

Meeting Minutes

Personnel Committee

March 12, 2007, 7:10 p.m.

City Water Department, 300 Bliss Avenue

Present: Chairman Moore; Alderpersons Molski, Sevenich, Wiza, Hanson

Also Present: Mayor Wescott; Comptroller/Treasurer Schlice; Attorney Molepske; Alderpersons Robinson, Trzebiatowski, Slowinski, Stroik; Directors Halverson, Schrader; Assessor Kuehn; Chief Morris; Captain Dowling; Chief Barnes; Andrew Halverson; Mary Ann Laszewski; Reid Rocheleau; Gene Kemmeter - Portage County Gazette; Lisa Jakusz

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1. Consideration of amendments to City Administrative Policy: 3.01 - Standard Benefits. 3.02 - Leave Policies.
2. Request consideration of movement to mid-point (Police Captain and Lieutenant).
3. Review and consideration of request for proposal statutory Assessor.
4. Adjourn into closed session (approximately 6:35 p.m.) pursuant to Wisconsin State Statute 19.85(1)(f) for the purpose of reviewing a request for a medical leave of absence.
5. Reconvene into open session (approximately 10 minutes after adjourning into closed session) for possible action of the request for medical leave of absence.
6. Adjournment.

Chairman Moore called the meeting to order.

1. Consideration of amendments to City Administrative Policy:

3.01 - Standard Benefits.

3.02 - Leave Policies

Personnel Specialist Jakusz explained the amendment to 3.01 Standard Benefits will amend the policy to coincide with the 10% premium contribution for health insurance.

The proposed amendments to 3.02 will clarify retirement eligibility age for general and protective service employees. It also adds the appropriate verbiage for the post employment health plan.

Alderson Molski moved, Alderson Hanson seconded, to amend Administrative Policy 3.01 and 3.02 as proposed, ayes all, nays none; motion carried.

2. Request consideration of movement to mid-point (Police Captain and Lieutenant).

Alderson Molski read a statement (copies were distributed to the Aldersons) that she had prepared which states that she is sure both individuals are good employees, however, the city's management pay plan was adopted for all non-represented employees and it is the job of the Personnel Committee and Common Council to see that the plan is administered fairly and equitably to all. She added her opinion that it would be unfair and demoralizing to further raise the salaries of these two positions while everyone else is bound by the plan. She added that although many non-represented employees are unhappy with the pay plan in effect, it is important to follow it until the city decides to fund having a new one prepared and not give any further special exceptions to certain individuals.

Chief Morris stated that he respects Alderson Molski's position. He spoke in support of his request. He stated his belief that protective services are different than other positions covered by the pay plan. He added that if this request isn't approved it is important that if this request isn't approved, the city move forward with a formal study of the pay plan. He added that the city should take care of the management employees and encourage those covered under the plan.

Alderson Stroik spoke in favor of the request. He stated that if employees are performing the same duties, they should be compensated the same.

Mayor Wescott indicated that a formal study of the management pay plan was stopped due to cost controls being slapped on the city. He added that this topic is an item he will be discussing with the new Mayor during the transition process. He feels that early in the upcoming term, this will be brought back to the Personnel and Finance Committees and city Council. He cautioned the vast majority of employees covered under the plan will anticipate a pay raise and it doesn't always work out that way.

He added the pay plan moved forward in time, but agrees that the time has come to do a formal management pay plan study. He noted that the city is still in a cost control environment.

Chief Barnes stated that he echoes the comments Chief Morris made earlier.

Chairman Moore stated that he recognizes there are issues with the pay plan but recognizes that supporting the request before the Committee this evening would put stress on other employees governed by the pay plan which would be unfair. He added that he feels the pay plan should be reviewed before the city loses good people.

Alderson Molski moved, Alderman Hanson seconded, all ayes to deny the request to move the Police Captain and Police Lieutenant to the mid-point of their respective grades, ayes all, nays none; motion carried.

3. Review and consideration of request for proposal statutory Assessor.

Personnel Specialist Jakusz stated that she received a letter of support for hiring a City Assessor to replace Carol Kuehn. She distributed copies of the letter from Wayne Bushman and Chairman Moore read the letter aloud.

Alderman Hanson stated that hiring an outside service may save a few dollars in the short term, but in the long term, having an employee who is a resident of the city makes more sense because that person will see to it that the job is done correctly. Other things to consider are the timing of work completion; delays can result in lost revenue. He also has a concern over the impact it would have on the other employees in the department.

Alderson Molski voiced her opinion that not much money will be saved by contracting out. She also questioned whether someone would physically be there to stand behind their work.

Alderman Wiza agreed with Hanson and Molski and stated his opinion that it is important that the individual responsible for assessments has a vested interest in the community. He also has concern over having work done on a contract basis by an outside vendor.

Alderman Robinson stated that he agrees with the opinions shared by the committee members but feels that not moving forward with the request for proposal would be shirking responsibility. The option needs to be considered.

Andrew Halverson stated that he agrees with the prior comments. He feels that other departments should be evaluated as well perhaps other departments. He also stated that he opposes pursuing and RFP at this time.

Alderman Trzebiatowski stated that pursuing and RFP is futile when you consider deadlines, reports that need to be filed on a timely basis and that missing deadlines may impose penalties on the city.

Reid Rocheleau stated that he agrees with Alderman Robinson; we don't know for sure if we don't review the possibility. He also disagrees with Mr. Halverson; City Assessor may be the only position the city should contract for. He added that the city could appoint someone to the position that is a contractor.

Alderman Molski stated that prior to Carol Kuehn's employment, the city had an assessor who lived out of town and from that experience, she knows that you don't get the service if the person isn't physically present in the office 40 hours per week.

Carol Kuehn stated that she did some follow up on the list provided by Mr. Radtke previously. The City of Neenah pays \$35,000 but it only includes 36 days worth of work.

The City of Superior pays \$9,300 (not \$30,000 as stated on the Radtke list) for not more than 17 days worth of work. The City of Muskego has a full-time City Assessor.

Two of the municipalities included on Mr. Radtke's list who contract out for assessor services are not in compliance with Wisconsin law in that as of October 18, 2006 they did not have a Statement of Assessments on file, this report is due to be filed in June. Ms. Kuehn stated she would provide the minute taker with some documents in this regard.

Assessor Kuehn stated commercial properties in Stevens Point make up 41% of locally assessed real estate; the average on Mr. Radtke's list of comparables is 22%. Stevens Point has three times the amount of personal property accounts to handle as compared to the examples on the list.

Assessor Kuehn also pointed out that Stevens Point does all of the real property listing for the city and knows that in at least the cities located in Brown, Dane and Milwaukee Counties they do not do this. She also emphasized that most cities on the list provided by Mr. Radtke are suburbs of larger cities which is not the case with Stevens Point. Also noted was the fact that Stevens Point is a university town unlike the vast majority of cities on Radtke's list. Assessor Kuehn stressed that the best value may not always cost the least.

Alderman Hanson moved to reject the request for proposal, Alderman Molski seconded. Discussion ensued as to the appropriate action to take in order to allow for the abandonment of the RFP process.

Alderman Hanson withdrew his initial motion; Alderman Molski withdrew her second.

Alderman Hanson moved to postpone action on this item to the March City Council meeting, Alderman Molski seconded. Ayes all, nays none; motion carried.

4. Motion by Wiza to adjourn into closed session pursuant to Wisconsin State Statute 7:52 19.85(1)(f) for the purpose of reviewing a request for a medical leave of absence.

Roll Call: Ayes: Chairman Moore; Aldermen Molski, Hanson, Sevenich, Wiza

Nays: None. Motion carried.

5. Motion by Alderman Sevenich to reconvene into open session for possible action on 7:57 the request for action on the request for medical leave of absence.

Roll Call: Ayes: Chairman Moore; Aldermen Molski, Hanson, Sevenich, Wiza

Nays: None. Motion carried.

Alderman Molski moved to approve the unpaid medical leave of absence after the exhaustion of accrued benefits for a combined total of up to twelve weeks, per the physician's certification, Alderman Wiza seconded, motion carried all ayes.

6. Adjournment - 8:00 p.m.

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