

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

2:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 2, 2017

The regular meeting of the Personnel Committee was held at 2:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 2, 2017 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Bettelli and Ferencz, 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 Ferencz moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of June 7, 2017 as submitted; Councilmember Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments – None

4. Old Business – None

5. New Business

A. Consideration of Employees of the Month

The Chair stated that Recreation Director Page has recommended that Robert Asero, Parks and Maintenance Supervisor, and Ricky Daugherty, Parks and Facilities Specialist, be named Employees of the Month; the information on the many additional services they have provided to the City over the summer over and above their regular duties are detailed in the memo included in meeting packets.

MOTION: Councilmember Bettelli moved to recommend to City Council for Robert Asero and Ricky Daugherty to be Employees of the Month; Councilmember Ferencz seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Administrator Tucker stated that this recommendation does not have to be approved by Council, but they will be recognized at the Council meeting, and the employees will receive a non-cash reward that does not exceed thirty dollars (\$30) in value. The reward may be in the form of a gift certificate, lunch, or whatever reward is deemed appropriate by the department manager.

Councilmembers Bettelli and Ferencz withdrew the motion and second, respectively.

B. Discussion of Code of Ethics for Elected and Appointed Officials

Chair Harrington stated that he has become aware of vitriolic comments that have been written about elected officials on social media sites, and he was concerned about it. He stated that all elected and appointed officials should be professional and ethical in everything they do, and that

they should display decorum and respectfulness toward each other. In his opinion, this situation should end immediately.

Administrator Tucker recalled that Julia Tucker had spoken at a Council meeting about derogatory comments she has read on social media written from one elected official about another.

The Code of Ethics included in meeting packets is from Mount Pleasant; in discussing the issue with Attorney Halversen, it was decided that their code would be too cumbersome for the Isle of Palms. She is currently working on a document geared to the City.

Councilmember Ferencz stated that she was not aware of these “vitriolic comments” and asked where they could be found as she wanted to read them for herself.

The Chair stated that they have appeared on a private website that he has not been allowed to join; he has seen the comments when a concerned citizen would take a screen shot and sent it to him.

Councilmember Bettelli agreed that disparaging comments from an elected official directed toward another should not exist on a social media site.

Councilmember Ferencz stated that she considered chatter on social media sites between individuals as a conversation, and she thought Council would be infringing on a person’s freedom of speech.

When she posed the question of how many members of City Council were engaging in this behavior, Councilmember Bettelli responded that there were several.

Councilmember Ferencz noted that the state has a Code of Ethics that all elected officials were bound by; therefore, for the City to have its own was unnecessary.

Chair Harrington stated that he saw this as the City taking a proactive stance, recognizing that all elected officials are held to a higher standard. He commented that several residents have made comments to him as Personnel Committee Chair, regarding what they are reading on social media sites. As the election season kicks off, he thought Councilmembers should be reminded to act with decorum at all times and in everything they do.

Councilmember Bettelli suggested providing a copy of the state Code of Ethics to all Councilmembers.

Chair Harrington stated that the Code of Ethics was a statement of what was expected from elected and appointed officials. He added that, assuming an IOP version is adopted, the next step would be to have a procedure for censuring or reprimanding in some fashion someone who was judged to have not lived up to it. He opined that, when an elected official was seen name calling, the balance of elected officials have a right and an obligation to stop the behavior.

Councilmember Bettelli voiced the opinion that the upcoming election was the perfect segue to provide officials with the State Rules of Conduct. He added that the island has a group of very angry people.

Councilmember Ferencz stated that the City could not control public comments, and she hoped that Councilmembers were above that.

Administrator Tucker remarked that she, too, has received screen shots from concerned citizens; she stated that it is not only what is originally posted, but also the comments threads that follow.

MOTION: Chair Harrington moved to take the Code of Ethics to City Council for discussion and to instruct the City Attorney to draw up a Code consistent with other local municipalities including repercussions for failure to adhere to it; Councilmember Ferencz seconded.

Councilmember Ferencz asked who would determine that an infraction had occurred and how would Council avoid defamation lawsuits.

The Chair responded that the elected body would police itself, and one (1) type of reprimand could be publicly sanctioning the individual.

VOTE: The motion PASSED on a vote of 2 to 1 with Councilmember Ferencz casting the dissenting vote.

C. Consideration of Appointments to fill Unexpired Term of Noel Scott on the Planning Commission; term expires 12/31/2017

The Administrator stated that Mr. Scott has resigned his appointment and was currently not serving. The advertisement seeking applicants for expiring terms will be printed in August, but she added that, in recent years, the ad has been ineffective. She suggested that a more effective way of getting applicants was word of mouth, and she encouraged members of the Committee to actively seek residents in the community.

Committee members were provided a list of the remaining members of the candidate pool accompanied by copies of their applications.

1. Miscellaneous Business

After a brief discussion, the Committee decided to move its meeting time to 3:00 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: 3:00 p.m., Wednesday, September 6, 2017

2. Executive Session – not necessary

3. Adjournment

MOTION: Councilmember Bettelli moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:47 p.m.; Councilmember Ferencz seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk