

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

January 18, 2000

5:15 PM

Chairman Lopez called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Lopez, Sysyn, Shea, Vaillancourt (late)

Absent: Alderman O'Neil

Messrs: H. Tawney, J. Porter, Chief Kane

Chairman Lopez advised that the first purpose of the meeting shall be organizational in nature, and requested the Clerk to provide a brief overview regarding typical issues addressed by the Committee.

Deputy Clerk Johnson advised that the committee dealt with what it was entitled, human resources and insurance issues. Insurance issues might include liability issues, CGL insurance, health insurance, or other various insurance issues relating to the city. She noted Mr. Ntapalis, who headed the insurance division, was here this evening. He advised the committee on these matters. Deputy Clerk Johnson referred to human resource issues providing the example of the Yarger Decker classification and compensation study that was referred by the Board and worked on over the last year. She noted that issues from that study would still come up to the committee over the next year. Additionally, requests for reclassifications of positions or new positions are brought to this committee and reports are brought to the Board for consideration. Most of what is acted on in a committee is considered advisory in nature and goes back out to the Board for a full vote. The Clerk's office will prepare those reports, sometimes in consultation with the Human Resources Director or Risk manager. Once in a while a special issue may be referred to the committee by the Board as well.

Chairman Lopez stated Mark Hobson is not here this evening. He did call me and asked me and I said that it would be appropriate that he take care of his son. The baseball banquet is in town this evening and I think his staff is capable of answering any questions for him so he was excused from attending this meeting.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated I noticed that with most of the items there is usually a recommendation from Mr. Hobson. Is that correct?

Chairman Lopez replied there is a recommendation on some of the items, yes.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked is that customary.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered it has been, but it is also something (written form) that the Chairman has specifically requested for this term.

Mr. Tawney introduced himself to the Committee. I would like to now introduce the Human Resource staff. To my left is Jackie Curtis who is the Administrative Services Manager for the office and basically keeps us on track. Going around the room, Maureen McCarthy who is our ADA Coordinator, David Hodgen who is our Chief Negotiator, Arlene Nye is the Payroll Coordinator and Cheryl Bell who is an Administrative Assistant and in the far corner is Red Robidas who is our Security Manager. The other members of our staff are either at school or at other functions.

Chairman Lopez stated one of the items that I wanted to bring up is the Committee rule. I think it is very important that we conduct business in an orderly fashion and that no new business comes before this Committee unless it is on the agenda. The only way that some new business can come before this Committee is with unanimous consent by the Aldermen present. I say present because there might be an Alderman sick or on vacation so if all of us unanimously agree that new business can come before this Committee, that is the way it will be. I would like to institute those rules.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Sysyn, it was voted to approve the rules of the Committee.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 5 of the agenda:

Opening of sealed bids for Term Life Insurance and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance.

Mr. Tawney stated we had four bidders.

Chairman Lopez asked is this going to be a standard procedure. As I understand, there was a problem and that is the reason we are doing it.

Mr. Tawney replied that is right and proceeded to open the four bids.

Mr. Tawney stated the first one is from Ferdinando Insurance. The total term life insurance price is 12 cents per \$1,000. Accidental death & dismemberment is 2 cents per \$1,000. Common carrier travel and accident is ½ cent per \$1,000 for a total combined price of 14.5 cents per \$1,000. That is from Ferdinando Insurance.

Mr. Tawney stated the next one is from Standard Insurance Company. The life insurance benefit was 15 cents per \$1,000. Accidental death is 3 cents per \$1,000. The total is 18 cents per \$1,000.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked and there was nothing for the other category there.

Mr. Tawney answered no.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked does that mean they are not offering that.

Mr. Tawney answered I would have to go through and re-read the entire proposal to make sure it is not covered some other way.

Mr. Tawney stated the next proposal is from Foye Insurance and the term life insurance is 14 cents per \$1,000. AD&D is 2 cents per \$1,000 for a total of 16 cents per \$1,000.

Mr. Tawney stated the last proposal is from Pine Services, LLC. The life insurance is 15 cents per \$1,000. Accidental death & dismemberment is 2 cents per \$1,000. There is no other policy. The total is 17 cents per \$1,000.

Alderman Shea stated just to revisit this, Ferdinando was 14.5 cents, Standard was 18 cents, Foye was 16 cents and the last one was 17 cents.

Chairman Lopez stated I think the procedure now is that they will review it to make sure that all qualifications are met.

Mr. Tawney replied right and then the HR Director will make a decision on which one to run by the Committee at the next meeting.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 6 of the agenda:

Ratify and confirm poll conducted December 17, 1999 approving a request from Regis Lemaire, OYS Director, for the replacement and upgrade of Office Assistant, Grade 10 to Administrative Assistant II, Grade 13.

Alderman Sysyn moved to ratify and confirm the poll. Alderman Shea duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked do we have any other alternative.

Chairman Lopez answered it was already voted on by the previous Committee. I don't think we have an alternative. It is just a confirmation of the poll.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated I want to state that in the future I will be very suspect of any upgrades of this kind because it seems to me that once you get up you never can get back down. So every time you do this you are costing not only this year but way out into the future so I probably would have looked at this with a jaundice eye but I wasn't here at the time.

Chairman Lopez called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 7 of the agenda:

Discussion relative to employee classification appeals relating to Yarger Decker and McDonald study with recommendations from the Human Resources Director.

Chairman Lopez stated I have asked the director to try and put it into some kind of issue and discussion and financial impact and his recommendation on these items as you look in your packet you will see. One of the recommendations is to do this for the simple reason that there is a new Ordinance 33:12.

Alderman Sysyn moved to approve Mr. Hobson's recommendation. Alderman Vaillancourt duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked this does not tie us into any specific recommendation, it is just a general policy. We are not bound by anything they are doing?

Chairman Lopez answered that is correct. We just want some type of order that is fair to everybody.

Alderman Shea stated as you know, the position I hold is that at some time we are going to have to revisit the whole Yarger Decker study because to me personally, I can't speak for anybody else, it is sort of out of whack. It seems that much of the focus is centered around those in a particular area. If, for instance, a person in one position whether it be a department head or so forth, if one department head is given some type of consideration as far as the step increase, that will throw the entire process out of whack so we really have to be very careful how we handle different types of requests for appeals. Another point is that we, as a Human Resource Committee, have a lot of things thrust upon us at the last minute and, therefore, I think that the earlier motion not to have new business placed before us...there have been instances where we show up for a meeting and somebody says I would like to have this considered and somebody else says I would like to have this considered and all of the sudden we are considering things that we really have no kind of insight into how it is going to impact other types of matters within this particular classification. It is just a comment but I think we have to move very cautiously.

Chairman Lopez replied I think it is a very good comment and I thank the Board for instituting the Committee rule because I only think it is fair to be fair with everybody. Not only the Aldermen who have to make a decision, but the people who submit the requests for us and the staff who does the research.

Chairman Lopez called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Mr. Tawney stated in here as part of the recommendation was some time certain and that we leave to the discretion of what you are looking for. 30-45 days we could probably turn this around for the group and cover it under Item 2 for the department heads to sit with the employees and go over it and maybe another 15 days after that for us to review the departments and report back to the Board.

Chairman Lopez replied I have had some discussion with the Director in that line and we both agree that it would be fair to the employees. I think a time frame is necessary because they were promised something. He was going to weed out those who did qualify, which might be 10 or 15 and I said when he is ready I am sure the Committee would be willing to sit down at a special meeting maybe and address those employees. Employees shouldn't wait for an answer. I agree with you.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 8 of the agenda:

Communication from the Tax Collector requesting sick leave severance pay for an upcoming Customer Service Representative III vacancy from Salary Adjustment and seeking a replacement immediately.

Chairman Lopez stated basically the person is retired and you need somebody at the counter when people are coming in to pay their taxes so it is a different type of situation. As a recommendation, the motion would be in order to approve.

Alderman Shea asked could the Tax Collector address that issue.

Ms. Porter answered I don't think there is anything too complicated other than the fact that with the person who retired, she had accumulated the maximum sick leave, she had a lot of vacation and comp time so in effect by paying her out of budget, which we have to do, we tied up four months before we could hire someone else. Four months with a vacancy on the counter would really be felt, especially right now because we have one of our others in the hospital as of today. Now we are down to four. It happens so easily with vacations and people being sick. It is just not a healthy situation at all to have that vacancy there for four months.

Alderman Vaillancourt replied so from what I understand, you normally have six on the counter.

Ms. Porter stated yes.

Alderman Vaillancourt responded and you are down to four now.

Ms. Porter replied yes.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked how much vacation time do these people get a year.

Ms. Porter answered it varies depending on length of service. We have two who are at three weeks and I believe one is at two weeks and the rest are at four weeks.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked when they are on vacation, these positions are not filled at the counter.

Ms. Porter answered no. When they are on vacation we have an empty spot.

Alderman Shea stated I would assume that you are requesting that the money not come out of the budget that you have.

Ms. Porter replied it is already coming out of our budget. If no decision were made here, that means we could not hire for four months. If it comes out of either the salary adjustment account or contingency into our budget and that could be at the end of the year when we discover how much money we actually need in our budget to cover salaries...

Alderman Shea asked, Howard, do we have money in the salary adjustment account.

Mr. Tawney answered we have a little bit, yes.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked could you be a little bit more specific.

Mr. Tawney answered we can probably cover this, but I can't cover much after that.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked how often does this happen. When was the last time it happened?

Ms. Porter asked in my office.

Alderman Vaillancourt answered yes.

Ms. Porter replied the last person who retired was five years ago and that was the tax collector.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked what did you do at that time.

Ms. Porter answered I wasn't the tax collector, so I am not quite sure. I became tax collector and we left it vacant for the month of January. In February, I was the temporary tax collector and I remained at my lower pay until March when it was finalized and then I was raised to the tax collector so it was absorbed.

Chairman Lopez stated I think that the other part of the recommendation, Alderman, is something that the Human Resources Director and the Mayor and everybody has to look at which is that this happens throughout the City when a department head loses a person. Some departments can put up with it, but when you are serving the public I think it can't wait. Mark Hobson's recommendation is

that we are going to have to review the whole process, especially in the Tax Collector's Office and the Assessor's Office and others.

On motion of Alderman Sysyn, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to approve the recommendation of the Human Resources Director.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 9 of the agenda:

Communication submitted by five employees (AFSCME) asking for reconsideration of the implementation of the Decker Plan as it relates to their scheduled longevity increases.

Chairman Lopez stated this item has to do with a communication sent in by five employees and Human Resources, upon reviewing this, the recommendation from the Director is that because the union has ratified a tentative agreement with the City and the agreement contains two items listed above and will be presented at the full Board this evening. It wouldn't be very prudent of us to approve something along that line. It doesn't preclude the union and the union workers after this process of the union contract is approved, for those people to resubmit with justification with the department head through HR and come back to this Committee with justification. I think it is the only process for us to go through.

Alderman Vaillancourt moved to deny the request.

Chairman Lopez asked are you denying the request or the recommendation. Under the Ordinance they have a right to appeal.

Alderman Shea duly seconded the motion.

Chairman Lopez called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 10 of the agenda:

Communication from Chief Kane relative to Deputy Martel receiving overtime payment for overtime hours should he be activated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Urban Search and Rescue Task Force. All costs are absorbed by USAR Task Force with reimbursement for all costs.

Chief Kane stated this is a Task Force and there are 25 formed across the United States and there is one here in New England. This would allow the person to join the Task Force. This Task Force has to respond within 48 hours to anywhere in the world to major disasters like earthquakes, etc. The federal government would pay for this.

Alderman Shea asked if he were to leave, do you have a person capable of filling in until he returns.

Chief Kane answered yes and the federal government would also pick up that person's salary. So it is actually a win-win situation for the City.

Alderman Shea asked will it have any negative effect on your department.

Chief Kane answered we would lose a person for two or three weeks, but I think the long-term impact in having that person trained over a number of years, we get the knowledge and education. If we lose a person for a couple of weeks...you know they don't go for four or five months.

Alderman Shea asked but when he leaves somebody can be replace him and that will be a win-win situation.

Chief Kane answered yes.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Sysyn, it was voted to approve this request.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 11 of the agenda:

Communication from Ron Corriveau, VP of New England Risk requesting approval to distribute employee benefit information regarding the PIP Automobile and Home Insurance Program.

Mr. Tawney stated the Committee has decided in the past to...we are going to be holding a Benefit Fair in the end of February, February 28 and at that time this gentleman has already been offered to attend and have a table and he is going to be able to do that. In the future, the decision was by the Committee that instead of pelting the employees with payroll stuffers, to allow the parties that were interested to attend the Benefits Fair and hand out their material at that time.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked you are not denying anybody else the right to do this.

Mr. Tawney answered no.

Alderman Sysyn stated we had quite a few requests and it was getting to be a weekly thing so what we did was ask that Human Resources put on a Benefits Fair so that they can bring all of the information to the employees.

On motion of Alderman Vaillancourt, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to refer this item to the Health & Benefits Fair.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 12 of the agenda:

New hire and termination reports for the months of October, November, and December 1999 from the Human Resources Director submitted for informational purposes.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Sysyn, it was voted to receive and file this item.

TABLED ITEMS

13. Communication from the Human Resources Director relative to the structure and status of department head and deputy department head positions in the Yarger Decker pay grade allocation. (Tabled 9/7/99)

This item remained on the table.

14. Ordinance:

"Amending Section 33.026 (Electrical Inspector) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester."

This item remained on the table.

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

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee