

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE  
CITY OF RAMSEY  
ANOKA COUNTY  
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Personnel Committee conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, January 22, 2013, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present:     Chairperson Jason Tossey  
                            Councilmember Randy Backous  
                            Councilmember Mark Kuzma

Also Present:         City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
                            Human Resources Manager Colleen Lasher  
                            Fire Chief Dean Kapler  
                            Police Chief James Way  
                            Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer  
                            Development Services Manager Timothy Gladhill  
                            Management Analyst Patrick Brama  
                            Interim Engineer Shane Nelson  
                            Mayor Sarah Strommen (Alternate)  
                            Councilmember David Elvig  
                            Councilmember John LeTourneau  
                            Councilmember Chris Riley

**1.     CALL TO ORDER**

Councilmember Tossey called the regular meeting of the Personnel Committee to order at 5:01 p.m.

**2.     CITIZEN INPUT**

There was none.

**3.     APPROVE AGENDA**

Motion by Councilmember Backous, seconded by Councilmember Kuzma, to approve the agenda as submitted.

Motion carried.   Voting Yes:   Chairperson Tossey, Councilmembers Backous and Kuzma.  
Voting No: None.

**4.     COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

**4.01:   Consider a Resolution to Select a Chairperson and Alternate Chairperson for the Personnel Committee**

Councilmember Tossey called for nominations for Personnel Committee Chairperson.

Motion by Councilmember Backous, seconded by Councilmember Kuzma, to recommend the City Council adopt the Resolution Appointing Councilmember Tossey as 2013 Personnel Committee Chairperson.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Tossey, Councilmembers Backous and Kuzma.  
Voting No: None.

Chairperson Tossey called for nominations for Personnel Committee Alternate Chairperson.

Motion by Chairperson Tossey, seconded by Councilmember Backous, to recommend the City Council adopt the Resolution Appointing Councilmember Backous as 2013 Personnel Committee Alternate Chairperson.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Tossey, Councilmembers Backous and Kuzma.  
Voting No: None.

#### **4.02: Consider a Resolution to Accept a Paid-on-Call Firefighter's Resignation**

Human Resources Manager Lasher reviewed the staff report and recommendation of Fire Chief Kapler to accept the resignation of Cory Helgoe and recruit for this position upon the next regular Firefighter recruitment.

Motion by Councilmember Kuzma, seconded by Chairperson Tossey, to recommend that the City Council adopt the Resolution confirming the recommendation of the Personnel Committee to accept paid-on-call Firefighter Cory Helgoe's resignation and to recruit for this position upon the next regular Firefighter recruitment.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Tossey, Councilmembers Kuzma and Backous.  
Voting No: None.

#### **4.03: Consider 2013 Fire Officer Selections**

Fire Chief Kapler reviewed the staff report and recommendation for 2013 Fire Officer selections, noting the terms are staggered to assure Fire Department stability and firefighter opportunity. He explained why one position for Lieutenant 3 will remain vacant at this time. It was noted that while there is a financial impact, there is not a budget impact.

Councilmember Backous requested additional detail on the role of the Captain Lieutenant.

Fire Chief Kapler explained there are administrative responsibilities, requiring monthly reports, in addition to command responsibilities. An educational requirement was added several years ago, which he thinks also shows the gauge of the firefighter's desire for the position.

Councilmember Kuzma asked who acts as command when a call is received.

Fire Chief Kapler explained the Chief Officers, when available, respond. In addition, they rotate through positions to create a duty officer response with the goal of getting them into a command position, which has worked out well.

Councilmember Backous asked who is assuming the duties of the Lieutenant 3 position.

Fire Chief Kapler stated the first meeting of the officers was held several weeks ago and those duties were divided amongst others. He stated it is his goal to recruit for that position this year.

Chairperson Tossey asked if the educational requirement is on the firefighter's own time.

Fire Chief Kapler explained the Fire Department pays for the class but it is on the firefighter's own time.

Human Resources Manager Lasher asked if the Personnel Committee would be open, in the interest of staff time, to not have the case come back for additional consideration once Fire Chief Kapler identifies a Lieutenant 3 in consultation with the City Administrator.

Councilmember Backous asked if the case would be considered as a Council Consent Agenda item.

Human Resources Manager Lasher answered in the affirmative.

The consensus of the Personnel Committee was that the case would not have to come back for additional consideration.

Motion by Councilmember Kuzma, seconded by Chairperson Tossey, to recommend that the City Council accept Fire Chief Kapler's recommendation for 2013 Fire Officer Selections.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Tossey, Councilmembers Kuzma and Backous. Voting No: None.

#### **4.04: Consider a Resolution to Approve the 2013 Non-Union Health Insurance Contributions and Non-Union Cost of Living Adjustments**

Human Resources Manager Lasher reviewed the staff report and options for 2013 health and life insurance and cost of living adjustment for the City's 21 non-union employees.

Councilmember Backous asked what are the numbers for each health option.

Human Resources Manager Lasher stated this is the second year in a row with zero enrollment in the 100% co-pay plan. The City's options are locked on that plan to promote more consumer driven health care choices. She advised that of employees enrolled in the single plan, about 75% take the highest deductible option of \$4,000. The City covers the cheapest single premium in

full. Human Resources Manager Lasher advised a handful of employees take the \$1,500 deductible but for employees not claiming single (employee plus spouse/children/family) the \$2,500 plan is popular.

Councilmember Backous stated it is supported by the employee because each gets a contribution of almost \$2,000 into their Health Reimbursement Account (HRA).

Human Resources Manager Lasher explained the amount of HRA contribution is a City decision and had been based on the deductibles and indexed each year. Ramsey has been with an HRA for six years.

Councilmember Backous asked whether employees understand an HRA is the City's money, not like a Health Savings Account (HSA) where the funds go with the employee.

Human Resources Manager Lasher clarified the money going into the HRA is the employee's money, even though not an HSA.

Councilmember Backous explained HRAs are more of an accounting entry and the funds stay with the employer so that aspect needs to be discussed.

Chairperson Tossey noted an HSA is a savings account so it is employee funded. An HRA involves reimbursement of the employee's expenses, once submitted.

Councilmember Backous stated he is 100% against offering the ability to opt out because they are voluntary benefits. If the employee does not take the benefit, he would oppose paying them.

Councilmember Kuzma asked whether there is a savings to the City when employees opt out.

Human Resources Manager Lasher explained it would be an estimate because the City does not know what an employee will decide to do, but she believed it would be a savings to the City of \$2,200.

Chairperson Tossey stated he had been approached by a retired police officer about this matter and asked if there is a penalty if each spouse has insurance.

Councilmember Backous explained that type of restriction probably involved a coordination of benefits clause written into the insurance plan.

Councilmember Kuzma stated it is a benefit if you are an employee and if the employee does not want the benefit, he would not oppose them receiving a cash check if it results in a savings to the City.

Human Resources Manager Lasher advised the City has these rates as long as it stays with LOGIS because it will remain in the large group. It would only be a consideration if the City decides to leave LOGIS and less than 50 people are covered.

Councilmember Backous felt offering an opt out could endanger the City's ability to get group rates and philosophically he found it wrong to pay people for not taking a voluntary benefit. He noted if it saves the City money, those funds can be better used elsewhere.

City Administrator Ulrich noted another option is to not offer a cash benefit but a contribution to the HSA or different coverage such as deferred compensation.

Councilmember Backous stated another option is to offer more life insurance.

City Administrator Ulrich stated the City needs to be careful if LOGIS changes and an employee is penalized if they opt out.

Chairperson Tossey asked how the employee would have an HRA if not accepting the benefits. He stated he does not want to jeopardize the City's future coverage or impact the employee's coverage, but he would support an opt out if it is cheaper for the City in the long run.

Motion by Councilmember Backous, seconded by Councilmember Kuzma, to recommend that the City Council adopt the Resolution to increase the non-union wage scale by one percent.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Tossey, Councilmembers Backous and Kuzma. Voting No: None.

Motion by Councilmember Backous, seconded by Chairperson Tossey, to recommend that the City Council adopt Resolution #13-01-XXX to approve the non-union City's health insurance contributions as detailed in the staff report.

Further discussion: Councilmember Backous pointed out that the City's health insurance plan is a "very rich plan" and a good benefit to employees. It is not a typical type of plan and he would like employees to be aware of that fact. Human Resources Manager Lasher stated her understanding that this rate structure, among municipalities, is common and that the private sector is completely different. Councilmember Backous stated he supports the plan since the City needs to compete for municipal employees.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Tossey, Councilmembers Backous and Kuzma. Voting No: None.

Chairperson Tossey asked the Committee to next discuss the option to waive health insurance in exchange for a cash benefit (opt out). He asked if this needs to be decided tonight.

Human Resources Manager Lasher explained it does not need to be acted on tonight but in order to make this change, it would be a mid-year election/policy change. She stated she has consulted with the City's benefit broker in case employees want to make this qualified status change. Human Resources Manager Lasher noted that many employees have spouses with benefit years renewing February 1 so their spouses are now in open enrollment, which would be the best time to allow them to take advantage. Otherwise, employees cannot take advantage until 2014 unless there is a status change.

Councilmember Backous pointed out that if the spouse's employer's coverage changes significantly, a status change is allowed. He asked if the City has noticed any problem by not offering a cash payment in lieu of benefits.

Human Resources Manager Lasher advised that employees have wanted this option for a long time and in some cases, depending on their spouse's plan, there is either first dollar coverage or there is not. With the police officer who wanted this benefit, it was because if the officer stayed on the City's plan, he was forced to meet the \$4,000 deductible before his spouse's plan would pick up anything.

Councilmember Backus stated the City cannot control the benefit their spouse receives.

Chairperson Tossey indicated the City has 12 employees already grandfathered in that get \$290 and asked how many more employees there will be.

Human Resources Manager Lasher advised that one more is currently waiving but does not get the benefit. In administration, she knows of three more.

Councilmember Backous noted the opt out results in the City paying the spouse's premiums and puts that risk on someone else. In addition, it takes the employee out of the City's pool, possibly hurting the City's status and rates.

Councilmember Kuzma stated he favors offering the opt out with the caveat that the employees agree to come back if the City faces financial detriments as a result of offering credit in lieu of coverage.

Human Resources Manager Lasher noted the City is locked in through the end of 2016.

Chairperson Tossey stated the City could try this alternative and if there is an impact, change it.

Councilmember Backous cautioned the Committee that from a benefits standpoint, it is easy to give things but difficult to take them away.

Chairperson Tossey stated he would support allowing the opt out with the added language suggested by Councilmember Kuzma.

Motion by Councilmember Kuzma, seconded by Chairperson Tossey, to recommend that the City Council adopt the Resolution to offer the option to waive health insurance in exchange for a cash benefit conditioned on the employee agreeing to come back if the City faces financial detriments as a result of offering credit in lieu of coverage.

Further discussion: Human Resources Manager Lasher advised that a few employees take the benefit only for VEBA since it is \$130/month.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Tossey and Councilmember Kuzma. Voting No: Councilmember Backous.

#### **4.05: Consider a Resolution to Address Building Maintenance Staffing Needs**

Human Resources Manager Lasher reviewed the staff report and recommendation to approve hiring Jeff Strelow as a regular part-time building maintenance worker, at Step 1 of the 2012 wage scale of \$15.99 per hour for 20 hours per week; with the option to work up to 30 hours per week, as determined by the Public Works Superintendent and approved by the City Administrator. All other personnel policies would apply and Mr. Strelow would be subject to a six-month probation.

Councilmember Backous asked what the City could do without as far as building maintenance tasks, such as not vacuuming as often.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer explained the main focus is coverage to offer to the public, not the activities, since someone needs to be in the building if meeting room spaces are in use.

Councilmember Backous asked about the City's policy to use City Hall meeting space.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer stated the City charges \$75 for the Lake Itasca Room if a resident and \$100 if not a resident. If after hours or on a weekend, there is an additional \$54/hour charge plus the rental rate.

Councilmember Backous asked how those rental rates compare to the City's maintenance expense.

City Administrator Ulrich noted the rental fee is waived for non-profits and community groups, which comprises a large percentage of the users.

Councilmember Backous stated if the non-profits/community groups are not within Ramsey, he felt the City should reconsider whether the rental fee should be waived.

Human Resources Manager Lasher answered the member's questions related to the salary and benefits that had been factored into the cost.

Councilmember Backous asked where rental revenues are deposited.

City Administrator Ulrich advised rental revenues go into the General Fund.

Councilmember Backous suggested rental revenues be used to fund building maintenance staffing needs.

Chairperson Tossey agreed since this position was not considered in the 2013 budget and will be a regular employee position. He stated he would like to know the rental revenues received when City Hall rooms are rented.

Councilmember Backous stated if the rental rates need to be adjusted, that can be considered.

Chairperson Tossey stated he cannot support this case until the Personnel Committee has more information on rental revenues.

With regard to reducing maintenance services, Police Chief Way noted a lot of people track into and out of the City Hall each day and if the flooring is not vacuumed regularly, the wear and tear on the carpet will be incredible. He noted if the maintenance staff is here, they are working on those tasks.

Chairperson Tossey indicated if this employee position is approved, he wants all rental fee revenue to go towards this expenditure.

City Administrator Ulrich asked whether staff should look at the rental rate fees in addition to the Rental Policy.

The Personnel Committee indicated in the affirmative, noting that report should be presented to the City Council.

Chairperson Tossey stated consideration of this item will be tabled until additional information is available.

#### **4.06: Consider a Resolution to Recruit for an Economic Development Manager**

Human Resources Manager Lasher reviewed the staff report, findings of the needs analysis, and recommendation to slightly restructure this position from Economic Development & Marketing Manager to Economic Development Manager to allow focus on economic development. Human Resources Manager Lasher recommended staff be authorized to begin the recruitment process for this position, noting funding is included in the 2013 budget.

Chairperson Tossey asked if this person would also be the new HRA Executive Director.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that is not necessarily part of this consideration but is a possibility since it would be 60% funded from that source.

Chairperson Tossey stated he would like the City Administrator to be focused on administration, not HRA/EDA activities. He stated this position was budgeted in 2013 but he wants to assure it includes HRA activities.

City Administrator Ulrich stated HRA is not currently in the job description, but it could be added since it is anticipated the position will work with the HRA. He stated the skills will include technical, real estate and development, and ability to negotiate and close real estate deals.

Chairperson Tossey noted the EDA paid some salary for the former HRA Executive Director and while he would like the HRA to be “gone,” in the mean time he wants to assure this position can take over that role. That was his intention when he supported including it in the 2013 budget.

Councilmember Backous asked if the City is being realistic in expecting to attract an employee with development and real estate abilities at a salary of \$67,000 (\$32/hour) plus 30% for benefits.

Human Resources Manager Lasher stated that is a great question. She noted the recommendation is Step 1 of the scale, which is competitive, but in order to retain Mr. Backman, he was hired at Step 3.

Chairperson Tossey asked Mayor Strommen for comment.

Mayor Strommen shared the concern that at this salary, the City may not be able to recruit an employee with this level of experience, assuming they may take on HRA Executive Director and Development Manager responsibilities.

Human Resources Manager Lasher stated it is based on the market but she would have the option, if desired, to advertise the position with a full salary range to generate more interest.

Motion by Councilmember Backous, seconded by Councilmember Kuzma, to recommend that the City Council adopt the Resolution authorizing staff to begin a recruitment process for an Economic Development Manager and advertise the full salary range to generate more interest.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Tossey, Councilmembers Backous and Kuzma.  
Voting No: None.

**4.07: Consider a Resolution Regarding a Leave of Absence (Portions of this discussion were closed to the public)**

Human Resources Manager Lasher reviewed the staff report. She advised that under Minnesota Statutes, the meeting can move into closed session to discuss personnel issues. She indicated the closed session discussion will relate to reauthorization of a leave of absence. The closed session will be tape recorded and that tape will be maintained for a period of eight years.

Motion by Councilmember Backous, seconded by Councilmember Kuzma, to move to closed session to discuss personnel issues.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Tossey, Councilmembers Backous and Kuzma.  
Voting No: None.

The Personnel Committee meeting moved into a closed session at 6:03 p.m.

The Personnel Committee reconvened in open session at 6:14 p.m.

Motion by Councilmember Backous, seconded by Chairperson Tossey, to recommend that the City Council adopt the Resolution approving an additional leave of absence through May 31, 2013; the maximum amount of leave time allowed per the City's Leave of Absence Policy.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Tossey, Councilmembers Backous and Kuzma.  
Voting No: None.

**4.08: Consider a Resolution to Authorize Staff to Recruit for a Replacement Patrol Officer Position from the Recent Patrol Officer Recruitment File**

Human Resources Manager Lasher reviewed the staff report and recommendation to authorize staff to recruit for a Patrol Officer from the recent Patrol Officer recruitment file in order to fill the position left vacant by the officer on an extended leave of absence.

Motion by Councilmember Kuzma, seconded by Chairperson Tossey, to recommend that the City Council adopt the Resolution to authorize staff to recruit for a Patrol Officer from the recent Patrol Officer recruitment file at this time.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Tossey, Councilmembers Kuzma and Backous.  
Voting No: None.

**COMMITTEE INPUT**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Councilmember Backous, seconded by Councilmember Kuzma, to close the regular meeting of the Personnel Committee.

Motion carried.

The regular meeting of the Personnel Committee adjourned at 6:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Colleen Lasher  
Human Resources Manager

ATTEST:

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Jo Ann M. Thieling  
City Clerk

Drafted by Carla Wirth  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*