

**CITY OF CEDARBURG
PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
September 23, 2019**

**PER20190923-1
UNAPPROVED**

A meeting of the Personnel Committee of the City of Cedarburg, Wisconsin, was held on Monday, September 23, 2019 at City Hall, W63 N645 Washington Avenue, lower level, room 2. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Committee Chair Patricia Thome.

Roll Call: Present - Council Members Patricia Thome (Chair), Sherry Bubnitz, Rod Galbraith

Also Present - Mayor Mike O'Keefe, Council Member Jack Arnett, City Administrator/Treasurer Christy Mertes, City Clerk Claire Woodall-Vogg, Assistant Administrator/Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry Mikko Hilvo, Public Works Superintendent Joel Bubnitz, Parks & Forestry Superintendent Kevin Westphal, Recreation Supervisor Danny Friess, City Assessor Cathy Timm, employees Jason Scheer, Dave Schwantes, and Jeff Schmitz.

STATEMENT OF PUBLIC NOTICE

Council Member Thome 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 Bubnitz, seconded by Council Member Galbraith, to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2019 Personnel Committee meeting. Motion carried without a negative vote.

CONSIDER CREATION OF NEW FINANCE DIRECTOR POSITION AND RESTRUCTURE CITY ADMINISTRATOR AND FINANCE DIRECTOR JOB DUTIES, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2020

Council Member Thome explained that the issues before the Personnel Committee this evening would go to the Common Council for a vote on September 30, 2019. She explained that the Administrator/Treasurer position was created 11 years ago out of an emergency need and that Administrator/Treasurer Mertes has been doing the work of two full-time positions for a long time. The Committee would like to separate the positions into two, which will better suit the City's needs and cater to the strengths of staff.

Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo explained that the City Administrator duties will be concentrated on personnel, economic development, and staff training. The Finance Director duties will focus on the budget, accounting, and investments.

Administrator/Treasurer Mertes expressed concern that the Director of Finance job responsibilities need to clearly articulate that the position will be fulfilling the statutory roles of Treasurer and Comptroller under state law. Clerk Woodall-Vogg stated that she agreed with Administrator/Treasurer Mertes' concern.

Council Member Galbraith suggested that the City's attorney for personnel matters review the issue and job descriptions before the Council votes.

Motion made by Council Member Thome, seconded by Council Member Bublitz, to recommend the creation of a new Finance Director position and restructuring the City Administrator and Finance Director job duties, effective January 1, 2020, subject to review by the City's attorney for personnel matters. Motion carried without a negative vote.

CONSIDER INTERIM APPOINTMENTS RESULTING FROM RESTRUCTURING, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2020

Council Member Thome stated that the Committee is recommending Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo to be appointed as Interim City Administrator for a 12-month term. She praised Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo for the strong relationships and partnerships that he has created throughout the City. He has exhibited excellent leadership by creating multiple financial opportunities for the Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department, served as the lead liaison on the Mercury Marine cleanup in Adlai Horn Park, created a comprehensive compensation study, driven the website updates and the use of a City application, as well as initiated the pre-budget meeting between staff and Council in July. The City has already benefited from his work ethic and creativity. He will be completing his Master's in Public Administration this December, prior to his interim appointment.

Council Member Thome stressed that Administrator/Treasurer Mertes has served the City well beyond the position she was hired for and has kept the City on track with her leadership. She has won numerous awards for the City's annual budget, as well as adapted to many changes within Cedarburg and led the staff through those changes. In her new position, she will be able to focus on her passion of finance and accounting, and the City will benefit from Administrator/Treasurer Mertes no longer working what should be two full-time positions. Her finance and accounting expertise will be invaluable to Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo and to the City.

Based upon Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo's recommendation, Council Member Thome stated that the Committee is recommending current Recreation Supervisor/Office Manager Danny Friess be appointed as Interim Parks, Recreation & Forestry Director. She noted that the Parks & Recreation Department will likely need to hire an administrative assistant for the interim appointment period.

Motion made by Council Member Galbraith, seconded by Council Member Bublitz, to recommend the appointment of Christy Mertes as Finance Director, Mikko Hilvo as Interim City Administrator for a 12-month period, and Danny Friess as Interim Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry for a 12-month period, effective January 1, 2020. Motion carried without a negative vote.

CONSIDER BUDGET AND REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) APPLICATION FOR EXECUTIVE SEARCH AGENCY SERVICES

Council Member Thome explained that Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo's appointment is an interim position, and the Personnel Committee is adding money into the 2020 budget for a search firm if those services are deemed warranted after the first six months.

Council Member Galbraith, while praising the decision to split the two positions and Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo's willingness to lead in the interim, encouraged the Committee to move forward with an executive search firm regardless of Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo's performance. He will be considered by the search firm as a candidate if he performs as anticipated during the interim.

Council Member Bublitz stated that she is happy to budget money for an executive search firm but wants to go into 2020 with open minds and provide Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo the opportunity to prove himself. Cedarburg is a community that will benefit from Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo's skills, leadership, and existing knowledge of the City. This is an opportunity to focus on economic development and the City needs someone who will fight for Cedarburg. Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo brings passion to the position, and she would like to give him a chance in the role and reconsider whether a search firm's services are needed in June of 2020.

Council Member Arnett asked for the projected cost of an executive search agency. Administrator/Treasurer Mertes said that the estimate is \$18,000 - \$22,000.

Council Member Galbraith confirmed that the enclosed RFP was a draft and should not be voted for approval at this meeting. Clerk Woodall-Vogg confirmed that she put a draft together based on several different RFPs for executive search agencies at the City Administrator's request, and that the RFP application did not need to proceed at this meeting.

Motion made by Council Member Bublitz, seconded by Council Member Thome, to recommend that the Council budget up to \$22,000 for an executive search agency in the 2020 Budget. Motion carried without a negative vote.

CONSIDER RECLASSIFICATION OF PARKS & FORESTRY SUPERINTENDENT TO CITY FORESTER AND CREATE ONE SUPERINTENDENT POSITION AT THE PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY

Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo explained that the reclassification request is based on the needs for effective communication and oversight at the Public Works facility. Over a year ago, Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo began supervising the Horticulturist and Parks Maintenance staff directly so that the Parks & Forestry Superintendent could focus on forestry operations in the field. It was critical for Cedarburg to have two full-time staff in the field on forestry operations because of the Emerald Ash Borer situation.

The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Director cannot be present at the Public Works facility on a daily basis, so there has been confusion figuring out who Parks and Forestry staff report to for daily assignments and oversight. Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo is proposing that all Parks and Forestry staff report to the Public Works Superintendent, Joel Bublitz, for daily assignments. The Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry and the Director of Public Works would work with the Public Works Superintendent to determine workflow and priorities. Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo thinks that this structure will create a more cohesive team and eliminate the divide between Parks, Forestry, and Public Works.

In response to Council Member Thome's question, Superintendent Bublitz said he does not yet have an opinion on the change and was present to listen and understand more about it. He agreed that it has been difficult not to have a supervisor on-site for the Horticulturist and Parks staff for the past year.

Parks & Forestry Superintendent Westphal asked if he could clarify who he would be reporting to in this new structure. Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo said that the City Forester would report to the Public Works Superintendent on a daily basis, as well as to the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Director. In response, Superintendent Westphal said that he did not understand the need for this change, as he has been a supervisor for twenty three (23) years, worked as the Parks & Forestry Superintendent for fifteen (15) years, had zero personnel issues during that time, and in his last performance review he was considered an outstanding employee.

Council Member Galbraith stated that he does not view this as a reflection on anyone's performance, including Superintendent Westphal, but rather a change in the chain of command for more efficient workflow and communication.

Further discussion ensued between the Personnel Committee, Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo, and Superintendent Westphal regarding the merits of the proposed change. Superintendent Westphal suggested that if this change was to take place, the position of sole superintendent be posted internally for applicants, as with any other position in the City. Council Member Thome affirmed her trust in the management decisions of Assistant Administrator/Director Hilvo. Council Member Galbraith stated that this change seems to be one designed for efficiency and is really a management decision.

Motion made by Council Member Galbraith, seconded by Council Member Bublitz, to recommend reclassification of the Parks & Forestry Superintendent to City Forester and create one Superintendent position at the Public Works Facility. Motion carried without a negative vote.

2020 HEALTH INSURANCE UPDATE

Administrator/Treasurer Mertes informed the Committee that there will be a 14% increase in health insurance rates in 2020. As a result, the City is going to market and the Personnel Committee will have to readdress the health insurance situation. She has a meeting on October 11th with ABRC and the Personnel Committee should reconvene after that date. Clerk Woodall-Vogg will send out a meeting survey.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Council Member Bublitz, seconded by Council Member Galbraith, to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 p.m. Motion carried without a negative vote.

Claire Woodall-Vogg
City Clerk