

**CITY OF NORWALK PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**CITY OF NORWALK**

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**JUNE 17, 2002**

**ATTENDANCE:** Douglas Sutton, Chairman; Peter Wien, Betsy H.

Bain, Matt Miklave, Barbara  
Hudgins (7:18 p.m.), Fred Bondi  
(7:45 p.m.)

**STAFF:**

Sara LeTourneau, Director of Personnel &

Labor Relations; John Schlosser,  
Personnel Administrator

**OTHERS:**

Bill Grumman, Department of Public Works;

Timothy Callahan, Health Director

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

**DISCUSSION ON PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS**

Mr. Miklave began the discussion by addressing the fact that creation of the form before the system is in place is putting the cart before the horse. Once the outline of the objectives have been designated then the form can be created or purchased from reputable human resource organizations.

Ms. Hudgins arrived at 7:18 p.m.

Mr. Miklave stated there are two types of systems. One is relative performance appraisals, rating people who are doing the same or similar jobs in the same arena; a ranking and rating system. An element of that is that the objectives are the same or the evaluation is invalid. There has to be some type of curve so that 90 percent of the population is not at the top. This format could be used in a downsizing process, but ineffective for judging individual performance over the performance year.

The second type addresses the individual, his strengths and talents rating that person's capabilities. This system and the previously mentioned one cannot be put into the same "pot." Mr. Miklave compared a professional with a Ph.D. to a general hourly individual who is clerical. The professional has value because of his education, and experience skills. The hourly person's value is that he comes in early, stays late and completes his work. A decision would be made based on their contribution and the need by the company to meet their objectives in a downsizing stage.

Further he stated that the process must be that early in the year the objectives are set to help both the individual and the supervisor meet their goals. They will decide together what the objectives are and the items upon which the evaluation will be judged. There should be a mid-point review to see where the individual stands. Also due to circumstances, see if there should be a change in the objectives in order to meet them or remove non-essentials. At the end of the year there would be a final review to look at the overall performance for the year or designated period upon which there was agreement.

Ms. Bain stated that this seems to be a two-step issue; setting objectives for the coming year and then meeting mid-year or at the end of the year evaluating the overall performance. She stated that the relative performance process would not work for the Ordinance List. She viewed the performance evaluation as a separate issue from the increase that would be given at the end of the year.

The Chairman inquired of Ms. LeTourneau for her comments. She stated that the City is divided into some very distinct groups. The Ordinance List and NASA are predominately the supervisory staff, i.e., Assistant to the Mayor but Secretary to the Mayor and Personnel Department are confidential employees. The evaluation process for NMEA and 2405, groups are clerical and labor and are another evaluation issue. These individuals are subject to a collective bargaining situation. She stated that different types of evaluations were perhaps better suited for different groups. She directed the Committee to the City of Norwalk Performance Appraisal Manual.

The vast majority of the individuals on the Ordinance List are evaluated by the Mayor and a supervisor.

Ms. Bain stated her objective was to create a system that is fair and useful. Whether it is deployed as intended is out of the Committee's hands. She commented that there is a form in the manual to assist in creating goals and objective. Ms. Bain noted that it is optional which allows the manager to use it or not.

**Ms. LeTourneau stated this is a cultural issue. Ms. Bain said that if the process is established and others agree, it is the role of the Personnel Department to see that the process is being carried out. There must be insistence to see that the evaluations are completed at all levels.**

**Mr. Miklave said it seems that it is not hard to implement a system with training and support from the Personnel Committee and Personnel itself. The form should be at hand for the reviewer and then the Committee would be able to evaluate personnel with all the documents in place. He stated the fundamental issues have to be dealt with, i.e., the union employees. He also stated that the process should not be ignored by the union employees. He also understood that there must be interaction with the Unions to implement this process.**

**Mr. Wien said he understood that the process exists, but it is not being used. Ms. LeTourneau confirmed that it is not being followed. Ms. LeTourneau stated that an effective evaluation system that is not used is of no benefit. She said the group has to become very concrete in stating what is wrong with the current evaluation system apart from the problems that it has not been followed. In order to get the process moving Mr. Wien asked why the current manual failed. Ms. LeTourneau stated that rather than focus on why it was not used this group must go forward and say this is the way it will be. Mr. Wien commented that there was a flaw and that needs to be understood before a new process is implemented or this existing one is moved forward.**

**Ms. LeTourneau said it has not been utilized as a management tool for the Ordinance List since she has been an employee of the City. She stated that the form the group received is the only thing that has been used for performance evaluations.**

**Mr. Bondi arrived at 7:45 p.m.**

**Ms. Hudgins inquired whether there was any backup material to accompany the evaluation forms presented to the Committee on Ordinance List employees. Ms. LeTourneau stated the form stands alone. Ms. Hudgins asked whether there were any complaints about the form or system from the supervisors and employees. Ms. LeTourneau stated that there had been no complaints voiced to her or the department staff.**

**Mr. Grumman commented that five years ago he was sent to a seminar on sexual harassment. He stated the same type of seminar should be developed for the department heads to attend for evaluations in order to be trained. They could then cascade the information down to the managers and supervisors under their direction.**

**Ms. Bain pointed to a document received from the town of New Britain, CT. She suggested that the Personnel Department list out the tools and resources available for performing effective evaluations.**

**Mr. Miklave agreed with Ms. Bain on the comment about resources. He stated in his experience a manual is just words and a guideline. However, a professionally run organization is required. He stated that the City should have the best practices in their supervisors. He said that the evaluations should be written and agreed to by both parties. The Committee needs to be able to determine that the evaluation is fair and not shaded with favoritism. The Committee may not agree with the rating by the supervisor, but a well conducted evaluation will give the Committee what it needs to look at for the increases at the end of the year.**

**Mr. Wien stated his feeling is that clear written objectives are needed for employees and accountability by them to perform those task will keep the system from collapsing. There has to be an insistence with management that the evaluations must be done.**

**Mr. Callahan stated that his department developing a "Balanced Score Card" performance appraisal process. He has used a consultant to assist in the development of the process. He meets at the beginning of the year with his subordinates to set objectives. The plan will be sounded down into the department so that all supervisors are equipped. Mr. Callahan distributed a report that will be sent to Personnel upon completion reflecting the results of the Balanced Score Card approach.**

**Mr. Bondi said that no one during his tenure has been doing appraisals. He stated that it was good to know that the Health Department is doing the job. He stated the evaluations should be used for training purposes or disciplinary actions. He said every employee should be evaluated by their direct supervisor and overseen by the department head. He noted that the New Britain process is very good. Mr. Bondi stated that while employed at Colgate they were given the opportunity to develop their objectives. A mid-year review was also performed to determine where the employee was in meeting his/her goals. He said that the City has many customer service departments and there should be people there to speak with not an automated operator. He commented that the evaluation should be viewed as a tool for improvement, not something to have concern about.**

**Mr. Miklave commented that the system will not work if it is not used. If the employee perceives it as a threat, it will not be used. It is the way to judge how the employee and supervisor sees the employee doing. He stated that the Committee should stay focused on the big picture. The objectives must be set in the beginning of the year, signed off by the employee and the supervisor. He said if the Mayor sets up a cabinet, then the objectives**

should be set by the Mayor and the department heads cascade that down to their subordinates. Mr. Miklave restated the timetable for the appraisals and indicated that they must be in writing.

Ms. Bain added that there should be indicated in the document where the resources are to meet their objectives. The Personnel Department should identify the resources they need to carry out and implement the process.

Ms. Hudgins said she assumed the department head objectives might be general but the department subordinates would be specific. She said it is assumed that some brief training for the lower level employee to understand how and why they are being evaluated so that all parties know how to act under this appraisal system should be implemented.

Mr. Miklave suggested that the staff look at the tools developed by the Committee and give comments on the input.

Ms. Bain stated the Committee should consider the time frame of the evaluation to separate it from salary increases. The desire would be to implement the tool not to just set salary increases, but to review the overall performance of an employee.

The Chairman stated that he and the staff will work out a timeframe.

Mr. Miklave was unsure of his feeling to have the performance evaluations separated from salary increases or cost of living. The practical problem is doing evaluations at the same time each year as it is an administrative nightmare. Using the anniversary date enables the supervisor to be less impacted and allows him to spend more meaningful time with each one. The down side of splitting the evaluations over the year is meeting the objectives of the department during the time frame. Objectives change over time and that is the issue.

Mr. Bondi suggested creating a universal form.

The Chairman commented that common ground is being sought. The question was raised earlier in the meeting whether the process works. This does not preclude the Committee from starting new. Not to reinvent the wheel, other appraisals were part of the package and the decision must be made as to what type of form will be used.

Mr. Miklave stated that it would be counter productive for the Committee to reinvent the process. He felt that staff should take the information tonight and come back to the Committee with some information or recommendations. The form and system that will make sense will require a lot of time and this Committee would spend more time than is available.

**Ms. Bain pointed out that the forms need to be more detailed in order to add written content versus just marking three areas.**

**Ms. Hudgins stated that the Committee wants to see a change in the system and the form as soon as possible.**

**Mr. Bondi reviewed some of the contents in the New Britain format. The town has guidelines and a form in order for the supervisor to evaluate properly. Norwalk has a similar set of guidelines in its process. Mr. Bondi thought between the two a process could be created, utilized and implemented.**

**Mr. Miklave proposed that this Committee not try and develop the forms. He noted the following be the objective in setting up the new process.**

- **Objective setting early in the performance year where the employee and supervisor agree.**
- **The parties agree on the weight of the grade**
- **The parties agree on the criteria for setting the objectives**
- **An objective form be approved by supervisor's supervisor**
- **A mid-term review be conducted and approved by both**
- **A form for changes in criteria at mid-year and why objective changed noted**
- **Final form be a year-end evaluation**
- **Rating as to whether the employee did not meet, met, or exceeded objectives**
- **Why rating given is justified**
- **What changes would need to be made to the current performance manual to implement the system**
- **Is this current system appropriate for the union employees**
- **If not, what could be used to evaluate such employees**
- **Staff's comments on the time frame of this new system and should they be annual or anniversary dates**

**Ms. Bain requested that an outline come from the staff of what it would need to implement and train on such a system.**

**Mr. Miklave asked that it be sent out prior to the meeting for review by the Committee for ready discussion at the next meeting on this subject.**

**Mr. Bondi asked if all departments are doing the process. Ms. LeTourneau responded that only NASA and Ordinance individuals are reviewed. The second form has never been used in any department. Mr. Miklave stated that the Committee might be wise to wait for staff to give input on the union positions. Mr. Bondi did not realize that the department could not promote**

the people. Ms. LeTourneau stated that the union employees move up by seniority, experience and qualification.

**\*\* MR. MIKLAVE MOVED TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION  
TO DISCUSS ORDINANCE LIST PERFORMANCE ISSUES.**

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

The Chairman closed the Special Meeting and moved into Executive Session at 8:45 p.m.

The Chairman closed the Executive Session at 9:12 p.m. and reconvened the Special Meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MR. BONDI MOVED TO ADJOURN**

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

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 9:13 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Alvina L. Richardson Decker Telesco Secretarial Services

