

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
4:00 p.m., Monday, March 12, 2018

The regular meeting of the Personnel Committee was called to order at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, March 12, 2018 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Ferencz, Moye and Rice, Administrator Tucker, Assistant Administrator Fragoso, Human Resources Coordinator DeGroot and Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business.

1. Administrator Tucker called the meeting to order and acknowledged that the press and public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Councilmember Rice nominated John Moye for Committee Chair; Councilmember Moye declined the nomination stating that he did not have the time to devote to the Committee at this time.

Councilmember Moye nominated Councilmember Ferencz for Chair; Councilmember Rice seconded and Councilmember Ferencz was unanimously elected Chair.

Councilmember Rice nominated Councilmember Moye as Vice Chair; Chair Ferencz seconded and Councilmember Moye was unanimously elected Vice Chair.

3. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

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

4. **Citizens' Comments – None**

5. **Old Business**

A. Review of updates to the Personnel Handbook and next steps

MOTION: Chair Ferencz moved to approve the updates to the Personnel Handbook and discussion purposes; Councilmember Rice seconded.

Administrator Tucker told the Committee that the handbook has gone through one (1) legal review; Department Managers have made additional changes that have been incorporated by Ms. DeGroot; and the document will likely have a second legal review before being presented to City Council for approval. The document in the meeting packet had the changes red-lined; one (1) key change throughout the document was to insert the Human Resources Coordinator. All cash awards have been removed; some of the language on safety and risk management has been updated, the addition of no discrimination based on genetics, and language on workplace violence was strengthened. Department Managers will go over the document again tomorrow, and the Handbook will be forwarded to the labor attorney for a second review.

Councilmember Rice asked why an employee was not allowed to take sick leave to care for a sibling.

Ms. DeGroot explained that the sick leave policy follows Family Medical Leave Act guidelines which do not include siblings.

Councilmember Rice thought that excluding siblings was inconsistent with, for instance, the Bereavement Policy.

The Administrator said that she would ask about that because she could imagine circumstances where a sibling might have to be a caregiver to another sibling.

When Chair Ferencz asked if the cash awards were removed from the Handbook for legal reasons, Administrator Tucker stated that the City has learned that it cannot give bonuses over and above someone's wage, and that opinion has not changed. The goal in removing them was to impress upon employees that safety should be a policy and practice, and the City should congratulate employees for safe practices, but not financially.

Ms. DeGroot added that the City will invest more in safety and risk management with all departments and use some of those funds for safety meetings, breakfasts or lunch and learns, etc. versus paying individuals by drawing a name out of hat. The City will continue the practice until the revised handbook has been adopted and distributed.

One (1) thing out of the norm that Councilmember Moye saw was compensatory time for exempt employees; he was more familiar with the supervisor acknowledging that work has been performed that required additional hours and giving the employee time off. The Personnel Handbook states "Exempt employees may accrue compensatory time on an hour-for-hour basis for hours worked over 40 hours in one week." He opined that the persons to whom this applies did not take advantage of it; therefore, he thought the language should more reflect actual practices.

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The difference in what the City does and what he was familiar with was that the Department Managers choose a day(s) when taking comp time works in their personal and work schedules, and they coordinate those dates through the City Administrator. The persons to whom comp time applies are the Department Managers, the City Administrator, the Assistant City Administrator, the City Treasurer and the HR Coordinator.

Chair Ferencz stated that, in her experience, exempt employees do not get overtime or comp time and their salaries are at an executive level to compensate for the hours required to do the job.

Ms. DeGroot stated that a difference existed in exempt for comp time between the private sector and the public sector. She agreed that, under the Fair Labor Standards Act, a list of criteria must be met; in the public sector, comp time is allowed at any salary as long as the position meets the criteria in the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Councilmember Moye thought that the members of the Committee agreed with the spirit of compensatory time, but "the hour-by-hour over forty (40) hours" complicated the issue when it was not being followed.

Ms. DeGroot offered that if the language was clarified by eliminating the "over forty (40) hours in a week" and "accrue hour-by-hour" and adding the "need for approval," the issues could be resolved, and the Administrator offered to review policies for other local governments.

Chair Ferencz questioned that the City had a “designated physician;” the Administrator answered that the designated physician was for workers compensation cases. Administrator Tucker noted that the City also has a specific physician who reviews and approves training protocols.

Chair Ferencz asked about a Grievance Committee appointed by City Council for a term of three (3) years.

Administrator Tucker reported that, in practice, a Grievance Committee was appointed on an as-needed basis.

Chair Ferencz asked that the language be changed to state “appointed as needed.”

Councilmember Rice was pleased that a section was added addressing social media based on changes in recent years.

Councilmember Moye stated that the document was “incredibly comprehensive.”

VOTE on motion to accept the Personnel Handbook as updated: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Continued discussion of City Administrator’s Personal Goal for 2018

MOTION: Councilmember Moye moved to remove the City Administrator’s Personal Goal for 2018 based on previous discussion; Chair Ferencz seconded; and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. Consideration of changes to the City’s Education Reimbursement Policy

Ms. DeGroot stated that the changes discussed at the previous meeting were included in the draft Personnel Handbook discussed earlier.

D. Continued discussion of the Continuity Plan presented in 2017. Consider changes such as: adding start date and retirement eligibility date for each department head, financial implication of loss of continuity and training in place for each department head for emergency coverage

MOTION: Chair Ferencz moved to continue the discussion on the Continuity Plan as outlined above; Councilmember Rice seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Although the City would not have a financial liability when the upper management personnel retire, the liability would be the loss of the efficiency in getting things done because they have done them many times; more people or outsourcing might be required to accomplish the tasks when the manager has multiple responsibilities like Chief Buckhannon being the perfect example as Police Chief and IT Department.

The Chair understood from the Continuity Plan that training was in place in most departments for work to continue with little disruption if the department manager was absent for an extended time.

Administrator Tucker agreed that, generally, that was true, but weaknesses did exist such as the Public Works Department; if Director Pitts was out for a period of time, trash and debris removal

would continue with little to no disruption in service, but the many other functions that fall to the Director would not be done.

On the subject of the projected retirement dates for the Department Managers, the Administrator thought that was considered private and not public information.

Chair Ferencz said that she was interested in knowing how many were eligible and whether the City should expect to lose more than one (1) person to retirement in any given year.

The Administrator advised the Chair that the majority of Department Managers were and have been eligible to retire for several years. Although this information might be alarming for the Committee and the balance of Council, the Administrator commented that anyone looking at the Isle of Palms would see the longevity and continuity of personnel that speaks loud and clear as positive and uplifting information about working for the City of Isle of Palms.

6. New Business

- A. Review City Code, Chapter 3, sections 1-3-31 through 1-3-36
Develop timeline for revisions to City Code as it pertains to:**
- 1. All standing committees – name, responsibilities and meetings**
 - 2. The nomination and voting process for standing committees**

MOTION: Chair Ferencz moved that, at the April Personnel Committee meeting, staff present revisions to the City Code in the areas referenced above and dates associated with the necessary ordinance changes; Councilmember Rice seconded.

The Chair explained that this was not intended to be an easy project because, rather than look at the standing committees as they are in the Code, she was interested in staff looking at the City globally to decide what it needed in the way of committees, to select committee name and to assign responsibilities accordingly.

On the subject of choosing members for standing Committees, the Administrator recalled that quite a few years ago, the nominations for them devolved into many motions and a degree of confusion; to avoid that, the Mayor began to poll Councilmembers for their preferences and made appointments in line with those preferences. The process evolved, but no change was made to the City Code to reflect the change in practice.

VOTE: The motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- B. Develop timeline to review options related to Public Works staffing**
- 1. Discuss and determine timeline to review job descriptions**
 - 2. Identify redundancy of staffing**
 - 3. Identify alternatives to increasing the number of regular employees**

MOTION: Councilmember Moyer moved to discuss Public Works staffing; Councilmember Rice seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Chair noted that job descriptions were included in the meeting packet for an Administrative Assistant and a Maintenance and Facilities Supervisor; these positions would be the first hired toward reaching the vision in the Continuity Plan.

Director Pitts stated that the Department currently has an Assistant Director, but his capabilities are limited; as a result, the position has morphed into one of a working foreman. In the Director's absence, he can keep the trash and debris pickup running and the removal of trash from the beach. The Assistant Director has thirty-five (35) years of service and is eligible for retirement.

When Director Pitts went to the Public Works Department fifteen to sixteen (15-16) years ago, the Department was responsible for garbage and sanitation, and today the list of responsibilities is quite long, i.e. from drainage to reporting on the underground storage tanks, to stormwater, to pooper-scoopers, to managing the one hundred fifteen (115) commercial dumpsters on the island, to managing the budget, etc. Director Pitts is the only Class AB operator employed by the City for the underground storage tanks; the City's Fire Inspector is being trained as an AB operator. If the new supervisory position is approved, he would become an AB operator and be the person primarily responsible for the reporting with Director Pitts and the Fire Inspector as backup.

In the Chair's opinion, the first thing that was needed was updating the job descriptions for the Public Works Director and Assistant to reflect the requirements of the job, not the qualifications or limitations of any one (1) person. A better job title for the current Assistant Director would be Sanitation and Debris Foreman or Garbage and Debris Supervisor.

According to the Administrator, in an ideal world, Public Works would have a Director, an Assistant Director, as well as the three (3) supervisory positions referred to in the Continuity Plan and an Administrative Assistant. Realistically, that type of restructuring was needed now, but cannot be achieved financially in one (1) year.

Councilmember Moye stated that he would better understand what the restructuring would look like if he had the job descriptions for the other two (2) supervisory positions proposed, and he asked that they be written.

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Chair Ferencz agreed with Councilmember Moye that the Committee would be more successful in getting Council to approve the two (2) positions and to include two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) to the FY19 budget if they could show them the full picture and the way the new positions would improve the functionality of the Department. The Chair proposed that what the Public Works Department needed was a true Assistant Director rather than the Maintenance and Facilities Supervisor.

Ms. DeGroot stated that the request to include the Maintenance and Facilities Supervisor position was to meet an immediate need and the job description for the Assistant Director will be revised once the current Assistant Director retires; the Director's job description will be updated when this new position is filled. She agreed that the supervisor's job would be a high level position and the name could be changed to whatever the Committee chooses. She said that the position needed to be filled so that a succession plan could be developed, as well as the need for this person as explained in the Continuity Plan.

To assist in getting the position approved by Council and included in the budget, the Chair thought the name should be changed to Assistant Director; she opined that the title change would be more effective in attracting qualified candidates for the position.

If the Committee did not make a decision on the two (2) positions in this meeting, Council would be well into the budget when the April meeting happens. Administrator Tucker stated that adding to the budget once it has been presented was a difficult thing to do and, therefore, the financial impact of the new positions should be included from the beginning of budget discussions. Another

complication to delaying a decision was that, if the City chose to fund this position from accommodations taxes, it must be approved by the ATAX Committee.

Shifting the discussion to the Administrative Assistant, Councilmember Rice recounted a situation where a neighbor called Director Pitts about a drainage ditch, and a day or so passed before he could visit the site and determine the problem and resolution.

Administrator Tucker added that sometimes the Director does not get the call because the answer machine at Public Works is full; the citizen might call multiple times and the machine is always full so the citizen gets angry and calls the Administrator complaining that no one has returned the call and no one has come out to address the problem. The end result is that the City has failed to meet the needs of its residents relative to drainage.

The Administrator said that, in addition to answering the calls, the Administrative Assistant would be responsible to follow up on the call to insure not only that the problem was identified and something was being done about it but also follows up with the resident.

Chair Ferencz asked if the calls to Public Works could be routed to the Communication Specialists at the Public Safety Building, and the Administrator stated that they could but they would not follow up in any way.

As presented, the Administrative Assistant would be a part-time position with no benefits; in addition to handling phone calls, this person would write purchase orders, assist with the administration of the budget, take payments for additional trash barrels, etc.

The total cost the first year would include the salaries, benefits for one (1) person, renovation of the building to house the additional personnel, computers and one (1) vehicle.

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The Administrator stated that her understanding of tasks assigned by the Committee was to create an ideal, stating how the Department would be structured and the recommended order of hiring to accomplish that goal, as well as to review all of the job descriptions

Councilmember Moyer thought that the proposed positions should emphasize how they would provide immediate assistance to the Director and how they would allow the Public Works Department to be more responsive to the residents

C. Consideration of changing the frequency of performance reviews

MOTION: Councilmember Moyer moved for the City to transition to quarterly employee performance reviews in 2019; Councilmember Ferencz seconded.

Councilmember Moyer stated that the City currently has annual performance evaluations which are more time consuming and less helpful than more frequent evaluation systems. He knew that training would be required; better communication and positioning on the reasons why the change was happening. He noted that the quarterly evaluations would roll up to produce the annual evaluation still achieving the requirements for the annual performance review. He asked that staff present a plan for the transition at the April Committee meeting.

Director Pitts commented that the Isle of Palms was a seasonal community and, in season, time was critical; to bring an employee out of the field for a review would be difficult.

Director Page stated that, if she had an employee who was not performing, she addressed it immediately so that, by the end of the year, the employee was doing a good job. She described quarterly reviews as busy work.

Councilmember Moye said that he was looking to Ms. DeGroot to bring value to the process because the value of frequent evaluations was not to tell the employee he did well or he did poorly, but how was the employee progressing toward a goal set for him and how he could do better. He indicated that the goal of more frequent evaluations was continuous improvement, and they were an opportunity for the Department Manager to grow and develop staff members. He stated that he was looking to Ms. DeGroot to develop a plan that would work for the seasonality of the City and the City structure that would achieve the desired results.

Councilmember Rice suggested that the performance reviews happen every four (4) months rather than every quarter eliminating an evaluation falling in the middle of tourist season.

AMENDMENT: Councilmember Moye moved to amend his motion to say “more frequent” rather than “quarterly;” Councilmember Rice seconded and the amendment PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

AMENDED MOTION: The motion as amended PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

D. Discussion of City’s current Human Resources processes, protocols and tools

Councilmember Moye said that he wanted an audit of Human Resources technology, protocols and processes in place; the current Human Resources status and the areas with the greatest opportunity, improvements needed or areas to do better.

7. Miscellaneous Business

Next Meeting Date: 8:00 a.m., Thursday, April 5th in the Conference Room

8. Executive Session – not needed

9. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Moye moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:24 p.m.; Chair Ferencz seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk