

CITY OF NORWALK PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 27, 2006

ATTENDANCE: Herbert Grant, Chairman; Matthew Miklave; Gwen Briggs; Joanne Romano.

STAFF: James Haselkamp, Director of Personnel & Labor Relations; John Schlosser.

OTHERS: Lisa Bardon, Public Works Operations Manager.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 p.m. by the Chairman, who introduced and welcomed Mr. Haselkamp.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 28, 2006 MEETING

** MR. MIKLAVE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS DISTRIBUTED.

** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE ABSTENTION (BRIGGS).

UPDATED STATUS REPORT ON EAP ISSUES

The Chairman said that this program is operational for Police Department but not for the Fire Department, due to financial issues, and the City is questioning whether there are adequate fund for the 24/7 approach.

Mr. Haselkamp said that the company has handled cases and is in the process of holding orientation. They are dealing with referrals. It will cost approximately \$3,800 to implement it at the Fire Department. Mr. Hamilton has spoken with the Chief of the Fire Department, who would like to see where his budget is in a few months. They would hope to start it by January 1st. Regarding the City, there is a \$10,000 expense to expand the program to the remaining 500 City employees. Mr. Haselkamp is to put this expense into his department's budget.

Mr. Haselkamp said that coordination is a worry; he wanted non-personal data to be collected. Craig Shoop has said that the Police Department does not want to work with him; Mr. Haselkamp will speak with the Police Chief.

Mr. Haselkamp said that Mr. Shoop provides services to the Board of Education. In theory, that will continue.

The Chairman said when they initially met with the outside provider and with Mr. Shoop, there was no indication that the Board of Education was part of the ongoing program, which is a concern. He asked why Mr. Shoop was spending time with the Board of Education when that has not been approved. Mr. Haselkamp said that, over the years, he thinks that Mr. Shoop has helped the Board of Education with issues. He will discuss this with him. The cost is \$21 per person per year.

The Chairman suggested that the Personnel Department has to get their arms around the entire program, which reports directly to this department. Mr. Haselkamp said because of contract negotiations, he has not spent a lot of time on this issue; he will talk with the Police Chief.

Ms. Romano said there may be a reason that Mr. Shoop was not invited to participate with the Police Department. Information had incorrectly ended up in the newspaper. The Chairman said that issue had been resolved and the Police Department and the Fire Department both agreed to go through Mr. Shoop with the understanding that all information would go through the Personnel Director.

Regarding the Health Department, the Chairman said there is an understanding that Mr. Shoop would be the coordinating body.

UPDATED STATUS REPORT ON CURRENT PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENT AND ASSOCIATED TASKS

The Chairman said there was a mandate for a comprehensive merit increase program. Mr. Haselkamp has this assignment and should have until the next meeting to provide this information.

Mr. Haselkamp said they are canvassing cities and towns to look at ranges. There is only one major city with a merit based system (Stamford). He will probably integrate parts of Stamford's system with a grade system. There was a system that automatically moved the range on a regular basis, as well as those of elected officials. The question is that of making decisions on an individual basis. They are now in the process of surveying. They should be able to have a draft at the next meeting. There are budget issues. A grid will be set up and a fund would be set up for general raises.

The second issue is that they performed a comprehensive survey of the Mayor, the Registrars and the Town Clerk. He has those figures and will perform an analysis, broken down by the State and Fairfield County.

The Chairman said that the Law Department questioned whether their salaries were competitive with the market. There may need to be some adjustments made.

Departmental Structure: Mr. Haselkamp said that the Personnel Department is understaffed. Several of the positions are a mix of clerical and professional. He has a reorganization planned. One person has left and another is retiring in November. Mr.

Haselkamp will make a proposal on this year's budget and next year's budget. The Department runs on a transactional basis now, as it did many years ago. The Munis system is not user-friendly and two staff members spend a substantial amount of time on this. There should be clerks to do this and the people now doing this should be covering personnel functions. Many activities that should be in the Personnel Department are not. For example, Police and Fire tasks should be done by the department, but are not.

Benefits: Mr. Haselkamp said it is very broken up.

Orientation: This is done by the Personnel Department, but it needs to be integrated with departmental orientation and be more comprehensive.

Mr. Haselkamp said employees know very little about their pensions. It is clear that they can put information on the Web to allow people to make their own calculations.

Mr. Haselkamp said they are struggling to deal with the fall-out from the City's change in insurance. There is not a benefits problem; the problem is that the benefits have changed.

Mr. Haselkamp said that there are five positions in the Personnel Department and one position open. He will make a proposal for reorganization.

UPDATE FLEET SERVICES JOB DESCRIPTION (NOTIFICATION OF REWORDING JOB DESCRIPTION)

Mr. Schlosser reviewed the new job description. They updated the minimum requirements and vehicles. Mr. Alvord has approved the changes.

Mr. Miklave asked if the general duties were essential functions of the position. Mr. Haselkamp said they don't analyze what are or are not essential functions. Mr. Miklave said if they don't do that now, they will not be able to do so down the road. It also has ramifications in terms of handicapped workers. This City needs to take into account the requirements of ADA and figure out what functions are essentials and which are not.

Mr. Miklave said a requirement of high school graduation has a disparate effect on minorities. It should require a GED or its equivalent. Also, the ability to work in weather conditions might be a problem for handicapped people.

Ms. Bardon said this is a weather-dependent function. People need to be able to supervise from other than an office location. Mr. Miklave said a manager's position does not necessarily require being able to do manual labor.

The Chairman said that a manager oversees the work of individual contributors. It is being suggested that the Director of Personnel and Mr. Schlosser revise the job description and bring it back to this committee.

Ms. Bardon said that their Fleet Department is under-staffed and on occasion, they need people to be working supervisors. The Chairman said this could run afoul of union contracts. The document should be more refined.

Mr. Haselkamp said that, in this instance, they could have the Fleet Manager position do some of the 2405 work on occasion.

Ms. Romano said that a supervisor does not necessarily need a CDL. Mr. Haselkamp said if he has to drive a truck anywhere, he would have to have a CDL; this is a licensing requirement.

Mrs. Briggs said there is urgency to get this done. The Chairman suggested, based on the information and concerns heard tonight, that the Personnel Director should refine the document and send it out to the Personnel Committee members. Mr. Miklave said he would be happy to look at the document, but it is not appropriate to poll the members. He suggested that the Chairman could put this on the Council floor. His position is any rules that exclude applicants with educational background and physical limitations he would object to and would have to see explanations on the Council floor.

The Chairman said that the key is to look at all of the elements relating to ADA and other requirements. He recommended that they not look at combining two jobs into one job description. This is either a management role or a worker role.

Mr. Miklave reiterated the following points:

1. Differentiating between essential functions of the position that you must be able to perform even with a reasonable accommodation and those that are good to do but cannot require a disabled person to do.
2. Qualifications that limit the pool of applicants.

The Chairman asked Ms. Bardon to go into this approach objectively, even though they may be under-staffed. He suggested that Ms. Bardon work out a revised modification with the Personnel Director and staff ASAP.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. MIKLAVE MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Telesco
Telesco Secretarial Services

