

**CITY OF RHINELANDER
FINANCE, WAGE & SALARY COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 6, 2011 – 5:00-6:30 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Mark Pelletier, Sherrie Belliveau, Tom Gleason, Joe Salzer and Alex Young.

OTHERS PRESENT: Golf Course Superintendent Joe Andersen, City Administrator Bill Bell, Sue Bessert of Downtown Rhinelander, Inc., Jim Bollman of MSA, Mayor Richard Johns, Payroll Specialist Beth Mannikko, Finance Director Julie Ostrander, Clerk/Treasurer Mary Richardson, Kyle Rogers of the Northwoods River News, and Fire Chief Terry Williams.

Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mark Pelletier at 5:00 p.m. The media was notified, the agenda posted, and a quorum present to do business.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION BY BELLIVEAU, SECOND BY YOUNG, TO APPROVE THE FINANCE, WAGE & SALARY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 2, 2011. ALL AYE; MOTION CARRIED.

Unfinished Business – None.

New Business

Discuss/Approve Appointment of Beth Mannikko to Finance Assistant – Utility Billing position to replace Dave Erickson upon his retirement (July 29th), with a start date of Tuesday, June 7, 2011 to allow for necessary cross-training

Bill Bell stated that Dave Erickson is retiring July 29, 2011 and he would like to move Beth Mannikko into that position. Local 178 has given their consent, as nobody within the union is interested in the position. He would like this to take effect immediately to allow sufficient time for Beth to train with Dave. Bill stated that we would then be filling Beth's current part-time payroll specialist position through the normal procedure of advertising.

The Mayor asked if Beth will still take care of payroll until her position is filled. Julie Ostrander confirmed that, stating that they have set up a timeline for payroll and training.

Mark Pelletier noted that Beth will be a full-time employee of the Water Utility instead of a part-time City employee.

MOTION BY BELLIVEAU, SECOND BY SALZER, TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF BETH MANNIKKO TO FINANCE ASSISTANT – UTILITY BILLING POSITION TO REPLACE DAVE ERICKSON UPON HIS RETIREMENT (JULY 29TH), WITH A START DATE OF TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2011 TO ALLOW FOR NECESSARY CROSS-TRAINING. ALL AYE; MOTION CARRIED.

Discuss/Approve Executive Assistant job description to replace previous Legal/Administrative Assistant description for Lisa Kuczmarski

Bill Bell stated that the job description has been changed to delete the duties of the Legal Assistant, and to reflect some additional duties, such as workers compensation and employee safety, which all came out of the CVMIC human resources audit.

The Mayor questioned whether the title Executive Assistant is appropriate, as she is actually an administrative assistant. Bill stated that an administrative assistant types letters and performs clerical duties, while Lisa is also responsible for a City-wide safety program and recordkeeping, which are things an Administrative Assistant wouldn't do.

Sherrie Belliveau stated that she agrees with the Mayor that the Administrative Assistant title would be more appropriate. She asked if Bill thinks the new Administrator may want to make changes in who is doing what work; Bill stated that he doesn't think so. Sherrie asked Police Chief Mike Steffes if his Administrative Assistant does specialized work. Mike stated that she helps out at the front desk and takes minutes of the Police & Fire Commission meetings, but she's not in charge of any programs. Bill stated that a big one Lisa does is employee safety and workers compensation. He stated that we have administrative assistants throughout the City, and he was trying to come up with a different title because this position is different.

MOTION BY PELLETIER, SECOND BY GLEASON, TO APPROVE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT JOB DESCRIPTION TO REPLACE PREVIOUS LEGAL/ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT DESCRIPTION. ALL AYE; MOTION CARRIED.

Review of City Administrator job description

Mayor Johns stated that this was the first time we've had an administrator, and he's had some problems with the duties of the administrator versus the Mayor. He feels that some of the issues are important because of the way they've been handled in the past. The Mayor feels that wage negotiations are the responsibility of the Finance Committee, to direct the Administrator. He thinks this is important in order to maintain control over it. The Mayor stated that we need to get back to face-to-face bargaining. He feels the biggest thing is the amount of money being spent; wages are a high-cost item and the people at this table have the responsibility for the City's finances, and can't give that responsibility to someone else.

Joe Salzer stated that the system we've had in place has made it tough to know what's happening, because the Finance Committee comes into it at the end, and isn't part of the discussion at all. He feels that may not be the best way to do it.

Mark Pelletier stated that he doesn't want to see it like it was 6 years ago, as that wasn't good for anybody. Tom Gleason agreed, noting that he's sat through marathon meetings only to narrow the package down to a few small items at the very end anyway. The Mayor asked whose responsibility it should be, and Tom stated that the Council always has the option to deny a proposal. The Mayor stated that the negotiations need to take place at the Finance Committee level. Mark stated that he just doesn't want to see it go back to the old way. The Mayor stated that the Finance Committee needs to be involved throughout the process; this has to change. He stated that this Committee, and not the City Administrator, is responsible to the taxpayers.

Sherrie Belliveau stated that she doesn't want to go back to old way either, but she agrees 100% with the Mayor that coming in at the end, when the union has already agreed to something, puts us in a bad spot. Sherrie noted that this is the Finance, Wage & Salary Committee, and the Mayor is right, that's this Committee's job.

Joe stated that perhaps we can find a middle-of-the road solution. For example, the Committee could meet with the Administrator to find out what the union's looking for, and direct him as to what we feel we can live with. Then at the next meeting, the Administrator would report on the progress and it would be discussed as a Committee.

Bill Bell stated that he and the Mayor discussed this issue this morning, and the Mayor has suggested new language. The current job description says the Administrator will "assist in labor contract negotiations" and the Mayor suggests changing it to "assists the Mayor and the Finance, Wage & Salary Committee in labor contract negotiations and collective bargaining."

Tom felt the Committee should be involved at least through the exchange of proposals. Under the current system, we have no idea what the initial proposals are.

The Mayor felt there was a conflict with the Administrator doing the bargaining, as he will get the same benefit that he bargains for the other employees. Bill stated that when you're negotiating, you're a representative of the City, not an employee.

The Mayor stated that the Department Heads accepted a zero wage increase for 2011, and he appreciates that, but as far as he's concerned, we need to fix that this year. He noted that when the employees get raises but the Department Heads don't, the gap between their salaries narrows and we need to address that. He asked what the total value of the 3-year package with the unions was, including benefits, and what those settlements cost us last year, as well as what they'll cost next year and the year after. Mark stated that it's no different than contracts we've had before; the Mayor disagreed, and noted that until we actually see the numbers, we don't know where we are.

Sherrie noted that we may have made similar settlements in the past, but these are leaner times and we're committed to a multi-year contract without knowing what the future holds. She stated that the Mayor's been asking for the cost of the settlements for several months, but hasn't seen it yet.

The Committee agreed that the Mayor's proposed language addresses the issue. Alex Young noted that how it's implemented is something for this Committee to talk to the new Administrator about.

Tom noted that when he was with the Police Department, the union would come in with a ridiculous number, while knowing where they would end up anyway. He stated that they felt they weren't appreciated and that their opinions didn't matter, which was the bad part of the old bargaining process; however, he likes having everyone around the table for discussion.

Terry Williams stated that the meeting to exchange proposals can set the tone for all subsequent bargaining. He suggested that perhaps the Administrator can get the union's proposals to the Committee before the meeting, to give the Committee members time to consider them; then the Committee can sit down with the union for discussion.

Joe noted that for the Committee members, the last couple of settlements have been a very smooth process, but by the time they got to the Committee, they were pretty much settled. He stated that the Committee doesn't have to be completely hands-on, but it's important to at least have oversight.

Alex stated that he likes the direction Terry mentioned, which would keep it funneled through the Administrator. He understands the Mayor's point that the Committee is out of the loop. Going forward, we can have the Administrator handle it, but have better communication with, and more guidance from, this Committee.

Bill suggested adding another sentence, such as: "communicate with the Finance, Wage & Salary Committee throughout the process" or "maintain communication with the Committee." Joe felt that the addition of that sentence actually seems a bit more restrictive; he feels the Committee has more flexibility without it.

Sherrie stated that she wants to address the Administrator's responsibilities to the City Council, as she's been asking for two years that the Administrator maintain an electronic calendar that all Council members can access, so they know what's going on if they are trying to reach him. She noted that there have been many times she's gotten no response to voicemail or email messages, and she wants to be able to look at the Administrator's calendar and see what's scheduled.

The Mayor noted that Bill is on 16 committees, and feels that's spreading it pretty thin. He asked if the Committee wants to address that issue in the job description. Sherrie noted that she had to change the night of the Parks Committee meetings because Bill is on the YMCA Committee. Bill noted that the current job description says the Administrator serves as a member of all City committees, and suggested that language could be tweaked. Sherrie feels the Administrator should be able to join as many outside committees and organizations as he wants to, as long as he has enough time to take care of City business.

Bill stated that he's on only one committee as a private individual, but he serves as a City representative on all the others. He feels this was important for him to do, as the City didn't have good relations with other community organizations; however, that's now been repaired and he wouldn't expect the new Administrator to need to serve on all of those committees. Sherrie suggested that perhaps others could serve as City representatives on some of those committees. She noted that we can't have the Administrator join a committee that meets during the day; we need to set some guidance as to spending enough time in City Hall to take care of business. Bill suggested that the Council have a retreat with the new Administrator to share their feelings about community involvement and other issues. Alex noted that we can also ask those questions during the interview process.

Alex stated that he thinks the job description is well-written; how it's interpreted and implemented is what's important, and we'll have those discussions with the new Administrator.

The Mayor stated that he appreciates the discussion tonight.

Discuss/Approve Engineering Services Agreement with MSA Professional Services for Fire/EMS Building Expansion Project

Terry Williams noted that we previously discussed this as part of the Aspirus contract. He stated that part of their rent will pay for this. This is a standard agreement for architect and engineering services. Terry stated that the total for the project is about \$195,000, plus \$34,545 for the contract with MSA; the total is about \$230,000 when you include everything, not just the expansion. MSA says right now, bids have been coming in 15% less than estimate.

MOTION BY YOUNG, SECOND BY GLEASON, TO APPROVE ENGINEERING SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH MSA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR FIRE/EMS BUILDING EXPANSION PROJECT. ALL AYE; MOTION CARRIED.

Discuss/Approve City's Intent to Provide Continued Support for the Parking Advisory Board Program

Mark Pelletier noted that he is a member of the Parking Advisory Board. He advised that the 5-year agreement for maintenance of the lots will expire on 12/31/11, and he thinks it's in the City's best interest to renew that agreement. At this time, he is just looking for support.

Sherrie Belliveau stated that she would like to see what the existing agreement is. Sue Bessert advised that the agreement includes the City of Rhinelander and DRI. The City contributes \$15,000 annually, and DRI contributes \$30,000 annually. In the past, the Cleary Foundation also contributed \$15,000. At this time, they are looking for the City's intent to proceed with an agreement, so that DRI can continue to work with the Cleary Foundation, as they want to know what the City's intent is.

Alex Young stated it's understandable that a private foundation wants to know we're on board before they commits. Sherrie noted that we've had this money in the coffers the last few years. Bill Bell stated that we still have money in the downtown greenspace fund; the idea was to put it on the budget for street lights, but that was never done, so it's been coming out of the General Fund.

MOTION BY BELLIVEAU, SECOND BY SALZER, TO APPROVE CITY'S INTENT TO PROVIDE CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE PARKING ADVISORY BOARD PROGRAM. ALL AYE; MOTION CARRIED.

Matters of Emergency/Informational Nature – Nothing to report.

Approval of Bills and Claims

MOTION BY BELLIVEAU, SECOND BY YOUNG, TO APPROVE BILLS AND CLAIMS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$290,042.02. ALL AYE; MOTION CARRIED.

Future Agenda Requests and Meeting Date

Future Agenda Requests:

1. Review agreement for parking lot maintenance

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, July 5, 2011 at 4:00 p.m.

Executive Session

MOTION BY YOUNG, SECOND BY SALZER, TO ADJOURN INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO §19.85(1)(g), WIS. STATS., TO APPROVE THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF MAY 2, 2011. ALL AYE; MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY YOUNG, SECOND BY BELLIVEAU, TO APPROVE THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF MAY 2, 2011. ALL AYE; MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY GLEASON, SECOND BY YOUNG, TO ADJOURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION AND RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION. ALL AYE; MOTION CARRIED.

Adjournment

MOTION BY YOUNG, SECOND BY BELLIVEAU, TO ADJOURN THE JUNE 6, 2011 FINANCE, WAGE AND SALARY COMMITTEE MEETING AT 6:30 PM. ALL AYE; MOTION CARRIED.

Approved By _____
Mark Pelletier, Chairman

Received By _____
City Clerk/Treasurer's Office

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