

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

August 22, 2000

7:00 PM

Chairman Lopez called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Lopez, Sysyn, Vaillancourt and O'Neil

Absent: Aldermen Shea

Messrs: M. Hobson, R. MaKenzie

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 3 of the agenda:

Communication from Mayor Baines submitting a proposal from the Director of Planning for an organizational change of the Planning & Community Development Department.

Mr. Hobson stated we have certainly reviewed this and we propose the recommendation and we also want the Committee to know that the department will stay within budget this year and we are projecting that they will also stay within budget for next year.

Chairman Lopez asked do we know the cost factors involved.

Mr. Hobson answered the cost factors for this year are approximately \$15,000 on one side, but we will also have a savings in terms of some of the moves and changes of about \$18,000. It will roughly be completely offset and that should carry into next year as well.

Chairman Lopez asked is there a difference between an Administrative Assistant and an Assistant Director.

Mr. MacKenzie answered an Administrative Assistant is a clerical person. An Assistant Director is at a much higher level in responsibility and they do have some programs in which I can use their assistance.

Chairman Lopez asked what would the Planner IV be in charge of.

Mr. MacKenzie answered on the day-to-day business, the Planner IV would be in charge and basically that is to help coordinate the CIP programs. Right now, all of the staff report directly to me and there are a lot of issues that I deal with and there are a lot of day-to-day nuts and bolts issues that need coordination. I have been trying to do that, but it is clear to me that in order to get all of those projects done right, I need an in-house coordinator of that program.

Alderman O'Neil stated I just want to commend the Planning Department, along with Human Resources. I think this is going to make Bob's life a lot easier and he is going to be able to hold some people accountable. I think this is long overdue and I commend him for taking a look at the organization and coming back with this.

Alderman O'Neil moved to approve the organizational change.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated there are a lot of things we would like in this world. I think maybe the Aldermen need a special assistant to help us type our communications and things or upgrade the City Clerk's Office and maybe we need a lot of new positions but clearly this is yet another position in City government...the Union Leader editorialized against it yesterday and I happen to agree with them on that position. How do you say this is going to cost anymore? In the long run it is going to cost the City more is it not?

Mr. Hobson replied what I stated was for this fiscal year and next fiscal year.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked how do you figure that.

Mr. Hobson answered because of the movement of funds from the general fund to CIP and grant funds. When I say that, I am distinguishing between general...

Alderman Vaillancourt interjected money is money though, right.

Mr. Hobson replied I don't disagree with you. I just want to be clear on that. I am talking about general funds versus non-general fund money.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked so how much new money is this going to cost us overall that could be used someplace else if we weren't doing it here.

Mr. Hobson answered \$15,000.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked for this year.

Mr. Hobson answered yes.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked and next year.

Mr. Hobson answered approximately \$18,000.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked and the following year.

Mr. Hobson answered I only went out two years.

Alderman Sysyn duly seconded the motion to approve the organizational change.

Chairman Lopez called for a vote. The motion carried with Alderman Vaillancourt being duly recorded in opposition.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 4 of the agenda:

Communication from Alderman Pariseau requesting a review of the recent increase in medical insurance payments (17.7%) as it pertains to retired City employees having to pay this out of their pensions.

Mr. Hobson stated fortunately or unfortunately, the 17.7% for the City of Manchester is actually the National average according to the American Compensation Association for health insurance increases across the country for all municipalities and governments. At this time there is no funding mechanism to help offset the retirees health insurance than what has been done now for several years. They absorb increases just like we do. As employees absorb increases, retirees absorb increases.

Chairman Lopez asked could you give a breakdown on that so we can get back to the full Board so that they understand what you are talking about. Could you do a summary and evaluation?

Mr. Hobson answered sure.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated I think I have to state for the record at this time before we leave that last topic that I wish to file a minority report. I believe that has to be stated now and a minority report will be filed. I remember it came up with the David Wihby situation at the last Board meeting whether he could file a minority report when he didn't give notice at the Committee hearing. I want to make it clear that I am filing a minority report on that last item.

Alderman O'Neil asked, Mark, I take it that this is specifically City employees who are part of the City retirement. We are not talking City employees who are part of the State Retirement System. Can we get a comparison of what the State does to address these situations? Is that possible?

Mr. Hobson answered the two State groups on the municipal side are Police and Fire and as you know School is over there. Their contracts and the situation is different than the municipal system. What I can do...as you know this came up at the last meeting and I wasn't too sure what the group wanted to do. There is a proposal in front of the Retirement Board to address this issue as well and it is coming up at their September meeting. Perhaps what I could do is try to garner some information there for the full Board.

Alderman O'Neil moved to table this item. Alderman Sysyn duly seconded the motion. Chairman Lopez called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 5 of the agenda:

A-Step change for department heads submitted by Human Resources.

Chairman Lopez stated as you read in your packet the process will be the Human Resource Director shall submit the application to the Mayor for final approval.

Alderman O'Neil asked are A-STEPS addressed with all rank and file employees, whether they were part of a bargaining unit or not.

Mr. Hobson answered yes.

Alderman O'Neil asked there isn't a department that hasn't addressed it.

Mr. Hobson answered to my knowledge all departments have committees and programs in place.

Alderman O'Neil stated that would be my only concern. Granting department heads A-STEPS when they are not addressing A-STEPS in their own departments.

Mr. Hobson replied this came up because we realized that a department head who filed for an A-STEP, the A-STEP is a salary increase and we realized that I was the one who would actually approve that and I personally had a difficult time with approving salary increases for all department heads. I did not feel that that was

my place so the Mayor and I discussed it and he felt that as a practical matter the Board needs to set the A-STEP policy.

Alderman O'Neil asked so that is all we are doing here is setting the policy.

Mr. Hobson answered that is all I am asking you to do.

Alderman O'Neil moved to approve the A-STEP policy for department heads. Alderman Sysyn duly seconded the motion. Chairman Lopez called for a vote. The motion carried with Alderman Vaillancourt duly recorded in opposition.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 6 of the agenda:

New Hire and Termination listings submitted for informational purposes.

Alderman O'Neil stated I noticed there was a significant amount of...namely these are young people on summer employment, outside of the City. Is there a reason why we are not offering these jobs to residents of the City and why we are going outside.

Mr. Hobson replied these are mostly based on the applications that we have. There are some surrounding towns.

Alderman O'Neil stated these are the types of jobs that should really be going to Manchester kids as far as I am concerned. I know we don't have a policy and there has been a lot of discussion about residency requirements but there are enough of them here that...there are five or six or eight that maybe should have gone to Manchester kids and I just want to make sure...

Chairman Lopez interjected some are lifeguards too.

Alderman O'Neil responded true but there are some Fun in the Sun and some Workreation in there that we should make sure in the future go to Manchester residents.

Mr. Hobson replied I truly think, and this is an opinion, that the department heads are very aware of that concern and do their best to try to make sure that the Manchester youth are employed.

Alderman O'Neil stated in all honesty, the rate is pretty good. I find it hard to believe that there aren't more Manchester kids available to work in these positions. I am just stating my opinion.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked are you trying to tell us that you are hiring the best qualified people.

Mr. Hobson answered we are attempting to.

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

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 7 of the agenda:

Communication from Michael Roche questioning an exhibit of the March 21, 2000 Human Resources Committee agenda.

Chairman Lopez stated this item is a duplicate. We took action at a previous meeting. For the record, we did receive the information and we received and file it at a previous meeting. There was some miscommunication on the City Clerk's part.

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Sysyn, it was voted to receive and file.

Chairman Lopez stated the next item is a separate document that you should have received. Did everybody get it? It is 7A.

Mr. Hobson stated it came in your original packet, but it has the wrong cover on it. We resent it yesterday. Mr. Robidas has extra copies if anyone needs one.

Chairman Lopez stated there was some confusion on the agenda so it was corrected by sending this new copy. What we are really doing is a Drug Free Workplace Policy.

Mr. Hobson stated you have seen a version of this before. You asked us to make revisions and to work with the City Solicitor's Office. We have. The City Solicitor's Office is comfortable with this version. If the City is going to continue to accept Federal dollars, it must have a drug-free workplace act in place. Mr. Robidas has worked diligently with Atty. Muller and they are both here to answer your questions. I am very comfortable with this document and I ask that the Committee approve it.

Alderman O'Neil stated one of the things that first came up two or three months ago when this was first presented was just working with a third party and that was the Employees Assistance Program and I haven't seen any correspondence to that effect.

Mr. Hobson replied that will be for the actual policy that the City will enforce. This is the act. There are two parts to it. The second part has been reviewed and we have discussed that second part with the EAP Coordinator on at least two occasions to my knowledge.

Chairman Lopez stated they just have the wrong interpretation. The Drug and Alcohol Policy that you are referring to is still on the table. This is a Drug-Free Workplace Policy.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked do we have a list of people that this covers.

Mr. Hobson answered this will cover...different from the policy that is on the table, this will cover the entire City. This is the Drug-Free Workplace Act to cover the City.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated last time you gave us a list of specific individuals that would be covered. Now you are saying this is going to cover every City employee.

Mr. Hobson replied this policy act will cover every City employee and the Drug and Alcohol Policy that is more of the micro level that you are referring to, will cover specific critical positions.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked what is the difference between this and that.

Mr. Hobson answered this is the Federal mandate that is the macro picture that has to be adopted first by you as the governing body. Whatever you do with the drug and alcohol policy later down the road, I truly exhort you to embrace this.

Chairman Lopez asked, Mr. Muller, do you have any comments on it.

Mr. Muller answered I have no comments. I have reviewed it and essentially most of the requirements are set forth by Federal statutes. This encompasses the requirements of the Federal statutes.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated my major question is have we gone beyond Federal statutes in any manner whatsoever.

Mr. Hobson replied in this document, no.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked in the other one we have.

Mr. Hobson answered in the other one we have disagreements over whether or not we have.

Mr. Muller stated just to explain, the Federal Drug-Free Workplace Act requires that in order to get Federal monies you have a certain policy regarding drugs and drugs only and it sets forth certain requirements. The other policy is not pursuant to any particular legislation. It is simply a policy in general that is being developed. As I said, there are no State or Federal mandates. This is mandated by the Federal government.

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was voted to approve this policy.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated I just want to go on record that I don't think this is necessary whatsoever. It says that you can't do something illegal. We have laws that say you can't do something illegal now. I don't think we need another law by saying that an employee of the City of Manchester cannot break the law. If you are possessing illegal drugs, you are breaking the law.

Chairman Lopez replied that is your opinion but the City attorney has advised me that we need a Drug-Free Workplace Policy in order to get Federal funds.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated the reason I am here is to express my opinions and I believe I have a right to say that. Why is it that we need something beyond a law, which is the law of the State and of the country saying drugs are illegal? Why do we need another law on top of a law saying that drugs are illegal?

Chairman Lopez replied it is a reasonable question, but the motion is already done with and if you have any other questions you can talk to the City attorney later.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked you mean I am not allowed to ask questions in this forum.

Chairman Lopez answered we went through questions before we took the motion. Why didn't you ask the question then? Now we have to readdress it after we passed it? Is that what you want to do?

Alderman Vaillancourt stated I want to be on record about having reservations about passing laws on top of laws and to find out why this is necessary to do.

Chairman Lopez replied fine. You are on the record. It has been taped.

TABLED ITEMS

8. Class specification for Electrical Inspector.

This item remained on the table.

9. Ordinance Amendment:

"An Ordinance to establish the salary of the Commissioner of Welfare by amending the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester by adding a new section 32.020(D)."

(HR recommends ordinance be approved as submitted, noting that the ordinance as submitted should read \$64,500 per year.)

This item remained on the table.

10. Drug and Alcohol Policy submitted by HR.

(HR recommends acceptance of the policy as submitted - updated policy as of 8/15/00 enclosed.)

This item remained on the table.

11. RFQ for Health Insurance Audit.

(HR recommends when economy changes attempts should be made to conduct an audit at that time.)

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Sysyn, it was voted to remove this item from the table.

Mr. Hobson stated the Finance Director wanted to go on record that he has sent the RFQ for the health insurance audit to McGladfrey & Pullen, our new City auditors. Mr. Scott Bassett is reviewing it. To date, there is only one company in the entire country that has responded to the RFQ. He feels that it is a very specialized area. He is trying to search for an independent third party to do the work. Mr. Clougherty wanted you to know that it is still in the process.

Alderman O'Neil asked who is paying our auditors.

Mr. Hobson answered they are doing it as part of the audit and this is part of that \$2 million offset. It is a contingency-based payment. Whatever they find is what they get paid with. I just wanted that on the record.

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Sysyn, it was voted to put this item back on the table.

12. Communication from Attorney Mueller regarding the residency requirement for City employees.
(Residency survey submitted by HR - recommends survey be received and filed.)

This item remained on the table.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Alderman O'Neil moved to adjourn. Alderman Sysyn duly seconded the motion. The motion carried with Alderman Vaillancourt duly recorded in opposition.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee