

**CITY OF NORWALK PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**JUNE 28, 2006**

ATTENDANCE: Herbert Grant, Chairman; Joanne Romano, Matthew Miklave

STAFF: John Schlosser, Personnel Department

OTHERS: David Davidson, Karen Doyle Lyons, Registrar of Voters;  
Anne Artell, Attorney Jeffrey Sparh, Diane Lauricella

**1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Chairman Grant called the meeting to order at 8:02 p.m. He stated that Ms. Briggs and Mr. McQuaid had excused absences. With the resignation of Reverend Olmstead-Sawyer, the Committee was reduced to five positions and therefore a quorum was present.

Chairman Grant explained that while the public would be allowed to make statements regarding the Ordinance List, the Committee would not be responding to their comments.

**3. PROPOSAL FOR ORDINANCE LIST INCREASES:**

**a. Public Hearing**

Let it be noted that the following comments and remarks by all speakers have been summarized and are not necessarily verbatim.

Mr. Schlosser announced the first speaker who had signed up as Mr. Davidson. Mr. Davidson introduced him to the Committee and stated that he lived at 16 Bettmarlee Road.

Mr. Davidson stated that he was against across the board raises and commented that the unions reject merit raises. He reiterated that across the board raises were inappropriate and informed the Committee that last year, he had asked Mayor Knopp to step down as the author of the Ordinance List and simply be the Mayor of the City. He was sad to see that Mayor Moccia was following in Mayor Knopp's footsteps on this matter.

Mr. Schlosser announced the second speaker who had signed up as Ms. Artell. Ms. Artell requested that Ms. Lyons be allowed to speak first. Ms. Lyons introduced herself to the Committee and stated that she was one of the elected Registrar of Voters. She said that the other Registrar was not able to attend the meeting. Ms. Lyons informed the Committee that she had spoken with Mr. Grant and Mr. Nolan about increases for the Registrars and proceeded to give a history of the pay raises they had received over the past several years, which amount to none. Ms. Lyons then submitted a copy of a document that listed the other surrounding communities, the number of staff in the

Registrar of Voters offices and their salary ranges. Ms. Lyons also informed the Committee that she has served as the Chairman of the Registrar of Voters for Fairfield County. While the Council has recommended raises for all the people on the Ordinance List, Ms. Lyons pointed out that the Registrars do not fall into that category as they are elected officials. She also observed that the vote for a salary increase for the Registrar's office must take place before the swearing in of the registrars, which means last year's salary increase was approved too late for them. This meant that only two City employees were being denied raises. Ms. Lyons stated that she loved her job but that it has become increasingly complex with the state system, since this requires a total of 12 different screens in order to change one address. Once that is accomplished, the permanent card must still be changed. She concluded her remarks by saying that the Registrars had not received a pay raise in five years.

Ms. Artell introduced herself to the Committee and said that she had worked as one of the Registrars of Voters at Norwalk City Hall for twenty three years. She commented that the law regarding the raises was passed with the intent of ensure raises, not denying them. The Registrars of Voters should be treated like every other City Hall employee and receive raises on a yearly basis. In conclusion, Ms. Artell urged the members of the Committee to give more consideration to the Registrars.

Attorney Spahr was the next speaker on the list. He distributed copies of the CPI Index and copies of the NASA Employee Roster to the members of the Commission. Attorney Spahr commented that the 3% raise being considered was not set in stone and reminded everyone that the 1983 Common Council resolution stated that ordinance employees should receive no less than what the NASA employees received in terms of salary increases. When there were deductions in the benefit packages, the ordinance list employees also had reductions in their benefits. NASA employees have various step levels, but ordinance employees do not. Attorney Spahr also mentioned that in the past there had been targeting of particular employees by the public. He stated that in his particular case, he had joined the City staff to provide a public service. Attorney Spahr stated that the Committee should take into consideration that the legal department salaries were underfunded and that there was the possibility that some of the staff might go back into private practice. In conclusion, he asked that the Personnel Committee look carefully at the Law Department in terms of salaries.

The fourth speaker signed up was Ms. Lauricella, who introduced herself to the Committee and said that she was appearing at this meeting as a Norwalk resident. Ms. Lauricella stated that she felt the public should be allowed to speak at this type of meeting before any member of the staff. She also said that she agreed with Mr. Davidson in rejecting the across the board increases. She commented that when she was a State employee, there were objective job evaluations that worked well. The Ordinance List is a joke, she claimed, because according to the Charter, the Council has the right to determine who receives an increase. She requested that if the Committee did not have the performance evaluations of the various employees before them at this meeting, that the Committee table the motion. Ms. Lauricella also stated that she would feel better if the performance evaluations were available for the public to inspect and reiterated her

observation that the current system is a joke. In speaking with various Council Members, Ms. Lauricella observed that a 1%-2% raise increase does not cull out poor job performances. Because of the flawed process, the public is forced to speak directly with the Council members about this issue since they have no other recourse. She stated that she is looking forward to a new Personnel Director. In conclusion, she asked about the status of the goal setting, and why the public was not allowed to see the performance goals.

There being no one else who wished to speak, Chairman Grant called the public portion of the meeting to a close at 8:40 p.m.

## RECESS

Chairman Grant called for a recess at 8:40 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 8:45 p.m.

### 1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chairman Grant called the meeting to reconvene from recess at 8:45 p.m. He stated that Ms. Briggs and Mr. McQuaid had excused absences. With the resignation of Reverend Olmstead-Sawyer, the Committee was reduced to five positions and therefore a quorum was present.

### 2. MINUTES FROM MAY 24, 2006 MEETING

The following corrections were noted:

Under the heading ATTENDANCE: please change "Herb Grant" to "Herbert Grant"

Under the heading STAFF and throughout the document: please change "John Schosser" to John Schlosser".

On page 3, paragraph 6, 2nd line: please change "He said that it was difficult to substantial their judgment of the senior staff." to "He said that it was difficult for the Council to substitute their judgment of the senior staff."

On page 3, paragraph 9, 2nd line: Please change "Robert Maslin" to "Robert Maslan".

\*\* MS. ROMANO MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FROM MAY 24, 2006 AS AMENDED.

\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

### 3. PROPOSAL FOR ORDINANCE LIST INCREASES:

#### b. Discussion

Mr. Miklave said that he appreciated all the comments from the public. He agreed that merit based raises for city employees were a good idea, but pointed out that the positions on the Ordinance List were positions that are not covered by the unions and are also ones occupied by the heads of the departments. These people are the leaders in shaping Norwalk as it is. He observed that there are three classes of workers: those motivated by money, which a lack of raises would affect their behavior; those who are motivated by praise; and finally, those who are motivated by service. The people in the senior positions in City Hall are not motivated by money. Currently, the Performance Appraisal Plan that is in place has been carefully researched and crafted. The department heads believe that it is effective. The important thing is that the Performance Appraisal is not tied to compensation and it also requires conversation with the staff in order to produce an evaluation at the end of a year. This process is designed to be fair and objective. Mr. Miklave stated that he did not believe it would be good for the Council to be second guessing the Mayor's recommendation because the Council does not work on a daily basis with the department heads. He also commented that personal enmity, bias or feelings have no place in this process and the Performance Evaluation should not be used as a weapon. It was designed to be a tool for the employee and the supervisor to track progress and to show where an employee could do a better job. The Performance Appraisal Plan should not be used to punish employees, which sends a negative message to the unions.

Ms. Romano stated that she is employed and her raises are based on her job performance. She also stated that she believes that the Corporation Counsel is underpaid, but that performance should dictate what percentage is given as a raise.

Chairman Grant said that he commends the previous Council for starting this process. The appraisals help the management and staff step back and analyze to see if they are on track. He commented that criteria is necessary and when there is improvement, dollars follow. He also reminded everyone that municipal employees make less than in the private sector, but that their jobs are just as important.

#### 4. ACTION ON ITEM #3

**\*\* MR. MIKLAVE MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL FOR ORDINANCE LIST INCREASES.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

**\*\* MR. GRANT MOVED TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL MATTERS PERTAINING TO SALARIES.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Committee and Mr. Schlosser went into Executive Session at 9:12 p.m. and reconvened into Public Session at 9:20 p.m.

5. OLD BUSINESS/AFFAIRS

6. NEW BUSINESS/AFFAIRS

There was no further business at this time.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Personnel Committee is scheduled for Wednesday July 26, 2006

8. ADJOURNMENT

\*\* MR. MIKLAVE MOVED TO ADJOURN.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Service

