

FINAL

**CITY OF NORWALK
PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 17, 2018**

ATTENDANCE: Faye Bowman, Chair; Doug Stern, Nick Sacchinelli, Doug Hempstead, Barbara Smyth. Greg Burnett (7:05 p.m.)

STAFF: Ray Burney, Personnel Director

OTHERS: Adam Bovilsky, Human Services Director; Laoise King, Assistant to the Mayor; Diane Lauricella

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Bowman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Lauricella thanked the Council for sending the item regarding the grant coordinator and the communications director back to committee. She said that in the last set of minutes she had indicated that the Zoning Department was in desperate need of a "enforcement staff member", not just a staff member.

Mr. Burnett joined the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Ms. Lauricella said that the Health Department and the Zoning Department need to have more enforcement staff. She said that she would like to see this body look at what the staff needs rather than canceling the meetings.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**** MR. SACCHINELLI MOVED THE DECEMBER 20, 2017 MINUTES.**

The following corrections were noted:

Page 1 under **ATTENDANCE**; please add "Beth Smyth"

Page 1 under **PUBLIC COMMENT**, paragraph 7, line 1: please change "of another staff member" to "of another Zoning enforcement staff member"

Page 2, under **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**, please change the motion from:

**** MR. SACCHINELLI MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 27, 2017 MEETING.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 27, 2017 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED WITH TWO (2) IN FAVOR (HEMPSTEAD AND SACCHINELLI) AND FOUR (4) ABSTENTIONS (BOWMAN, BURNETT, SIEGELBAUM AND STERN).**

To:

**** MR. SACCHINELLI MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 27, 2017 MEETING.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 27, 2017 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED WITH TWO (2) IN FAVOR (HEMPSTEAD AND SACCHINELLI) AND FIVE (5) ABSTENTIONS (BOWMAN, BURNETT, SIEGELBAUM, SMYTH AND STERN).**

Page 4, paragraph 4, line 1: please change the following from:

“Ms. Siegelbaum said that she would have concerns

to:

“Ms. Smyth said that she would have concerns”

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 20, 2017 AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DISCUSSION OF SOCIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR POSITION

Ms. Bowman said that the Charter calls for a Director of Social Services. Mr. Bovilsky was present to give the Committee some information about the Social Services. Mr. Burney said that in previous discussion, there had been some questions about which social services had been available in the past and what the City might need now in terms of social services. He added that Mr. Bovilsky would most likely be aware of the current status. Mr. Stern asked if there was a Social Service Director. Mr. Burney said that there had been one in the past, but those public assistance duties were later transferred to the State.

Ms. Bowman reminded everyone after the State took control of the responsibilities, they assigned those services to NEON, which was a CAP agency. NEON is no longer in existence. She then invited Mr. Bovilsky to address the Committee.

Mr. Bovilsky said that his office was mainly focused on civil rights issues, but Mayor Moccia had asked his Department to work on issues involving homelessness. He confirmed that the State had taken over the public assistance portion of the department. As the charter envisioned the position, there does not seem to be a need for that particular job description any longer. However, there is a need for Human Services.

A few years ago, when Mr. Bovilsky's department was working on homelessness, they were asking whether there was a need for social services in Norwalk. There was a need for assistance following the hurricanes; during the downturn in the economy and also following the closing of NEON. The City had attempted to establish a CAP agency and did not want to have competing agencies. Many of the neighboring towns have Human Services department. This is distinctly different from the position of Social Services Director as described in the Charter.

Ms. Bowman asked Mr. Bovilsky if there should be a Department of Human Services. Mr. Bovilsky said that it would depend on the definition of a department. The discussion moved to whether one employee would constitute a department and who that individual would report to. Mr. Burney said that the basic question was what services the Committee thought the city should be provided and went on to point out that this would give shape and substance to the position.

Ms. King said that when Ms. Bowman brought this up, it had been discussed by the Mayor and others. There is a new CAP agency, which is ABCDE, but they are not providing as many services. Ms. King said that she would love to hear the Committee's ideas and then would be bringing back a proposal to the Committee. Discussion followed.

Mr. Hempstead pointed out while compiling a list would be a good starting point, the Committee would need to consider what the cost of administering those services and also what the cost of those services may be.

Ms. Bowman asked Mr. Bovilsky and Mr. Burney to provide a list of services that might be needed. Mr. Bovilsky pointed out that his department might have some idea of what services were needed, but the Committee really would need to contact an expert in this area. Ms. King agreed and said that having an administrator would be able to assemble a list of assets and a list of what the needs are.

Mr. Stern wished to know if the thought was to create a new position. Mr. Burney pointed out that Mr. Bovilsky was involved in many different social services issues, but he was not a social service provider. Discussion followed.

DISCUSSION OF COMMUNICATION MANAGER POSITION.

Mr. Burney directed everyone's attention to the Grants Coordinator/Communications Manager. He said that in response to Mr. Hempstead's inquiry about creating a new position, he reviewed the documents and there is no definitive process for combining the positions.

There were no summary reports on grants applied for, grants received or grant funding spent. However, the Personnel Department will continue to look through the documents. Mr. Burnett asked who was responsible for those reports. Mr. Burney said that according to the job description, the grant coordinator would be responsible for producing the reports. Mr. Burney said that when he checked the files, there were no summary reports found. Discussion followed.

Ms. King said that when the former Grants Coordinator left, she had turned over her work files to Ms. King. Ms. King said that she had been surprised at how short the list was, but has been handling those responsibilities for the last 10 or 11 months. She then outlined how her office receives all the grant opportunities and identifies the various opportunities. She gave an overview of how they handled a recent grant opportunity by calling all the various department staff together. Ms. Alvarado has a good handle on how to do this because she has been doing this for a number of years.

Mr. Hempstead said that he would like to have a summary report of the grants applied for and the percentages of grants that were awarded and the amounts involved. He said that the previous idea was to unfund the full time position and combine the responsibilities with that of a Communication Manager. However, it would be important to know how many grants were being written and the amount of funding involved.

Mr. Stern said that he would like to have quarterly report from the Grants Department and also have the Communications manager publish the notification of the meetings and the minutes on Twitter and Facebook. Mr. Burnett said that the agendas and minutes were available on the City's official website. Mr. Stern said that Twitter and Facebook are key communication avenues.

Mr. Burnett said that it would be important to take a pro-active role in going after grants. He added that the Committee was not adding a new role, but taking the Grant Coordinator position and adding the Communications Manager duties to the position. Discussion followed.

Ms. Smyth said that she can now see how the position would be formed now and agreed with Mr. Stern about the social media outlets. She added that the future staff member would have support from the current staff.

Mr. Hempstead said that he had asked for the Director of Economic Development position but there was only an old one from an online post in 2014.

Mr. Sacchinelli said that he would be more comfortable if the Committee participated in the grants review or staff annual review. He pointed out that the Governor's election would take place during this Council's term and there may be more grant opportunities available.

For the next meeting, Ms. Bowman asked for a listing of the grants that the City applied for in 2016 or 2017 and received. Mr. Burnett added that if there were grants that were denied, it would be good to know why that happened. Ms. Bowman noted that the Committee wanted to have quarterly reports and include social media in the job description.

Mr. Burnett asked if there was a time line because he was concerned that the City might miss out on grant opportunities. Mr. Stern said that he would like to vote on this at the next meeting. Mr. Burney explained that the Mayor's Office would like to move forward on this as quickly as possible. Discussion followed.

Mr. Hempstead asked about the salaries and fringe benefits. Mr. Burney said that a full time ordinance position would entail about 40%. Having a part time Communication Director would be difficult due to the fact that no one can predict when something happens. Ms. King said that the bottom line was that they need another person in the Mayor's Office.

ADJOURNMENT

** Mr. Hempstead moved to adjourn.

** The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services