

SPECIAL PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING

1:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 22, 2014

A Special Meeting of the Personnel Committee was held at 1:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 22, 2014 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Bettelli and Harrington, Chair Ferencz, City Administrator Tucker, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business.

1. Chair Ferencz called the meeting to order and acknowledged that the press and public had been duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2. Old Business

A. Reconsideration of Job Descriptions for City Treasurer and Assistant City Administrator

Administrator Tucker stated that she had made several changes to the job description for the City Treasurer to have it more accurately describe the duties currently performed by the Treasurer. The Committee was satisfied with the job description as presented.

Chair Ferencz stated that, in her opinion, there was a difference between "Assistant to" and "Assistant Administrator"; an Assistant Administrator shared responsibilities with the Administrator. Following protocol, if the Administrator is unavailable, the Assistant Administrator makes all decisions; therefore, the Chair stated the view that the job description should be clear that it enables the Assistant to make decisions. The Chair indicated that she had gone online to look at Assistant Administrator job descriptions from other municipalities to get a better idea about the things that should be included; two (2) of these descriptions were included in the meeting packets.

Councilmember Bettelli said that he had a problem with the phrase "periods of expected or unexpected absences."

Administrator Tucker agreed with the Councilmember and suggested that the sentence be moved to the top of the job description; the Administrator cited an occasion when Assistant Dziuban acted in her stead at a meeting earlier in the day.

The Chair suggested that the words "Ability to" be removed from the sentence and agreed that the statement should be moved to the first paragraph.

On the issue of absences, the Committee agreed to change the sentence to "Functions as Administrator when necessary."

Responding to the Chair's desire to consolidate the many statements referring to the website, the Administrator stated that she thought they should remain delineated, especially for recruiting to insure an applicant knew that this was going to be a big part of her job.

Chair Ferencz said that she believes that the job description should focus on the Assistant aspect of the job and not the website and social media sites. She then recommended that the Administrator write a job description for an Assistant City Administrator.

Since City Council was reluctant to approve some, but not all, of the revised job descriptions, the Committee asked Administrator Tucker to try to have a new job description for the Assistant City Administrator for the Committee to review at a special meeting called for Thursday, October 23 at 2:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. Administrator Tucker was confident that she and Assistant Dziuban could have a new description for that meeting; Assistant Dziuban left the meeting to generate an agenda for the special meeting and to notice it on the website.

B. Discussion of Job Description and Evaluation Tool for the City Administrator

Chair Ferencz told the Committee that the multi-colored job description in packets was a compilation of the job descriptions presented at the October 8 meeting that combined input from the Chair and Councilmember Harrington's revisions and now incorporated Councilmember Bettelli's version as well. The last two (2) job descriptions in packets were the same; the first contains headings and the second does not.

Councilmember Bettelli suggested that the Committee use the multi-colored version as its work document for this meeting.

After extensive deliberation and discussion, the Committee unanimously agreed on a version without headings that will be presented to City Council for approval at its October meeting.

MOTION: Councilmember Bettelli moved to recommend to City Council for the approval of the job description for the City Administrator; Councilmember Harrington seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Ferencz said that she had completely revamped the previous evaluation form presented for the Committee's review; she explained that she liked this format because it is an Excel spreadsheet that automatically calculates, and criteria are grouped together under the same attribute titles, which do not have to remain.

In this form, the person is not being rated on a scale of one to five (1-5) of whether the task was done or not, but considers the percentage of time – no one is capable of doing everything one hundred percent (100%) of the time. The evaluator has the opportunity to indicate those things that are done one hundred percent (100%) of the time and graduates down from there; it is more than just was the task done or not. The descriptives that follow the headings were taken from the functions that are in the job descriptions, which follows the Chair's belief that the evaluation should follow the job description.

Councilmember Bettelli commented that the newest evaluation tool has fifty-four (54) items to respond to and the existing tool has sixteen (16), and Councilmembers already struggle to turn them in on time. He referred to item four under the heading of "Leadership" that states the following:

Provides mentoring and coaching to key staff as part of their evaluation.

The Councilmember asked what type of documentation would an administrator need to show to a councilmember; he added that he was thinking of the paper trail that would end up being "enormous" at a time that the City is working with a lean budget and a lean staff.

On that issue, Administrator Tucker stated that she did not think it was appropriate for Councilmembers to see the evaluations of individual staff members; she noted that many could have growth opportunities, criticisms or praises in their evaluations that could improve over the years; if Councilmembers were to have access to evaluations, they could be prejudiced toward that employee. The Administrator agreed that it would be difficult to document that category.

Councilmember Bettelli then questioned the statement that reads;

Motivates and inspires council and staff and the public.

Councilmember Harrington voiced the opinion that the descriptive points were very subjective, and the Chair agreed that the entire evaluation is more subjective than objective.

Councilmember Bettelli commented that these points under the headings appear to create more paperwork for the Administrator that will take time away from her running the City. In his opinion, being subjective or objective, documentation will be needed to back-up what one is doing. He also pointed out that there are members of Council who have little interaction with City staff.

Recreation Director Page stated as a matter of fact that she "hates" evaluations, but that she does understand the need for them; the Director said that the department heads try "very hard" to be objective on evaluations for their employees. She added that it was easy to have someone who does not like a manager for any number of reasons, but that employee might be "buddies" with Councilmembers; she was aware of several cities where Councilmembers did not like the Administrator or certain department heads. With that in mind, the Director encouraged the Committee to have an objective evaluation form for the Administrator; she added that, in her opinion, the rating scale for the Administrator should be more in-line with other evaluations which use the terms "meets expectation, exceeds expectations," etc.

Councilmember Harrington stated that his concerns were fairness and measuring performance toward stated goals. On the subject of goals, he thought that Council should design a goal for an administrator or indicate that a specific goal should be set for a department head. The Councilmember recalled discussions where the weight of the evaluation regarding the budget was too high, or possibly, should not be included in the evaluation in any way other than "meets budget" as opposed to ending the year being "X" percent under budget. He indicated that he would be more comfortable with a more objective evaluation tool.

Chair Ferencz stated that the descriptive points under "Fiscal Management and Budgeting" were more objective in her opinion.

Assistant Dziuban asked whether Councilmembers would rate the administrator on these categories based on meetings or on evidence provided by the administrator.

The Administrator voiced concern that there will be huge variations among Council on how the evaluation tool presented at this meeting was to be scored; for example, they may read all of the descriptive points under a heading and give one (1) score which would then to be divided by the number of points in the category. Administrator Tucker opined that the scored evaluations would be inconsistent because the scoring is somewhat complicated.

Chair Ferencz expressed the opinion that the City Administrator's evaluation should be more than just a supervisor's evaluation; she added that the job the Administrator does and how she does it is much more important in terms of the City structure that the Committee needed to look at a tool that is more comprehensive.

Director Page stated that some of the leadership qualities on which department heads are evaluated on are qualities expected of an administrator. She agreed that the form presented to the Committee was complicated and that some Councilmembers would not take the time to score it; she suggested that the points under a category could be included in a paragraph which Councilmember would score once.

Chair Ferencz agreed that the Director's approach would simplify the task and stated that her goal for the evaluation tool as for it to become an education tool for an administrator based on the feedback on the evaluations.

When Administrator Tucker summarized her understanding of Director Page's suggestion, she indicated that the descriptive statements would be removed, and actual rating to be applied would be one (1) score for each heading, totaled and divided by the number of headings. She also understood that the descriptive statements included in a paragraph under the heading would be topics on which to base the evaluation score.

The Administrator thought that the first statement under the last heading "Going forward" would provide an opportunity for each member of Council to recommend a goal for the next year; the descriptive point referenced is:

What comments do you have for the City Administrator, i.e. priorities, expectations, goals or objectives for the next rating period?

Responding to the Chair's question about whether or not the descriptive statements would be enough for the paragraph under each heading, Councilmember Bettelli said that he still has issues with some of the points.

Chair Ferencz asked whether the Committee was expected to present all of the job descriptions and the evaluation tools for approval at the Council meeting of October 28th, and the Administrator responded that she understood that Council wanted the complete packet.

The Chair posed the question to the Committee about which evaluation tool the Committee wanted to present to Council for the City Administrator position, i.e. the form discussed at this meeting or the supervisor form.

Councilmember Harrington stated that he agreed with Councilmember Bettelli to use the same evaluation tool used for department managers tweaked to fit the administrator position.

Chair Ferencz recalled that currently Councilmembers use the supervisory evaluation tool when evaluating the Administrator and have additional objective statements that the Administrator created. To the opinion that Council has no input on the Administrator's goals, Administrator Tucker stated that Council has input when they approve the annual goals; when first submitted to the Personnel Committee, they have the choice to approve or disapprove or to tweak the goals. Historically, the goals submitted have been received positively and sent on to Council with a recommendation to approve.

Administrator Tucker said that this all started because Council felt that a fifteen percent (15%) weight to their subjective evaluation was not enough and, therefore, felt it was not worth it to complete it and that the fifteen percent (15%) weight minimized the importance of their opinions. Some members thought that the objective side was given too much weight. The weights attributed to each section of the administrator's evaluation were determined by a prior Council. She commented that a possible solution might be to give more weight to the subjective portion, using the same supervisory evaluation tool used for department managers with higher percentages and leaving the goal establishment the same as it has been.

Chair Ferencz stated that one (1) of her objections to the old way was that the goals put so much work on the Administrator and the department heads.

The Committee agreed to defer further work on the evaluation tool for the City Administrator until the November meeting.

MOTION: Councilmember Harrington moved to recommend to City Council the approval of the job description of the City Administrator as changed; Councilmember Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Bettelli moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:05 p.m.; Councilmember Harrington seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk