

City of Stevens Point Meeting Minutes

Personnel Committee

Monday, November 9, 2009, 7:10 p.m.

Lincoln Center, 1519 Water St.

Present: Chairperson Molski; Alderpersons Moore, Brooks, Walther, M. Stroik

Also Present: Mayor Halverson; C/T Schlice; Alderpersons Trzebiatowski, Mallison, R. Stroik, Slowinski, O'Meara; Assessor Siebers; Chief Ruder; Directors Halverson, Schrader, Gardner; Interim DPW Saunders; Airport Manager Wheeler; Superintendent of Streets Laidlaw; Deputy C/T Freeberg; Assistant to Mayor Pazdernik; GIS/Const. Mgr. Lemke; Transit Manager Lemke; Mary Ann Laszewski; Mildred Neville; Jeremy Beaudry; David Schleih - Police & Fire Commission President; Gene Kemmeter - Portage County Gazette; Human Resource Manager Jakusz

Chairperson Molski called the meeting to order.

Index of these minutes:

1. Request from City Transit to authorize a part-time Late Night Transit Supervisor.
2. Discussion of management pay plan and salaries.
3. Discussion and possible action on H1N1 Policy.
4. Adjournment.

1. Request from City Transit to authorize a part-time Late Night Transit Supervisor. Memo

Alderman Moore questioned the need for additional management staff. Transit Manager Lemke responded that she held off requesting the additional staff when the late night bus service began earlier this fall to determine necessity. Initially she had adjusted the hours of the three quarter time PM/Weekend Supervisor for approximately one month to see if that would meet the need. What she found was that he spent much of his time supporting the drivers, fielding phone calls and watching video. The requested position is 6 hours per night Thursday through Saturday.

Alderman Slowinski questioned if this is funded by the students. Lemke replied that it is on a revenue hour basis. She further explained that there are actually two separate agreements with UWSP, the U Pass Service and the Late Night Bus Service.

Alderman Walther stated that if we want the program to be a success we must support it.

Human Resource Manager Jakusz stated that the position is 18 hours per week when UWSP is in session.

Alderman Brooks stated that when this position becomes non-levy neutral, the City will have to re-visit.

Alderman Walter moved to authorize a part-time Late Night Transit Supervisor; Alderman Brooks seconded.

Roll Call

Ayes: Molski, Walther, Brooks, M. Stroik

Nays: Moore

On a vote of 4 to 1, motion carried.

2. Discussion of management pay plan and salaries. Mayor's Memo | Carlson Dettman Study | Other Attachments

Mayor Halverson reviewed his memo that was included in the packet.

Alderperson M. Stroik questioned the year in the far right column on the 2010 Management Salary sheet. Jakusz responded that is to indicate when employees who aren't eligible for movement to step annually are eligible for the next step movement.

Alderperson M. Stroik questioned why Joel Lemke was on the chart twice. Mayor Halverson replied that was to hold the place in Grade H for his replacement.

Alderman Slowinski stated that he doesn't disagree with the pay plan and doesn't want to dismantle it; he just feels a freeze needs to be put on it for 2010.

Chairperson Molski gave a brief overview of the prior pay plan and indicated that it had never been administered properly. She added that overtime was taken away from management as well as the ability to earn compensatory time. She added that none of the unions have had wage freezes. Freezing the management pay plan in 2010 would cause us to be in the same situation as we were prior to implementing the current pay plan.

Alderperson Slowinski stated that in 2011, the City needs to push for wage freezes in negotiations.

Mayor Halverson urged that we keep the proposed 2010 budget in context. The increase is one-fifth of one percent; the general City tax levy will be a decrease. The City is not in a budgetary crisis.

He added that it is unfair to impose a wage freeze on management employees when the labor agreements have settled with pay increases. He agreed that union contracts may have to change in the future, especially in 2012 and at that time we may also ask management to make sacrifices as well. He added that we don't have a crisis now and to not compensate management employees when we can is very disrespectful to those employees due to the fact that we may have no choice but to freeze or reduce at some point in the future. He reiterated that 2011 and 2012 may be very different.

Alderman O'Meara stated that the budget is in good shape. He added that government tends to be counter cyclical for budgetary purposes. He added that the percent of wages as part of a budget have more to do with new development taking place in a specific community. He voiced his opinion that we compensate fairly but people aren't coming here to enrich themselves and that we are very comparable to other communities around us. How we behave toward our management employees will impact those wanting to come here.

Mary Ann Laszewski voiced her growing concern/disbelief of the 3-5% benefit increase in salaries. She stated that the plan does not provide for years where there is a recession; she is concerned that we will price ourselves out of city government and this isn't the time to shackle ourselves with more taxing. The City Officers have responsibility to tax payers to keep taxes down. She referenced that there isn't a COLA increase in 2010 for social security.

She added that management employees in Wausau will have a wage freeze in 2010 and union employees are responsive to freezing wages as well.

Ms. Laszewski referenced Alderman Wiza's comments at the Special Finance Committee Meeting regarding the reorganization of the Police and Fire Department's not saving money. She feels they should go back to the way they were structured before.

She feels it is inappropriate to cut police training and equipment budgets then increase wages.

NOTE: In a follow up call to Ila Koss of the City of Wausau, it was discovered that unions have been approached regarding wage freezes for 2010, however, not all unions have responded in the affirmative regarding said proposal.

Mildred Neville stated her belief that the City is ignoring its citizens and it's an issue of finances. She stated that people are hurting in this community. Taking 1.6 million from reserves - is this a proper way to handle finances?

Police & Fire Commission President Dave Schleihs addressed the statement made earlier by Ms. Laszewski by asking Chief Ruder if training and equipment budgets were cut in 2010. Chief Ruder responded that they were not.

Police & Fire Commission President Schleihs stated that the current management pay plan process is more logical and fair than the previous model. He feels that the cost of the plan and the cost to "catch up" in the future need to be evaluated. He also stated that private employers have more flexibility than us when giving raises, cuts or bonuses and we need to be mindful of that culture or perspective when comparing public employers versus private employers.

Chief Ruder indicated that he hadn't intended to speak this evening but would like to address the comment relative to the training and equipment budgets in the Police Department. He reiterated that these budgets were not cut. He added that in an economic downturn manager's jobs are more difficult as they try to do more with less. He referenced the information on the City's website regarding the number of grants that the City has received in the last year due to the hard work of managers. Freezing wages would be a disservice to managers across the board. He added that we're still working as hard as we ever did.

Alderman R. Stroik stated that there are many issues we need to look at before we look at the management pay plan. In tough economic times they are expected to do things hourly people won't. He urged Council members not to vacate the pay plan that was many years in the making. He added that if the economy continues to slide we need a plan of action to address the unions long before October.

He voiced his opinion that it is unfair to pick one salary and make comments without knowing the entire history - was the salary low to begin with; were there other issues involved.

Alderman O'Meara stated that pay is not given to treat employees well or equitably - it is given to keep or retain good and qualified employees. He added that we don't want a reputation that we don't treat our employees well.

Alderman Walther voiced concern over freezing management salaries and then giving unions a 3% increase. He stated that he feels the pay plan is a good one.

Mayor Halverson stated that in the 2010 budget, the City is offsetting capital improvements and debt service with fund balance, not operations. He added that if there was a large tax levy increase, he would not be supporting pay increases. He added that the 2010 budget has a general city tax levy decrease. In the future if sacrifices are necessary pay freezes or reductions will be implemented.

3. Discussion and possible action on H1N1 Policy. Draft Policy | Sick Leave Request Form

Chairperson Molski stated that the policy is basically common sense. Mayor Halverson agreed, but commented that it allows the City to send home employees who exhibit the symptoms and provides a safety net for employees who may not have enough sick leave to cover their absence.

Chairperson Molski moved to approve the H1N1 Policy; Alderperson M. Stroik seconded.

Ayes all; nays none. Motion carried.

4. Adjournment - 8:17 p.m.

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