

City of Stevens Point Meeting Minutes

Personnel Committee

Monday, June 8, 2009, 6:00 p.m.

Lincoln Center, 1519 Water St.

Present: Chairperson Molski; Alderpersons Brooks, Moore, Heart, Walther

Also Present: Mayor Halverson; C/T Schlice; City Attorney Molepske; Alderpersons Slowinski, Mallison, O'Meara; Directors Halverson, Schrader, Popoff, Gardner, Morris; Chief Ruder; Assessor Siebers; Assistant to the Mayor Kelley Pazdernik; Civil Engineer Alex Saunders; David Blunt; Meredith Thorn, Stevens Point Journal; Reid Rocheleau; Lisa Jakusz

Chairman Molski called the meeting to order.

Index of these minutes:

1. Discussion of Employment Contracts.
2. Discussion and possible action on amendment to Administrative Policy 1.11 Relocation Expenses.
3. Discussion and possible action on salary for Interim Public Works Director.
4. Adjournment.

1. Discussion of Employment Contracts. Human Resources Manger's Memo

This non-action item was placed on the agenda to allow for additional discussion on the topic of employment contracts. Alderman Brooks asked what the City's experience has been with employment contracts and why, in the past they have caused hard feelings.

Human Resource Manager Jakusz replied that when she started working for the City in 1998 some employment contract did exist among some of the Police Department sworn management staff. The contracts provided the "best of both worlds" by providing the management employees with whichever benefit (union or management) was more lucrative for the employee. Protections weren't built in for the City. The existence of these agreements weren't common knowledge among City management staff and when they came to light, caused some hard feelings among management staff.

Jakusz added that she was advised by the City Attorney Molepske to be watchful and not allow any additional employment contracts. At the present time, there aren't any employment contracts among management City employees.

Committee Chairman Molski acknowledged having similar experiences when she was responsible for City Personnel with the management employment contracts.

City Attorney Molepske voiced his opposition to employment contracts. He indicates that dismissal of a management employee is likely to carry a severance or compensation package and may carry a higher standard to release the employee. He added that employment contracts are a double edge sword.

Reid Rocheleau voiced his opinion that the City is in a bind because an employment contract didn't exist; he added his opinion that the City should be able to collect liquid damages when someone leaves. He feels the City should get someone who knows how to write a contract to protect the City.

As this is a discussion item only, no action is necessary.

2. Discussion and possible action on amendment to Administrative Policy 1.11 Relocation Expenses. Proposed Policy Change| Human Resources Manger's Memo

Human Resource Manager indicated that this draft policy amendment is in response to concerns raised at the Special Personnel Committee meeting that was held on June 1, 2009. The intent with the draft modifications is to provide a starting point in the event the Personnel Committee and Common Council feel a revision to the policy is warranted.

Brooks voiced concern over the cost of the recruitment process the City will incur. Mayor Halverson stated that from a historical perspective, the current instance of a department head leaving within their first year is unheard of. Both Chairman Molski and Human Resource Manager Jakusz agreed with that statement.

Brooks stated that in addition to the reimbursement of the moving allowance he feels a recruitment fee should be imposed as well. Alderman Moore voiced his disagreement. He added that he feels the recruitment process is a cost of doing business and if someone "wants out" they should be able to go. He agreed that once in awhile it will bite you, but it is a cost of doing business.

Committee Chairman Molski supports the relocation expense payback but does not support a recruitment expense payback. She added that she doesn't feel the requirement to reimbursement moving expenses would be a deterrent for the applicant pool; but the imposition of a recruitment expense would be.

Alderman Heart voiced concern over concern over the two year time frame. She stated that she feel it is too aggressive.

Mayor Halverson said it is the six-month probationary period plus 18 months. He added that if a determination is made not to appoint, employees would not be required to reimburse the moving allowance.

Alderman Brooks stated his understanding of the policy is that if it is a situation where the employee voluntarily terminates, they would then be required to reimburse the moving allowance; if it is non-voluntary on the part of the department head then there would be no requirement to reimburse the moving expense. Mayor Halverson agreed with that description.

Alderman O'Meara urged caution with moving forward with the amendment to the policy. He feels it could give a potential candidate reason to second guess his or her candidacy. Alderman O'Meara added that a financial penalty already exists for those who leave and need to sell a house locally. He added that nationwide, there is a shortage of engineers.

Reid Rocheleau voiced his opinion that Books is on the right track. He feels the moving allowance should be eliminated.

Alderman Walther stated that Alderman O'Meara made good points. He feels there is a great deal of competition with the private sector for many positions.

Alderperson Molski moved to adopt the amendment to Administrative Policy 1.11 Relocation Expenses, Alderman Brooks seconded. Ayes: Molski, Brooks; Nays: Walther, Moore, Heart. Motion fails.

3. Discussion and possible action on salary for Interim Public Works Director. Mayor's Memo | Human Resources Manger's Memo

Mayor Halverson referenced his memo outlining his request to name Alex Saunders Interim Public Works director and elevate his salary to the entry level step of Grade O of the management pay plan which is \$74,469.

Alderman Slowinski questioned whether other individuals will be taking on additional responsibilities and want higher salaries.

Mayor Halverson replied that all will need to work much more aggressively on the projects this summer and the City may need to hire external engineering assistance. He added that he doesn't feel that additional pay will be warranted.

Reid Rocheleau indicated that Alex Saunders current salary is \$50,000. He added his opinion that salary is more than enough to take on the additional duties.

Alderman Heart moved to approve the interim status for Alex Saunders effective June 19, 2009 with the annual salary of \$74,469 with the understanding that if the interim status is longer than four (4) months, this item will come back to the Personnel Committee in October for further review; Alderman Moore seconded. Ayes all; nays none. Motion carried.

4. Adjournment - 6:55 p.m.

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