

**CITY OF CEDARBURG
PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 6, 2017**

**PER20171106-1
UNAPPROVED**

A meeting of the Personnel Committee of the City of Cedarburg, Wisconsin, was held on Monday, November 6, 2017 at City Hall, W63 N645 Washington Avenue, lower level, room 2. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Council President Mike O'Keefe.

Roll Call: Present - Council Members Mike O'Keefe, John Czarnecki, and Jack Arnett

Also Present - Council Member Rick Verhaalen, City Administrator/Treasurer Christy Mertes, Director of Engineering and Public Works Tom Wiza, Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry Mikko Hilvo, City Clerk Constance McHugh, Public Works Superintendent Joel Bublit, Parks and Forestry Superintendent Kevin Westphal, Parks, Recreation and Forestry Board Member Paul Rushing

STATEMENT OF PUBLIC NOTICE

Council Member O'Keefe verified that notice of this meeting was provided to the public by forwarding the agenda to the City's official newspaper, the *News Graphic*, to all news media and citizens who had requested copies, and by posting in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meetings law.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Council Member Arnett, seconded by Council Member Czarnecki, to approve the minutes of the May 2, 2017 Personnel Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDER RESTRUCTURING PARKS AND RECREATION MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES TO PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Director Hilvo said that he believes the proper procedures for reorganizing the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department have not been followed. He said that he and Forester Westphal were not consulted about this before it being placed on a public agenda. Any reorganization should be done after an analysis of staffing based on performance measures. He said the suggested reorganization is detrimental to staff moral and is based on a Council Member's grievance with an employee. He recommended there be a motion to deny restructuring and he be given the opportunity to deal with the backlog of tree trimming internally, with the help of employees from the Department of Public Works based on direction from the Council as to what services should be provided.

Council Member Czarnecki said he is tired of meetings where Council Members talk about the budget and taxes and staff attends only one meeting a year regarding their benefits. He said if there is a chance to lessen the burden on residents or increase efficiency, all options must be considered.

Council Member O'Keefe said this Committee and the Council are simply looking at solutions to the tree trimming backlog.

Director Hilvo said that the tree trimming backlog can be accomplished by the dedicated staff of the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department, with more staff help from Public Works.

Council Member Verhaalen said the Department is behind on tree trimming. His solution is to have a dedicated crew to do only tree trimming to get caught up. He said he had a discussion with Director Wiza and Superintendent Bublitz to discuss how the Public Works Department could assist with this.

Director Hilvo said his internal solution involves a two person crew working on tree trimming at all times, along with seasonal employees in the spring and fall to keep up with grass cuttings. He recommended the Public Works Department and Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department work together to get the tree trimming done.

Superintendent Bublitz said he is responsible for 9.5 Public Works employees that do street work but do help out the Parks and Forestry Department with special projects such as the Santa House and the ice rink. If he takes employees from street work for parks and forestry work some things will not get done.

Director Wiza said leaves are a good example of this. The Public Works employees are needed full time through Thanksgiving to pick up leaves. If these employees are assigned other duties he gets complaints about leaves not being picked up. If there is a quiet period after leaf collection is done and there are not snow plowing efforts, Public Works employees can be available for parks and forestry maintenance.

Council Member Arnett said his neighbors want the low limbs trimmed for safety reasons when they are walking. He suggested that this type of tree trimming be done exclusively until it is caught up. He said he believes the City has the resources to get the work done.

Director Hilvo said it is not fair to blame Forester Westphal for tree trimming that is not getting done when special projects such as the Santa House, Cedalights, flower baskets, wintergreens, and the ice rink have come along. The City has the necessary equipment to do tree trimming, crew members are just needed.

Superintendent Westphal said he reviewed what eight other cities similar in size do in terms of forestry operations to determine how to get more forestry work done with the available resources. Three of those cities have a working forester. He said he could focus more on forestry work, but someone needs to take over park supervisory maintenance duties.

Director Hilvo said internal changes have already been made that will allow the Parks and Forestry Department to catch up. He said there will still be times when assistance from Public Works is needed. He asked that no changes take place at this time and the situation be reevaluated in six months to determine if the internal changes are working.

Council Member Arnett suggested the following:

- The Forester and Arborist should be focused primarily on trees and less on administrative matters;
- For now the “low and go” approach to tree trimming should be taken so that low limbs and branches on street trees are trimmed for pedestrian safety;
- The Public Works Department should assist with brush cleanup/pickup;

- There be better coordination and cooperation between the Public Works Department and the Parks and Forestry Department;
- Tree trimming efforts be evaluated in April to see how things are going; and
- Staff should review the EAB program.

Council Member Verhaalen said that maybe he has taken a simplistic view of the issue. It was not his intent to punish any employees.

Council Member O'Keefe said it is not the intent to punish employees or push them out. Staff needs to find ways to fix the tree trimming problem, as it is likely the Council will not hire additional employees.

Director Hilvo suggested staff work as a team to fix the inefficiencies and that there be no changes in job descriptions or restructuring at this time. He said he is confident that the internal changes made will provide results in six months. The matter should then be reevaluated in July in preparation for the next budget cycle.

Paul Rushing, Parks, Recreation and Forestry Board Member, said the Council needs to examine what has happened since Forester Westphal was hired in 2004, such as maintenance of the ice rink, implementing the EAB program, taking over the flower basket program, and construction of the Santa House. He said there comes a time when employees can only do so much work, and the employees are at this point. There has been more work but no increase in personnel hours. He said maybe it is time for the Council to consider hiring more personnel.

It was the consensus of the Personnel Committee that staff make changes internally without restructuring at this point, that Council Member Arnett's suggestions above be implemented, and the matter be reviewed in April.

CONSIDER REDEFINING JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR FORESTER AND PUBLIC WORKS SUPERINTENDENT

Motion made by Council Member Arnett, seconded by Council Member O'Keefe, that no action be taken at this time regarding redefining job descriptions for the Forester and Public Works Superintendent. Motion carried unanimously.

SCHEDULE FUTURE MEETINGS AND TOPICS

It was the consensus of the Personnel Committee to meet every other month starting in February 2018 to discuss matters such as employee compensation and benefits.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Council Member Czarnecki, seconded by Council Member Arnett, to adjourn the meeting at 6:27 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Constance K. McHugh, MMC/WCPC
City Clerk