Attorney replied that doing so would muddy the waters.

City Attorney Beveridge also indicated if the action is to increase the salary by an index such as CPI, they should include what point of reference should be used.

If the Council would like the salary for the Mayor to increase each year of the term by a certain percentage, we could have the ordinance reflect that salary.

Mayor Halverson indicated that it would make sense to provide a salary that has a percentage increase built in each year of the term. It would provide for a slow regimented process to bring the salary in line with area comparables.

Mayor Halverson also stated that the 2015 budget would need to include a line item for a family health insurance plan.

Alderman R. Stroik stated that the committee shouldn't take into consideration the added cost for the health plan when setting the budget. Setting an appropriate salary for the chief executive officer of the City of Stevens Point should be the focus. He added that although he hasn't always agreed with the Mayor, he respects the heck out of him for doing a job that requires making difficult decisions and that it is a thankless job. He feels it will be a missed opportunity if the wage scale isn't set appropriately.

Alderman Wiza made a motion to increase the salary by 1.5% each year of the term beginning with April 2015; Alderman Moore seconded. A quick calculation of the salary effective April of 2015 indicated an annual salary of \$71,050). Discussion ensued.

Larry Lee from WSAU stated that the City of Wausau is currently considering a City Manager position in lieu of a full-time Mayor.

Action on motion: Ayes all, nays none. Motion carried.

2. Request to fill anticipated vacancy in the Streets Department

The memo from Director Schatschneider which was included in the packet was referenced.

Motion by Alderman Moore, second by Alderman Wiza to approve filling if a vacancy does occur. Ayes all, nays none. Motion carried.

3. Adjustments to pay steps for certain positions

Mayor Halverson reviewed the memo that was sent out on Friday regarding this agenda item. He added that it would show good faith on the part of the City to make "true ups" for these salaries during the current

year.

Alderman Wiza asked how far along the budget process is and what the current situation with the budget is. C/T Ladick replied that the budget situation hasn't changed; we are still looking to fill a gap of \$140,000. If approved, the additional cost for these requested changes would have an impact of \$21,800 for the 2015 budget.

Mayor Halverson stated that although a budget shortfall currently exists for 2015, several options are being considered to reduce costs next year such as modifications to health insurance plan and reviewing RFP's for garbage and recycling services.

Alderman Moore stated that he agrees with Alderman Wiza.

Motion by Alderman Wiza to postpone action on this item and to address it during the 2015 budget process; Alderman Phillips seconded. Discussion ensued.

Alderman R. Stroik urged the committee to consider approving the request. He stated that we expect our leaders to lead and that the \$20,000 can come back four or five fold with the right leaders. He added that you have to spend money to make money and you get what you pay for.

He feels the City owes it to the Directors and citizens to employ the best and the brightest to lead us into the future. He encouraged the committee not to postpone action on this item.

Alderman Wiza stated that he gets where Alderman R. Stroik is coming from, but also believes that people are not doing it for the money. He referenced the salary for the Alderman that hasn't been increased in some time.

Alderman R. Stroik stated that as Alderman, they shouldn't be involved in the day-to-day business. An Alderman provides a community services and oversight.

He added that the committee has a chance to make this right; then task the Directors with filling the budget gap. He further added that we need the Directors to step in with the upcoming change over in the Mayor position.

Alderman Phillips stated that as Alderman they have to answer to the tax payers and explain why salaries are increased when services are cut.

Mayor Halverson stated that he agrees with Alderman R. Stroik. He stated that these are the instances where salaries matter the most. He added that it doesn't work the same for elected positions.

Alderman O'Meara stated his opinion that the City needs to maintain competitiveness with other communities. He stated that good managers don't cost money; they save money. He added that he concurs with Alderman R. Stroik and Mayor Halverson.

Alderman Moore stated that he doesn't disagree. He stated that the City was sold a bill of goods on the whole pay plan. He added that the pay plan fixed nothing and things are still screwed up.

He added that he doesn't like to be put in a bad spot to make the tough decisions.

Alderman Wiza stated there has to be a quid pro quo; something has to give. He wants to be able to weigh the options and keep service levels the same. He wants to be able to evaluate where the give and is going to be that is owed to the constituents.

Council President Slowinski voiced his opinion that it isn't fair to all to pick certain positions for review. We need to take care of all of our employees and be fair across the board; that is why he supported re-running the pay plan matrix.

Alderman R. Stroik voiced his opinion that there is a flaw with waiting for the budget process to address this matter. It needs to be viewed not as a cost but as an investment in the future. He urged the committee to vote it

up or down tonight and not tie it to the budge and pit the employees in these positions against a City service or other budget item.

Chief Ruder stated that he isn't going to argue salaries, but asks that the Alderpersons make sure the constituents they talk to know what the salaries are as well as what the comparables are.

Action on motion:

Ayes: Philips/Wiza

Nays: Moore /Patton

4. Request for Lead Position on Collections Crew Water Department

The memo from Director Lemke that was included in the packet was referenced. Human Resource Manager Jakusz questioned Director Lemke to determine if his request was to place the Lead position in Grade I or in Grade H which is where the Streets Department Lead positions fall. He indicated his intent was to request Grade I based on comparables within his department.

Council President Slowinski asked what additional responsibilities the Lead Position will have. Director Lemke replied that the individual would be a first contact among peers in the work unit and working foreman who has institutional / historical knowledge. He is hoping that the creation of this classification will enable him to keep a person in the position with institutional and historical knowledge as it takes years to learn and stay efficient and effective.

Alderman Wiza asked if approval would result in a service cut or rate increase. Director Lemke said it would not result in either.

Mayor Halverson voiced his disagreement with placement in Grade I. He noted that collections is different than water operations and doesn't entail sanitary sewer construction. It does include ditching, swailing and light water work. He feels Grade H is warranted.

Alderman Wiza asked Alderman Phillips if he concurred with Mayor Halverson's assessment as they worked together on the appeal process

and are more well versed in the pay grade structure. Alderman Phillips replied that he does concur.

Alderman Wiza move to approve the creation of a Lead Position for this crew and setting the salary in Grade H Step 6. Ayes all, nays none. Motion carried.

5. Request to add two additional Laborer positions in the Streets Division

Director Schatschneider stated that the Staff Engineer position has been vacant for about five-and-a-half months. The work has been absorbed by others in the Engineering Department.

He stated that the wages/fringes for the Staff Engineer position will offset the cost of two new Streets laborers who are at a starting pay rate of \$15.36 per hour.

He added that with the grade separation in the near future, the City will be scaling back on the number of projects we undertake allowing for the current Engineering to continue to absorb the duties. He added that if things change in 2017 or 2018, he will come back to the committee.

Mayor Halverson stated that this would allow a net gain of three plow drivers and shave off 4 – 6 hours of plowing time for an average snowfall.

Alderman Wiza moved to approve the fund transfer and the addition of two additional laborers for the Streets Division, Alderman Moore seconded. Ayes all, nays none. Motion carried.

6. Adjournment ~ 7:40 p.m.