

**LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

The Labor Relations Committee of the Willmar City Council met on Wednesday, April 29, 2015 at 4:45 p.m. in Conference Room No. 1 at the City Office Building.

Present:	Steve Ahmann	.....	Chair
	Jim Dokken	.....	Member
	Andrew Plowman	.....	Member
	Ron Christianson	.....	Member

Others present: Mayor Marv Calvin, Council Member Audrey Nelsen, Interim City Administrator Kevin Halliday, Finance Director Steve Okins, Planning and Development Director Bruce Peterson, Public Works Director Sean Christensen, Police Chief Jim Felt, Fire Chief Gary Hendrickson, Wastewater Superintendent Colleen Thompson, Senior Technician Lynden Wittman, Administrative Assistant Sue Edwards, Accounting Supervisor Carol Cunningham, Brad Hanson, Jeff Gilbertson, Frank Hanson, Ken Warner, Jessica Rohloff, Wayne Nelson, Administrative Assistant Janell Sommers, and David Little, "West Central Tribune."

Item No. 1      Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Council Member Ahmann at 4:45 p.m.

Item No. 2      Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

Item No.3      Request to Appoint Interim Fire Chief/Marshal (Motion)

Interim City Administrator Kevin Halliday presented options for the Committee to consider for Interim Fire Chief due to the upcoming resignation of the current Fire Chief Gary Hendrickson, whose last day is April 30th. In order to maintain continuity of operations at the fire department until another Fire Chief is hired, it is recommended to name a Fire Chief. Staff's recommendation is to appoint Jeff Gilbertson as the Interim Chief to be paid an additional monthly stipend of \$2,000.

Council Member Dokken made a motion to appoint Jeff Gilbertson as Interim Fire Chief until such time as a new Fire Chief is hired for an additional monthly stipend of \$2,000. Council Member Christianson seconded the motion, which carried.

Item No. 4      Request to Appoint Interim Director of Emergency Management (Motion)

Interim City Administrator Kevin Halliday informed the Committee that our current Director of Emergency Management is also Fire Chief Gary Hendrickson. Currently Brad Hanson serves as the Deputy Director of Emergency Management and is certified as a Director by Homeland Security and Emergency Management which is a requirement to fulfill the duties of the position. The position of Director is required per Minnesota Statute Chapter 12.25 and it is staff's recommendation to appoint Brad Hanson to serve as Interim Deputy Director of Emergency Management for a monthly stipend of \$500.

Council Member Christianson made a motion to appoint Brad Hanson as Interim Director of Emergency Management until such time as a new Director is appointed for a monthly stipend of \$500. Council Member Dokken seconded the motion, which carried.

Item No. 5      Request to Fill Fire Chief/Marshal Vacancy (Motion)

The Fire Chief/Marshal is resigning from his position with the City and staff is requesting authorization to implement the hiring procedures to fill this vacancy and assign the Council Member to the interview committee as per the recent policy change for hiring of Department Directors. The first step in the process would be to post internally for ten calendar days and if internal applications are received, process them and set up the interview team of one member of the Labor Relations Committee as assigned, the City Administrator, the Police Chief and the State Fire Marshal. If no internal applicants are received, proceed with advertising the vacancy to the general public, process and handle in the same manner. Fire Chief Gary Hendrickson spoke in favor of hiring from within the organization as there are several good candidates.

Council Member Christianson made a motion to appoint Council Member Dokken from the Labor Relations Committee to the interview team. Council Member Plowman seconded the motion, which carried.

The Committee also discussed the hiring process and a motion was made by Council Member Christianson to authorize staff to proceed with advertising for the position if no internal applicants are received. Council Member Dokken seconded the motion, which carried.

Item No. 6      Interim City Administrator (Motion)

Interim City Administrator Kevin Halliday presented options for the Committee to consider for Interim City Administrator. One option is to consider external professionals with the assistance of the League of MN Cities or Public Sector Professionals (PSP), on a contractual arrangement. Another would be to enter into an agreement with former City Administrator Michael Schmit. Lastly the Council could choose to continue extending internal appointments.

Council Member Christianson made a motion to keep Kevin Halliday as Interim City Administrator until a new Administrator is hired. Council Member Dokken seconded the motion for discussion.

Council Member Christianson stated he felt the City has a very experienced, competent staff who can manage the City's affairs until a new Administrator is hired.

Council Member Plowman asked to visit the pros and cons of the situation stating his concern of the workload for staff and expressed the need to move the timeline up for hiring a new Administrator.

Council Member Ahmann suggested the City look at an arrangement in which Department Directors share duties and responsibilities if the workload is too tremendous.

Council Member Christianson stated shared directorships do not work.

Mayor Calvin stated the dedicated staff are overloaded and spoke in favor of hiring Michael Schmit. The City is a complex organization and we need someone to come onboard and move this

City in a positive direction. He noted the City is four to six months out before an Administrator is hired. Interim City Administrator Kevin Halliday stated he is confident with Michael Schmit's abilities and staff has worked well with him in the past. It was also mentioned there are currently labor issues with the Department Head, First Line Supervisor and Confidential Employees Group that need to be resolved which makes having staff in this position difficult.

Mayor Calvin also voiced his concern that with the absence of a City Administrator, meetings with the legislature are not being attended and the proposed "Wye" project funding could suffer if contact with legislators is dropped.

The motion to name Kevin Halliday as Interim City Administrator until a new Administrator is hired was voted upon and passed with 3 Ayes and 1 Nay, Council Member Plowman casting the "no" vote.

Item No. 7      Consider Process to Fill City Administrator Position (For Information Only)

Interim City Administrator Kevin Halliday requested the Committee decide on a plan of action to fill the City Administrator position. The process can be either an external or internal process. An external process would require staff to prepare an RFP for consultant services to control the process from advertising, collecting applicant's resumes through guiding the Council on interview day. The advantages for candidates are 1) perceived protection of private data for applicants not making the final selection and 2) an assumed approximate two-year salary protection offered by the consultant firm to the top selected candidate in case of an early dismissal by the Council. The disadvantage is the near \$20,000 cost of which \$4,000 would be advertising the vacancy.

The internal process would require staff to prepare advertising documents, place ads in appropriate associations and websites, collect applicant resumes, and prepare Council interviewing packets. The advantage is lower costs. The disadvantage would be the reverse of items 1) and 2) as stated earlier. However, the protection of private data is only their perception as the City protects private data on unselected applicants.

It was noted City Attorney Robert Scott recommends the external process, as does the League of MN Cities.

Interim City Administrator Kevin Halliday did ask the Committee to review the ordinance that established the Administrator position. The job description should also be reviewed for any additions or deletions. It was the consensus of the Committee to have staff make any recommended changes to the job description and have them brought before the Labor Relations Committee at a special meeting at 4:45 p.m. on May 6, 2015. No action was taken on whether to hire a consultant to assist with the hiring process or whether staff could conduct the hiring process.

Item No. 8      Agenda Items 8 Through 11 (For Information Only)

Chair Steve Ahmann announced that at the recommendation of Labor Attorney Frank Madden, the next four agenda items are not to be brought before the Committee. They will be dealt with through the upcoming hearing of the Bureau of Mediation Services sometime after May 15<sup>th</sup>. A motion was made by Council Member Plowman, seconded by Council Member Dokken and passed to table these items until a Labor Relations meeting after May 15, 2015.

Item No. 9      Employee Compensation Request (For Information Only)

Chair Steve Ahmann requested the Committee consider his recommendation for compensation for Senior Technician Lynden Wittman similar to what was granted to Planning and Development Director Bruce Peterson. He felt he should also be compensated for the extra hours and responsibilities during the vacancy of the City Engineer position. In order to follow the labor contract, a memorandum of agreement will be prepared and brought back to this Committee in the near future. This was received for information only.

Item No. 10      Miscellaneous (For Information Only)

The question of the Assistant City Engineer vacancy was discussed by the Committee. Staff addressed the Committee commenting that the main issue for no applicants is the salary. The advertisement for the position remains ongoing until filled.

Council Member Christianson questioned the filing of the last Pay Equity Report for the City not being reviewed by the Committee and requested staff to provide this information at a future meeting. Both these items were for information only.

Respectfully submitted,

Janell Sommers  
Administrative Assistant  
Recording Secretary