

## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

4:00 P.M., Monday, February 12, 2018

The regular meeting of the Personnel Committee was held at 4:00 p.m., Monday, February 12, 2018 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Moye, Rice and Ward, Administrator Tucker and City Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business.

1. Administrator Tucker called the meeting to order because the Committee will not have its full complement of members until the Special Election is held on Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>. She acknowledged that the press and public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

### **2. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes**

**MOTION:** Councilmember Rice moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 10, 2018 as submitted; Councilmember Moye seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **Citizens' Comments – None**

4. **Old Business**

#### **A. Update on Personnel Handbook**

Administrator Tucker stated that staff had nothing new to report at this meeting, but a draft copy with the revisions would be available for the March meeting.

#### **B. Continued discussion of Administrator's Personal Goal for 2018**

Subsequent to the January meeting, Councilmember Moye asked for and was sent a copy of the evaluation form for department managers and the City Administrator's form that shows where the Administrator's personal goal is identified. At the same meeting, Administrator Tucker suggested continuing the development of the continuity plan as her 2018 goal, but Councilmember Moye wanted the goal selected to have a clear and measurable means by which to evaluate it.

Councilmember Moye stated that what he wanted was an objective and clear delineation of what the personal goal was to be and how Council could objectively say that it was or was not accomplished. He indicated that he would, for instance, like for the goal to be in tune with the continuity plan and the things that are important to City Council with the addition of measurability and specificity.

Councilmember Rice stated that she was fascinated with the differences between government and the corporate world in that many things that work in the corporate world do not translate into government and vice versa. She said that she did not know if a s.m.a.r.t. (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely) goal was possible since so much of what local government does is to provide services. She then asked Councilmember Moye if he had a suggestion for a measurable goal.

Councilmember Moye said that a hypothetical goal could be for the Administrator to make recommendations on the three (3) top priority positions; this would be measurable in that by the end of the year, she would have made recommendations to City Council on these positions.

The Administrator thought it interesting that a personal goal was included in her evaluation because her work plan for any year was the plan laid out in the annual budget, but, in any given fiscal year, interruptions or deviations occur to that plan, which might be the will of the people, the will of Council or a weather event. Administrator Tucker recalled one (1) year when Council eliminated the personal goal from the evaluation form because the City had experienced so many interruptions. In addition, she stated that if Council were to choose a goal that needed to be included in the budget, they would need to do so in the next two or three (2 or 3) months.

Councilmember Moye commented that he was not ready to make a recommendation to change the entire evaluation process, but he was thinking about some of the challenges and about the current performance trends whereby companies are moving to more frequent performance evaluations, quarterly or monthly or weekly. The evaluations are much smaller in nature and scope and much less time-consuming, but more useful because the purpose of an evaluation is to continuously improve. If that was the goal, i.e. to set a goal for the end of the year, he understood the challenge; he said that he would fully support revamping the system the City was using to evaluate what would work better for the City and the employees. He suggested that one (1) huge goal for the end of the year might be replaced with goals that are in-line with the City's vision and have micro evaluations as completed.

According to publications the Administrator reads in her field, the move is away from annual evaluations all together because they are not as meaningful. Although the City goes through the exercise of annual evaluations, the Administrator believed that, in all departments, when something is going well or something needs to be tweaked or something is not going well, it is handled in the moment. If the City were to go to a more frequent evaluation, Administrator Tucker said that the City would have to define how they come together to make decisions on increases.

Councilmember Moye assured the Administrator that the challenge of compiling the smaller evaluations into a single number for the determination of wage increases has been solved by several companies; this process also eliminates recency bias. He did not think that this would replace the current system, but would augment it.

Human Resources Director DeGroot wholeheartedly agreed with Councilmember Moye; she indicated that the department managers have discussed and were considering more frequent evaluations. In her opinion, they would be more effective and much easier for the department heads to evaluate personnel bit by bit than to collect or try to remember an entire year.

Councilmember Rice stated that she was not comfortable making a motion at this time, but she also did not want to set a goal to be accomplished in a year and allow less than a year for its completion.

Councilmember Moye contended that the Administrator would not be judged on an annual goal that was identified in June.

In light of what has been said, Councilmember Moyer thought the discussion could go two (2) ways; the first would be to take the continuity plan and develop a measurable objective behind it, and the second, which would not be mutually exclusive, would be to try to implement some type of more frequent performance evaluations.

Administrator Tucker stated that to change the evaluation frequency for City employees would take a year; therefore, she preferred not to pair the two (2).

Speaking freely, the Administrator said that, in terms of achievement and what she feels she has given to the City in calendar 2018, getting the beach renourishment project underway should have been the “fantastic goal” achieved. She commented that the behind the scenes work was “monumental” – working with the stakeholders, juggling all of the state and federal agencies involved, etc. She would have named starting the fifteen million dollar (\$15,000,000) renourishment project as the Administrator’s Personal Goal and she would mark it achieved. In her opinion, the City does not celebrate the victories enough; the City should not take them in stride. She added that these goals should not be set just for the sake of setting a goal or to make more work to be able to say at the end of the year that the goal was met when the work plate was already full and overflowing. Based on its importance to the City, the Administrator still felt that refinement and completion of the continuity plan was a worthwhile personal goal.

Councilmember Moyer agreed with the continuity plan being the focus of the Administrator’s 2018 Personal Goal if it were something like to identify and to rank the prioritization of positions to be filled and to provide a plan for the top three (3) positions. He could support such a goal and would be comfortable taking it to City Council as the best goal by stating that the continuity plan was essential to the City and these three (3) things could be done to resolve issues with these critical positions.

### **C. Continued discussion of the City’s Education Reimbursement Policy**

Administrator Tucker expressed two (2) areas of concern with the education reimbursement policy, and they are as follows:

- Situations where employees receive a scholarship or grant but are not compelled to disclose it to the City when filing for reimbursement so that the City only pays the net balance; or
- Situations where the City is not protected when employees receive tuition loan forgiveness for the job they do for the City, and the City has no way to track or monitor the tuition forgiveness.

Councilmember Rice asked about paying the institution rather than the employee, but the Administrator reminded her that the City’s policy is reimbursement; there is also the fact that not all employees make excellent grades to be reimbursed one hundred percent (100%) of their tuition investment.

HR Director DeGroot stated that the goal was to tighten up the language of the policy, as well as the request for tuition reimbursement forms.

The Administrator wanted Council to be aware of the policy change because employees who are already in the City's program might push back against it.

Councilmember Rice voiced her understanding that, with the new tax plan, tuition reimbursement would be considered taxable income.

As an accountant, Councilmember Ward said that he was unfamiliar with this and that he would do some research on it.

#### **D. Continued discussion of the Continuity Plan**

Administrator Tucker stated that, in the upcoming year, she sees three (3) critical areas to be addressed and the first is the Public Works Department. The Public Works Committee, Directors Kerr and Pitts, along with HR Director DeGroot have been working together to devise a plan that will help the Department to function better with its expanded areas of responsibility. Currently, the Public Works Department is the only department where the Assistant Director functions more as a superintendent than a true assistant who could step in when the Director was absent. She noted that the Public Works Committee was going to hold a Special Meeting to discuss the staffing needs before budget work begins.

Director Pitts confirmed the needs in his department; he stated that his primary concern was the lack of backup to monitor the underground storage tanks at a time when the regulatory agencies are increasing and tightening up on their regulations. The City needs to be proactive with drainage, and he acknowledged that the City has a plan, but it is a plan. He expressed the belief that someone should be walking the City's drainage ditches daily.

Another critical personnel concern was that Chief Buckhannon serves a dual function as Chief of Police and IT Manager; the Administrator stated that a loss in either position would be very costly for the City. She noted that the City was still in the process of getting out the RFP for IT services that was included in the FY18 budget; in her opinion, an outside source would be the temporary fix. She explained that the City has evolved with a network of computers attached to servers that has become "Chief Buckhannon's child." As a result, whenever someone has a real computer issue, the call goes out to the Chief, and he goes into his room, does his magic, and the problem is solved, showing that the City's employees have become very accustomed to having an on-site person who responds quickly. She opined that outsourcing IT services would not work permanently for the City unless the company was right across the Connector to respond quickly. The ideal situation would be to have an individual or a company on-board before the Chief decides to retire to begin to absorb his body of knowledge. IT is another critical area of the City that has no backup.

Seeking clarification, Councilmember Moyer asked if staff was looking to add the supervisors to Public Works because they could play the assistant role or was staff also looking to add an assistant.

Administrator Tucker stated that she believes that the Department needs a true assistant as well as the supervisors, particularly one (1) over drainage. She envisions the supervisors as being empowered to make recommendations and get things done, to stay abreast of projects until they

are completed, as well as to give the Director and Assistant Director feedback so that they can provide updates to the Administrator and/or governing body, and to identify problems.

Providing additional information about the existing Assistant Public Works Director, Director Pitts stated that the role of Public Works has changed with the changes to life on the island, and, although Joe Washington is the Assistant Director, he has specific manual duties that are not supervisory, but he can juggle a route if needed, he could direct the Caterpillar to go to a certain location. On the other hand, if equipment suffers a breakdown, he will call Director Pitts even if he is a thousand (1,000) miles away. Mr. Washington can do the tasks that are directed at him, but he has not been trained to take anything upon himself, other than straightening a street sign or picking up trash. The position has evolved to a point that the Public Works Director cannot be the hands-on, on-site supervisor one hundred percent (100%) of the time; for him, the Assistant would delegate assignments and follow-up on them to completion.

Director Pitts acknowledged that Council has increased the ditch maintenance on the island from a five-year (5 yr.) cycle to a three-year (3 yr.) cycle. The Director told the Committee that, less than one (1) year ago, the County was on the island and cleaned the ditch at 32-32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue; now that ditch has become like a bowl that holds water. The supervisor in charge of drainage must become intimately knowledgeable about the island's ditch drainage system.

The Director wants someone who can manage people, is capable of dealing with other agencies, such as Charleston County, DHEC, NPDES, etc., and be capable of being trained as the UST backup resource on the island.

Councilmember Ward voiced concern over the anticipated increases to the budget and pondered over where the additional funds would come from.

Councilmember Rice reminded the Committee that the City would only have the services of Mr. Schupp for beach trash and recycling removal for one (1) year.

**5. New Business – None**

**6. Miscellaneous Business – None**

Next Meeting Date: 4:00 p.m., Monday, March 12, 2018 in the City Hall Conference Room.

**7. Executive Session – not needed**

**8. Adjournment**

**MOTION: Councilmember Rice moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:45 p.m.; Councilmember Ward seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland  
City Clerk