

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

May 19, 1998

5:45 PM

Chairman Sysyn called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Sysyn, Klock, Pinard, Shea, O'Neil

Messrs.: Mayor Wieczorek, Mark Hobson, Maureen McCarthy, Ola, Harry Ntapalis, Floyd Decker, Fred Rusczyk, Frank Thomas, Solicitor Clerk

Chairman Sysyn addressed item 3 of the agenda:

Presentation by ADA Consultants regarding a public forum to be held on Thursday, May 21, 1998 at the School Administration Building from 7:00 to 8:30 PM.

Mr. Hobson stated I would like to introduce Maureen McCarthy and Ola who are the ADA Consultants for the City and they're here to do a brief presentation about the public forum being held in two days.

Ola stated we are just going to briefly present some of the work that we've done to date and let you know a little bit about the forum; that as you know the ADA is a Civil Rights Law that applies to state and local governments like Manchester; that essentially the ADA requires with respect to a local government that all programs, services, and activities provided to the public be accessible to people who have disabilities. So, the first thing we looked at was how many departments there are in the City and I think there are 27 and our first step was basically to develop a comprehensive listing of all of the programs, services, and activities that are provided by all of those 27 departments. As a second step, we have been meeting with individuals responsible for providing those programs, services, and activities within each department and the purpose of this meeting is to gather information about how the programs are run, the current level of accessibility and also to identify where gaps or barriers do exist. In the meeting, we walked through two assessment worksheets to help us determine what level of accessibility is needed

to comply with the law. To date, we've held 21 of these meetings, we have 6 more scheduled, and we are still waiting to schedule several more. Now, if you're faster than I am with math you realize 21 and 6 is 27 which is how many departments there are, but for several of the larger and more diverse departments like the Parks Departments, Schools, and Police Department we have to have several meetings just to be able to meet with all of the folks we need to see. Based on our findings, based on the assessment that we are doing in those meetings we will then be conducting site assessments for those programs that we find do require some level of physical access. Once the initial assessment is completed for a department we work to develop an individual action plan for that department in cooperation with the department staff and also with members of the public; that plan addresses what barriers to access do exist and how program accessibility can be achieved, what the requirement of the law is. In many cases, accessibility can be achieved through simple, common sense modifications to a policy or practice or just to the way business is done and in some cases structural modifications will, of course, be required. I do want to stress that we've invited the public to participate very heavily in this process. We've done a significant amount of outreach to disability organizations in the area and to the press and we will be holding a public forum this Thursday as Mark mentioned to invite comments, insight in areas of interest from residents of Manchester who have disabilities and other people who are interested in disability issues like parents of kids with disabilities or caregivers or family members. Those people will also be invited to work directly with us as we write the plan, the Transition Plan for the City and finally, we've been doing a great deal of telephone and fax work. We began to document our telephone calls in mid-April when we started to realize that there were a lot of them and since we started documenting we've made over 200 telephone calls (made and received) and faxed over 50 different documents and I'm going to have Maureen quickly address some of the outreach that we have been conducting to date on this project and talk a little bit more about the public forum and some of the other outreach that we have. I think for a task we have a long way to go, but we're getting there and we've had some great responses working with folks from the City and following Maureen's comments, if there's time permitting, we'd be happy to address any question you might have.

Ms. McCarthy stated we have done a significant amount of outreach and just to give you a brief rundown of the list of people that we've seen or talked to or organizations that we've contacted Ola and Representative Carol Williams and I did a taping over at Manchester Community TV this past weekend, we had flyers sent out to various organizations throughout the town, we had about 50 disability organizations that we contacted, Granite State Independent Living Foundation

which is a statewide service organization sent out a mailing to 226 Manchester residents, we had Access Manchester Committee members and asked them to distribute flyers, we had the Regional Action Committee which is a separate private non-profit group of people with disabilities that Carol Williams is also affiliated with. We had an employee notice sent out to every City employee in last week's paychecks and when we first start with the project we also sent a notice out just to let people know that we were coming, who we are, and what we did. We were invited to address the Governor's Commission on Disability last month to talk about the forum/project, we had a mailing to about 40 disability organizations as well as faxes to 40 media outlets in the press local and statewide television, radio and print. So, there has been a lot of outreach which we have done in the last month-and-a-half. As for the forum, we have scheduled Thursday night's forum and hoping it will be heavily attended and we have also scheduled six road shows which include the six high rises throughout the City (senior and accessible housing).

Alderman Shea asked when does the ADA have to be implemented.

Mr. Hobson replied technically the City of Manchester has been out of compliance since 1992 according to federal law and by 1994 we were suppose to have a Transition Plan in place along with some of the census information that we were suppose to do, so we are behind the curve, however, compared to other municipalities in the State we are, frankly, light years ahead of what some of our counterparts are doing. So, the City in a liability in the fact that we do not have complete compliance with the law to this point, but I think that we're doing every reasonable effort to bring ourselves up to speed as quickly as possible.

Alderman Shea asked when will we be brought up to speed.

Ola replied essentially we will have a Transition Plan this summer and the purpose of that plan is to really look at what you need to do and then provide a reasonable and realistic plan as to how you're going to get there and obviously there are budgetary concerns and issues; that you can write a plan and say this is what we need to do, but you're not really going to get there tomorrow, so part of the plan is prioritizing and as Mark said the City's behind, but what we have always stressed as we have been meeting with people is that we can't change the past, there is maybe no good excuse but this is reality and we are moving forward and I think people, given that positive message and given the fact that there is change that's now visibly occurring, I think people will cut the City a little bit of slack...pardon the expression but I think it's possibly years as we get into looking at the budget and what realistically we can do and what the costs are, I'd hate to try and give you an answer now without really knowing.

Alderman Shea asked is it possible to phase it in gradually.

Ola replied yes, that has to be done because it just can't happen.

Chairman Sysyn acknowledged Harry Ntapalis, Risk Manager, requesting he update the Committee regarding insurance matters.

Mr. Ntapalis stated we have been involved in a property bid which included the property of the City of Manchester both real and content value as well as transit and the boiler machinery which started around February of this year noting there were four brokers involved in that process; that the incumbent which is The Insurance Exchange; Dick Ferdinando's Agency; the Gordon Powers Agency; and lastly Foye Insurance. The bids were opened on April 30th and an awarded made on May 10th with the lowest responsible bidder being The Ferdinando Agency who came in at \$73,250 which included boiler, the transit, and the property coverages. So, we'll be receiving the binder effective tomorrow securing that particular insurance coverage. The next runner up was at \$83,000 which was with the incumbent. We had two companies who currently write the insurance (Cigna & The Hartford) who combined was about \$108,000 with savings over the last year of about \$35,000; that the market has been soft, really competitive; that the agents that were involved were quite aggressive and the specifications were extremely broad; that obviously the broker that received the award met the specifications in the type of coverage cost that we had hoped to get into the soft market situation; that it's locked in for three years, it's a guaranteed rate so for budgetary purposes we know what we have to put aside unless we have a major increase in property value, obviously the rates go up. Incidentally, the rates are currently at about three cents or just under three cents per hundred; that the new bid comes in just scarcely over two cents per hundred in value and we're insured about \$274 million of City property values which includes real and content; that retention stayed the same which means the deductibles are the same, it's St. Paul's Insurance.

Chairman Sysyn addressed item 4 of the agenda:

Status report by Floyd Decker on the compensation and classification process, and an overview of his organizational plan for the Human Resources Department.

Mr. Hobson reintroduced Mr. Floyd Decker of Yarger, Decker & Thomas and also his associate Scott MacDonald who was here in town doing presentations to the Oversight Committee, the Quality Management Committee, department heads, and also union groups and affiliations and executive boards throughout the City and has been here since almost October, at this point in time with the City and has been in Manchester with us this week and would like him to give you a status and update on a couple of items.

Mr. Decker stated we are in the process of completing the pay and benefit study and assigning classes to paygrades and within the next couple of weeks we will deliver the draft of the final report to Mark. We're also preparing administrative rules and regulations for classifications and pay plans and, of course, our overall recommendations. Then, we will talk with Mark and Frank Thomas about the methodology for presenting the report to you, the Mayor and Board of Aldermen as well to the employees, the department heads, and determining at what point this is going to become public information. As we said when we met before we want to make sure that you have a chance to look at this before it goes public. In addition to that, we have been meeting with the department heads, the Quality Management Committee, the Project Oversight Committee today and the unions tomorrow on the performance evaluation process that we're presenting to them and I thought I would just give each of you a copy of the basis system that we have presented to them today in case you see copies of that floating around. Obviously, also in addition to this we will be talking to Mark this week finalizing our discussions with them about the organization of the Human Resources Department and those recommendations will be coming to you shortly, as well. I would say that just in summary that what we're finding with the pay and benefits study is that you are currently paying within the range we found in the survey, the minimum and maximum range, but toward the lower end of that range which means that you're slipping a little bit in terms of competitiveness with the surrounding market. I don't anticipate any startling, major adjustments but I do anticipate some upward adjustment in the pay scales for many of the positions. What we are doing right now is also taking a hard look at internal relationships. For example, should a Police officer be paid more or less than a beginning attorney or any number of those kinds of issues. We do have some additional data to collect from Boston, Nashua, the State, and Merrimack. We have some of that data but we don't have certain jobs enough that we feel comfortable with, we should have that today or tomorrow and again putting that into the database. We did hand out some rough information on the salary findings from the survey to the department heads and the Quality Management Committee but that is very preliminary, it's incomplete and we should have a more complete set of data to give you next week.

Mr. Hobson stated we talked today, just to remind the Oversight Committee and the department heads that a Quality Management Committee which includes two Board of Mayor and Aldermen members...Aldermen Pinard and Klock...they had four duties. One, is first primary is to bring the compensation and classification plan system proposal. The second is to develop a performance appraisal process that would most likely first be adopted by supervisory and management staff and then moved on through all employees. Third is to bring about a Human Resources reorganization that will support what Floyd is proposing and then finally to bring about an employee handbook that would give all employees a level playing field of knowledge when they become an employee of the City of Manchester...here's what to expect. In going along with all four of those pieces are ordinance changes and policy changes for administrative regulations, however, we wish to word them that Floyd will also be proposing and we've been talking about what those might be, how those might be structured and it's been a healthy discussion.

Alderman O'Neil asked, Mark, the two new positions in your proposed budget, are those recommendations from the consultant because of what we're doing or would they have happened anyway.

Mr. Hobson replied no, those were early recommendations from Floyd that I put into my budget at this time and as I shared with the Committee and I think it might have been just before you came in the room. I've asked for my budget presentation to be delayed until next week in order to give Floyd a chance to continue to work on some numbers and some organization for my department.

Alderman O'Neil asked is it your recommendation for the total program to happen that those positions need to be in place.

Mr. Decker replied yes. What we're going to propose to you is an overall, a longer term plan than just this year or next year. We're going to show at least, I think, we have potentially another position that could relate to performance evaluation as we go through this and we may combine it with some others and that is why I need to talk to Mark to keep the additional number to an absolute minimum, to see if we can combine duties with some of the other things that we are working on, but the two that we recommended absolutely. Performance evaluation, I guess all of you know this is performance evaluation is one of the difficult areas...city governments all across the country...we're proposing a system that is pretty comprehensive and that will ultimately base pay advancement on performance instead of just pure longevity or just being that. To do that and we talked to the department heads today about is that it is going to require a major commitment from them, it's going to require a major commitment from the Mayor

and Board of Aldermen to insist on it, to insist that performance be measured and be discussed with employees as the basis for their advancement. Since employees generally would be measured on their performance on their anniversary date and that that data on their performance be put into the database and tracked to make sure that performance evaluation is objective as possible, but not subject to favoritism. There is a role there for Human Resources to play, a major role. The question is can we sort that out and put that into the work of existing positions or not. I tend to think we can and we could ask some people to stretch a bit, but I want to talk to Mark in a little more detail about it.

Alderman O'Neil asked are there communities where you've put this part of the program in place, been in place for a while.

Mr. Decker replied yes.

Alderman O'Neil asked can you provide us with some of those names.

Mr. Decker replied sure.

Alderman O'Neil stated as a follow-up, my recommendation would be that whenever you're coming out with this thing meet with the Quality Management Team during the day, department heads and bring it to the Board the same night, it has to happen, it has to be done all in one day.

Mr. Hobson stated one of the things that was brought up by the Committee because you have five union representatives that serve on the Oversight Committee and we're trying to be very sensitive also to the timing and the explanation of this information to employees. We don't necessarily want them to be reading about it in the press on the front page, that might happen anyway no matter what we do, but we want to make sure that Floyd is in town along with Scott and whoever else needs to be here to meet with employees...as long as it takes...if we have to schedule sessions from early morning to night time, we'll do it because we feel that's critical. So far we've been, in my opinion, much more than average communicators and I think that's why this process has gone along pretty well. We tried to answer questions and send data out as people have requested it.

Alderman Klock stated I just wanted to concur with Mark, being a member of the Committee too, Dan, that that is a major concern especially the two of us on it, we want to make sure that if there's any hope of this being implemented it is brought basically within a very short timeframe.

Mr. Decker stated in fact what Mark is talking about with employees...that whole week is going to move very rapidly. I think if the meeting is scheduled with employees even if the press picks up on it that night to be presented to you and the employees read something they were immediately scheduled to talk with us, so we don't have the gap and they begin to worry. But, the press is certainly not going to get anything out of us because anything we say to the press we refer to the City, we're not giving any independent interviews.

Alderman Shea stated we're focusing on the methodology of the presentation that you said before, how about the implementation of all of this. In other words that depends on the Board, but is there a suggested phase-in.

Mr. Decker replied yes, Sir. We will suggest a methodology for you to implement the plan. Recognizing that all the numbers we are going to show you for implementation of the plan include all employees, those in individual bargaining units may wait until their bargaining agreement is up for renewal or everybody may agree to reopen it. I don't know which way we are going to go yet, it depends on how everybody views it, but we will give you an actual number of what it will cost for actual implementation, I think we will probably be looking at a two-year phase-in where we can give you the number for the first year, a number of the second year, we can give you kind of an estimate of what the continuing cost may be, but that's particularly difficult because you don't know how many people are retiring, how many people are going from the top step to a new employee who starts at the bottom step, we're going back to the minimum of a grade, so that's more dicey but we will certainly give you a methodology and we can kick it around the table and do some what if's and a lot of this is on our computer database so we can run some what if's for you.

Alderman Shea stated some of the contracts not all are settled now at least until the next year.

Mr. Hobson stated many of them are waiting to see what happened with the study and we've been told that.

Mr. Decker stated one thing that is important for all of you to know is that when we make the recommendation there is then an appeals phase, a request for reconsideration phase of employees who are unhappy. Maybe, we found them to be overpaid, maybe we found them to be paid within the range, therefore, there is not much of an adjustment. No doubt, we will get phone calls from employees that you know are complaining about this and we would recommend that the way you handle that is to ask them and suggest to them that they follow the appeals

process and then we come back and we have them to submit written appeals and review them and in many cases we'll come back and talk to them personally to explain what we've done or we make an initial presentation just like we did when we started the study we will meet with all of the employees in groups so that we can present the findings to them personally, answer their questions, give them an hour to listen to us and ask questions, and then they can appeal if they want to. So, you will get some heat, there's no way around it and you should know that right up front...you're going to get some heat from employees who are unhappy, so when you do if you don't mind just suggest that they follow the appeals process and keep you out of that kind of thing as much as possible.

Alderman Shea asked is that a one way street. Do you know what I mean, how about if...and I'm being the devil's advocate...the Aldermen decide the other way that people are being overpaid or over compensated and so forth, can they appeal too.

Mr. Decker replied yes, you'll be looking at our recommendations and you will accept them or reject them or grill me or question me as to why we found what we did, so hopefully that is a conversation...take as much time as you want to study it and sit down and discuss it. You're the policy-makers. I would say right around the first part of June because we have June 9th, so you're going to have to have a number by then, so the minute we get this back to Mark in draft form, Mark will look at it and then we will set a date.

Chairman Sysyn addressed item 5 of the agenda:

Communication from Thomas Seigle, requesting that John Patten, Maintenance Supervisor (EPD) be authorized to receive overtime as needed for the duration of this current budget period.

Alderman O'Neil asked what the paygrade was as no where did it mentioned the paygrade.

Mr. Hobson replied it's a guess and I believe it's in the low 20's, but not sure.

Mr. Thomas stated I believe his paygrade is a Grade 25.

Alderman O'Neil stated this then is one of those border line positions.

Mr. Thomas replied that is correct.

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to approve the request of Thomas Seigle.

Chairman Sysyn addressed item 6 of the agenda:

Communication from the Health Officer requesting that Timothy Soucy's pay status be changed from paygrade 25 to paygrade 27 due to the fact that he has attained a Master's Public Health degree in fulfillment of the educational requirements for his position as Supervisor of Environmental Health.

Alderman O'Neil asked, Fred, if Tim would have had his Master's and applied for this job he would have come in at a Grade 27.

Mr. Rusczek replied that is correct.

Alderman Shea stated you have it in your budget to add it on.

Mr. Rusczek replied yes, it's not a significant increase and since our budget for FY1999 was prepared we've had two people resign so there are funds.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Klock, it was voted to approve the request of the Health Officer.

Chairman Sysyn addressed item 7 of the agenda:

Communication from the Human Resources Director requesting that one Senior Public Health Specialist position be deleted from the Health Department complement due to a lack of grant funding.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Klock, it was voted to approve the Human Resources Director's request.

Chairman Sysyn addressed item 8 of the agenda:

Communication from the Human Resources Director submitting a flow chart for review and input of the City's hiring process.

Mr. Hobson stated at one of the very early meeting held members of the Committee had questions about the hiring process in terms of what happens with people who are physically looking for a job in the City of Manchester, what do they do, what happens and I more or less because I introduced my department to the Committee I actually have their names down, who does what, what actually takes place by the time we roll through and I thought this was timely as we were looking at department head hiring procedures and such and it's more or less for your information.

Alderman Shea stated there are about 13 steps in this process, but how much time sequence is it.

Mr. Hobson replied it depends upon whether or not the position is one of those "tough to fill jobs"; that a normal position should take about thirty days or less.

Chairman Sysyn addressed item 9 of the agenda:

Reports from the Human Resources Director submitted for informational purposes:

- A. New Hire Report
- B. Termination Report
- C. Vacancy Report
- D. Pre-retirement Planning Seminar scheduled for May 27 and June 3, 1998

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was voted to receive and file reports and seminar information.

TABLED ITEMS

Communication from Alderman Hirschmann regarding a Sidewalk Action Team proposal.

(Tabled 1/20/98 pending report from Public Works Director.)

This item remained on the table.

On motion of Alderman Klock, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to remove the following item from the table for discussion.

Communication from Mayor Wieczorek recommending approval of Department Head hiring procedures.

(Note: final revision submitted by the Human Resources Director dated 5/13/98.)

(Tabled 4/21/98)

Alderman O'Neil stated, Mark, I appreciate your effort to shorten it after the discussion last time, just a few questions. On page 2, item 5 I guess what I'm really going to ask has to do more with if it's an external process, some of this information do we really need the persons already within the City, for instance, the resume.

Mr. Hobson replied what we are concerned about as we look at some of the background information on some of these candidates, we're changing the position description process now with Yarger, Decker, Thomas Company and we want to make sure particularly that educational transcripts and professional licenses now match the requirements of the position that the department heads and the employees have submitted. While someone, even like myself when I came from the School system, some of you knew me but you may not have known my resume, my background, my transcripts, my certifications and I really do feel that it's important that we get that kind of information from our people; that it's not just to edify ourselves, to know about their backgrounds and to learn more about them as employees and in some cases it's a tribute and a kudo to them and to the City that we have such quality people.

Alderman O'Neil stated I see three letters of professional recommendations...if somebody is going from Fire Chief and he get three letters from three former Fire Chiefs in the City are we putting a process in we really don't need.

Alderman Shea stated I think all people should be able to apply whether it's external or internal, I think we discussed this before...one never knows what a candidate may bring forth. All things being equal we should give consideration to those who have performed their duties and have been in a sense on the firing line, but I do think that there should be opportunities for other people to apply and I think that regardless if a person applying for a fire Chief has three former Fire Chief recommendations that proves in a sense that that person has their confidence and if we've elected three previous Fire Chiefs and we have confidence in their abilities then obviously it's a plus for that person.

Alderman O'Neil in reference to F - Sign Release for the City to receive the candidates federal and local police records background investigation. From somebody who is already within the City, what does that do us.

Mr. Hobson replied depending upon certain jobs in the City, it's actually a State law. So, I felt that it was prudent to do all employees since with some employees we were already doing it and I think from a liability standpoint I also think it's prudent to do.

Alderman O'Neil stated if we find out something, that person shouldn't have been in the position to begin with, correct.

Mr. Hobson replied that might be true.

Alderman Shea stated on *60 Minutes* the program, they did discover this person down at one college that falsified their Ph.D. and after an investigation they found out, so I think it's good for them to check. It just goes to show that it is more thorough and some times Peter's Principles catches up with someone.

Chairman Sysyn stated it's not just for this one particular case.

Alderman O'Neil stated there is still a general practice here whether it's the case of the case of the Building Department; that Item 9 it says "the Mayor and Board"...does the Mayor determine who does the interview.

Mr. Hobson stated yes.

Solicitor Clark stated by Charter. The Charter says "the Mayor may ask the commission to do the interview".

Mr. Hobson stated he may decide not to...use the Police Department, for example. The Mayor can say that I prefer the Police Commission do that, but it's at his discretion. They shouldn't be conducting interviews unless directed to by the Mayor.

Alderman O'Neil in reference to C on number 11 which kinds of goes back to my comment about somebody already in the City, similar to F under 5.

Mr. Hobson stated Police, Fire, School...I'm not sure of some of the other departments with commissions, but many departments right now are doing thorough records checks on their own in consultation with our department, so I figured if we remove the liability we'll do it for everybody.

Chairman Sysyn stated can I ask, his Honor, how do you feel about this.

Mayor Wieczorek stated I've looked at this very carefully and I know it looks a little voluminous, but I think with the laws that you have to deal with today, you have to make sure that you're going to do everything appropriately and in looking at the things regarding the Civil Rights Law, the Affirmative Action laws, the American with Disabilities, you've got all of these things that you've got to comply with. You want to make sure that you don't miss something and it's the same with the internal/external when you're looking at that. I think that you really need to touch all of the bases even if you might have a candidate that's an excellent candidate inside. You still have to follow the proper procedure, so that you're not going to be criticized for saying well, we've got the buddy system going here and we'll just hire Moe's brother-in-law and this is what the system is all about. You don't want that kind of criticism.

Alderman O'Neil stated I just want you to know, your Honor, I was fighting for you to make your job easier.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to recommend approval of the revised department head hiring procedures as submitted by the Human Resources Director.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Klock, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee