

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING  
Monday, July 9, 2012 - 6:37 p.m.  
Lincoln Center ~ 1519 Water Street

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

OTHERS

PRESENT: Mayor Halverson; C/T Schlice; Clerk Moe; Attorney Molepske;  
Alderpersons Suomi, Beveridge, M. Stroik, R. Stroik,  
Trzebiatowski, M. Stroik, Wiza; Directors Schatschneider,  
Lemke, Ostrowski, Schrader; Assistant Chief Skibba; Assessor  
Siebers; Assistant to the Mayor Pazdernik; Barb Jacob; Cathy  
Dugan; Reid Rocheleau; Matthew Brown ~ Portage County  
Gazette; Brandi Makuski ~ SPCT; Brian Kowalski ~ SPJ; Human  
Resource Manager Jakusz

Chairman Moore called the meeting to order.

1. Discussion of appointed versus elected office for the positions of City Attorney and Comptroller/Treasurer.

Mayor Halverson stated that he has had discussion with some Alderpersons and wanted to bring this topic forward for discussion. The Council has two options; A) **do we want to pursue changing the status from "elected" to "appointed" which would allow the implementation of credentials for those holding these positions or** B) do we want to leave the positions elected as they are today?

Is there merit to consider changing how these positions are filled? If the City Council believes there is, the following steps would need to be taken:

- The Governing Body would need to pass a Charter Ordinance by two-thirds vote approving the change;
- The Common Council would call for the referendum on the November ballot; it **would be a "YES/NO" question.**
- This would allow time for candidates to take out nomination papers.

The Mayor stated that currently by statute, there are no credentials for the City Comptroller/Treasurer; the City Attorney must be an attorney.

Other questions to consider are whether we want to guarantee credentials? What would the hiring process be? Would the Mayor forward three names to the Council to select the individual to fill the positions or would the Council be

involved in the selection process?

Alderman Slowinski questioned whether requirements could be added to the Comptroller Treasurer position and still have it maintain the elected status? The Mayor replied that this question is being evaluated and researched.

Alderman Slowinski voiced concern of an individual having to run for re-election of job every four years and the level of confidence that person would have in their job security.

**Alderman O'Meara stated that he supports having both of these positions be appointed.** He stated if these positions are appointed, they would be at-will employees and would be much more accountable.

Alderman Phillips questioned whether the referendum in the steps outline previously by the Mayor would be a binding referendum. Mayor Halverson replied that it would be a binding referendum.

Aldersperson Suomi stated that she was glad to see this item on the agenda for discussion. She stated that out of 596 municipalities in the State of Wisconsin, 190 are Cities and only 19 of those Cities have an elected attorney.

**She stated that out of 356 members of the State Treasurer's Association, only 36 are elected and only 7 of those that are elected are from Cities - including Stevens Point.**

She state that she is going on record to support these positions being appointed by the Mayor with input by the full Common Council. She added that the Personnel Committee/Council members be involved in the process.

Alderman Beveridge stated that maintaining an appointed Comptroller/Treasurer will not ensure the employee has the right skills for the job.

He added that he believes if this question goes to referendum, the people will vote to keep the positions elected.

He stated there are pros and cons to having these positions appointed versus maintaining them as elected:

Cons

Best Politician is not the best attorney

Time/cost of running for office

## Conflicts

It is still political

Not accountable to voters

Adds additional political element for Mayor and Council members

## Pros

Select best candidate

Wider range of candidates

Not a politician

Alderman Wiza stated that he is glad this is being discussed. He added that accountability to voters is important. He stated that the biggest downside is that **an employee will do what their boss tells them to do; whether or not it's in the best interest of the City.**

Alderman Wiza stated that his biggest concern is the comment made by Mayor **Halverson indicating that he's had several conversations with many alderpersons; was there a walking quorum?**

He is requesting to know who/when/what was discussed.

**R. Rocheleau stated that he's been pushing for this for a long time. He added that he feels the Clerk should be included. He feels the present system isn't so great; there's no competition.**

He feels that an appointed system with a binding referendum is the way to go. The Constituents need to see all the facts and all the figures. He also feels the Personnel Committee along with the Council should be involved in the process.

He added that to take the politics out of it, you hire a law firm to handle legal matters.

**C. Dugan voiced her agreement with those who've spoken about the need for public input.**

**She stated that she's had easy access to both the City Attorney and the Comptroller/Treasurer. She indicated that were they under the thumb of a very strong figure head, they may not be. Power consolidation is a concern.**

Alderman Moore stated that he has had discussion with Mayor about this agenda and with regard to the timeline for the process of changing from elected to

appointed.

Alderman R. Stroik suggested that Alderman Wiza file an open records request to obtain the information he requested previously.

He added his opinion that it would have been better to discuss this topic in February or March rather than make a determination in the next 30 days to put the matter to binding referendum.

He cautions acting in haste. This is huge and should not be handled in 30 days.

He added that he has a ton of respect for the Mayor, but if things are done too quickly problems are likely to arise.

B. Jacob stated her opinion that there is not nearly enough time. She referenced the mall hassle.

She stated that people are losing faith in the Council and that we need to make this change over time. Stick with elected positions for the next four years; it will give us time to sort it out. Do we include the Clerk? She added that he is unsure **if we can put limitations on elected positions. She doesn't feel a fast process** would be fair to ourselves or others.

Mayor Halverson stated that the timing issue is purely his fault. Initially he was focused on the spring election. He acknowledges that this is a major decision, but is more convinced that credentials for these positions are more important than who they report to. He stated that he is not looking to build an empire.

He indicated that he underestimated the timeline for such a change.

2. Adjournment ~ 7:30 p.m.