

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

3:00 p.m., Wednesday, November 1, 2017

The regular meeting of the Personnel Committee was held at 3:00 p.m., Wednesday, November 1, 2017 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmember Bettelli and Chair Harrington, Administrator Tucker, Assistant Administrator Fragoso and City Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business.

1. Chair Harrington 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. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

MOTION: Councilmember Bettelli moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 2, 2017 as submitted; Chair Harrington seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments – None

4. Old Business

A. Consideration of filling open seat on the Planning Commission and review of candidate pool for Boards and Commissions appointments

MOTION: Chair Harrington moved to appoint Phillip Pounds to the Planning Commission; Councilmember Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION: Councilmember Bettelli moved to re-appoint Ron Denton and Lisa Safford to the Planning Commission; Chair Harrington seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION: Councilmember Bettelli moved to re-appoint Julise Spell and Susan Haynie to the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee; Chair Harrington seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION: Councilmember Bettelli moved to re-appoint Pete Doherty to the Board of Zoning Appeals; Chair Harrington seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION: Councilmember Bettelli moved to re-appoint Ann Sherrill and Alan Shultz to the Code Board of Appeals; Chair Harrington seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Administrator Tucker stated that the appointments above will be presented to City Council for an initial approval at a Special Meeting of Council at 6:00 p.m. on December 5th, 2017.

MOTION: Councilmember Bettelli moved to combine Item B under Old Business with the item under New Business, Review of Draft of Continuity Plan; Chair Harrington seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Discussion of personnel needs in the Public Works Department

5. New Business

Review of the draft Continuity Plan

Chair Harrington stated that he was “perplexed about Councilmember Ferencz’ comments about Public Works’ personnel needs not being discussed at Personnel;” he commented that the Committee had not received any recommendations from Public Works. He stated that he takes exception to that. He noted that, in the past, proposals for personnel changes or additions in the City were typically made to the Committee that has purview for the department, and they send recommendations on to the Personnel Committee. He said that he was “anxious to be involved in responding to any recommendations from Public Works in terms of their current and future needs within the Department.”

Administrator Tucker explained that Director Pitts was absent because he had previously been granted leave for this afternoon; he is very active in the Exchange Club, and the fair is their biggest fund raiser of the year. He asked that the Administrator be his voice at this meeting; therefore, she will be reiterating some of the discussion from the Public Works Committee meeting earlier in the day.

The Administrator asked Wynette DeGroot, Payroll and Human Resources Director, to report on a meeting of staff members that focused on personnel needs in the Public Works; attendees were Director Pitts, Assistant Administrator Fragoso, Director Kerr, Amy Lee and Ms. DeGroot.

The Administrator’s view of the Public Works Department is that it does an “A+” job on garbage and debris collection, and, in the tourist season, that is about all they can do. That being said, she does not see a need for expansion in that area of the Department. The areas that are being handled by other departments and areas where the City is not serving its residents proactively fall into two (2) categories, i.e. drainage and maintenance-type activities.

Chair Harrington asked if the maintenance of City buildings would fall under the maintenance to which she referred.

According to the Administrator, this arm of Public Works would be responsible for sign maintenance, general maintenance, supervision of City contracts, like the landscaping contract, and maintenance of the public restrooms, and other things, like the exterior of City Hall. When the regular maintenance of these things are not properly done, the result is the Hill Report.

On the subject of drainage, the job is to ensure that the City is monitoring projects and the work of contractors, identifying other projects that need to be addressed, and communicating on a regular basis with the other entities involved in island drainage, i.e. SCDOT and Charleston County.

In these two (2) areas, other members of the City staff are being called upon to take care of things.

Another problem is that Public Works does not have any administrative support, and that function has fallen to anyone else who could help, which means that no one is following up with getting the task done and communicating with the citizen(s) who made the request once the job is completed. The Public Works Department needs someone in this role to stay on top of requests by residents, see that they are completed and to follow up with the complainant to ensure that the job was done to their satisfaction.

According to Ms. DeGroot, the crux of the meeting was the need for an administrative person who would take the responsibilities being assumed by other City staff currently. Director Pitts said that his immediate concern was having another licensed person on the island to serve as his backup to perform the necessary tests and monitor the underground storage tanks; currently the Fire Inspector is working toward the necessary certification to be the backup person although he has a full-time position with the City already.

At the staff meeting, administrative support was defined as the most immediate need for the Public Works Department; the group considered the position as a part-time position initially working, possibly, five (5) hours a day.

The Administrator confirmed that, at one time, the Department had an administrative person, but Director Pitts thought that it was not necessary. Based on the volume of work today, not having someone to function in this role leaves a void.

Ms. DeGroot indicated that this person would need to be an administrative person who would learn the budgeting process and assist the Director in the preparation budget requests.

Chair Harrington opined that he thought attracting a qualified individual would be difficult in a part-time position.

In their meeting, staff considered a twenty-five (25) hour work week and having this person cover the phones in the busiest part of the day.

Ms. DeGroot reported that the group decided to try part-time first to keep the budgetary impact to a minimum.

A second position discussed was a working facilities supervisor/foreman who would be working primarily in the field as he/she oversees the landscaping contractor, signage, the public restrooms etc. and this person would also oversee the increased clearing of the ditches as contracted with Eadie's.

Chair Harrington thought that Council would embrace the addition of these positions.

In this meeting, staff did not discuss the possibility of increasing the number of Public Works personnel since the Director uses temp labor who are overseen by the drivers.

Administrator Tucker noted that, when the temp labor is deployed on the island, they must have a driver and supervision.

Councilmember Bettelli said that, no matter what decisions are made, the temp labor must be a part of any considerations since they are a “must” in the tourist season. For this Councilmember, the question was how the Public Works Department should be organized now to maximize its use to the residents of the island.

The Administrator agreed that there must be a justification, an identified need and how much it would cost and the timeframe when it would be phased in.

As the discussion morphed into the continuity plan, the Administrator recalled that the plan was the 2017 goal for her as defined by the Personnel Committee, and the goal was to look at all departments and evaluate them based on having sufficient redundancy when and if, for any reason, the department manager could not perform his/her responsibilities. In looking at the draft plan, staff identified immediate needs like the demands of the dual roles Chief Buckhannon serves as Police Chief and IT person; funds for an IT consultant were included in the FY18 budget and need to become a reality. Over the long-term, the City needs to decide whether it is going to hire an IT person, but now is a critical time in that the City needs to take advantage of the historic knowledge the Chief possesses. And the third critical challenge is making decisions on what to do in the Public Works Department.

From the 2016 visioning meeting, the Administrator recalled that a vision going forward was for all public spaces to look as good as the Rec Center looks, and that has not been achieved. She stated that she could compile a long list of things that need to be done, but the City has no one to do them without reaching out to other departments to handle it.

Another concerning fact for the long term was that the Building Department has no redundancy; therefore, at some point in the future, the City should consider hiring a senior planner to work under the Director to have continuity in the event it was needed.

This work also brought to light that the Fire Department does not have an Assistant Fire Chief; currently the battalion chiefs are filling the gap and they are doing a good job. During Chief Graham’s recent absence, the Administrator learned that each shift led by a battalion chief acts as an independent entity and that crossover conversations do not occur between them.

At its meeting earlier in the day, the Public Works Committee carried the discussion into the future in deciding that, with the personnel changes, a building to house them should also be considered which might also provide storage space for items currently stored off island.

From the staff meeting, Assistant Fragoso reported that they had agreed that the new positions should be located in the Public Works Department, but due to the expense of a new building, they discussed what could be done immediately to convert the existing building to meet the needs.

Ms. Degroot stated that, if the Public Works administrative position received the necessary approvals, this person could provide critical information for an internal study on the Department’s true needs.

Another discovery the staff made was that the job descriptions for the Public Works Director and other personnel have not been updated in quite a while and need to be done relatively soon.

Councilmember Bettelli asked whether the Public Works Committee had considered how the increased frequency of ditch cleaning would impact the new positions and the demands, particularly, on the working facilities supervisor.

Administrator Tucker stated that she does think the City will get fewer complaints about drainage, but the Administrator is responsible for the budgetary impact of that, for instance, how it will be paid for, responsible for getting it through City Council and approved, having the contract written and executed and that should be the extent of her involvement. It should be the responsibility of the Department Manager where that contract rests to make sure that the terms of the contract are being met. She stated that she must rely on the honesty of Eadie's to insure that the new terms are honored; currently no one is making sure that they are doing what they should. Ideally the department manager would study the contract, then go to Eadie's asking when they were planning to start and where and follow-up. Currently the Director does not have the time to give to the contract, so nothing will change.

The Administrator said that she welcomed any feedback related to the draft continuity plan presented and indicated that she believes that this work product meets the goal she was assigned despite being a work in progress.

Councilmember Bettelli commented that he could see that a lot of work has gone into the draft and suggested that it be sent to all Councilmembers asking for comments. He advised that starting salaries be included on the new positions since budget preparation is on the horizon.

Chair Harrington proposed setting a deadline for comments to be returned to the Administrator.

6. Miscellaneous Business

Distribution of calendar year 2017 Evaluation Forms for City Administrator

Administrator Tucker said that a memo from Chair Harrington will be sent to Councilmembers with the evaluation forms attached and designating the date they are to be returned to him.

Next Meeting Date: 3 p.m., Wednesday, January 3, 2018

7. Executive Session – not needed

8. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Bettelli moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:53 p.m.; Chair Harrington seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:
Marie Copeland, City Clerk