COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

January 22, 2009 **6:00 PM**

Chairman Gatsas called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Gatsas, Shea, Lopez, Pinard

Absent: Alderman Garrity

Messrs: L. LaFreniere, P. Goucher, J. Gile, T. Arnold

Chairman Gatsas addressed items 3 and 4 of the agenda:

3. Communication from Jane Gile, Human Resources Director, submitted a request from the Planning Department for reorganization of Planner positions.

4. Communication from Pamela H. Goucher, Interim Planning Director, and Leon L. LaFreniere, Building Commissioner, regarding the potential merger of the Planning and Community Development Department and the Building Department.
(Note: Referred to the Committee for review of grades proposed under the organizational chart of the new Department of Planning and Community Development. The Committee requested an updated organizational chart on 1/20/09.)

Chairman Gatsas stated I guess our communication and discussion is to continue along with the consolidation of Planning and Building. Let me get a clarification for your color scheme. If you can walk me through the colors so that I understand which colors mean vacant, filled… and I assume there is another color that is designated for Building and a color for Planning.

Mr. Leon LaFreniere, Building Commissioner, stated actually Alderman the color schemes are related to the program areas of the consolidated department. They don't relate to either filled status of a position or single department function. If you read across the bars in the approximate center of the flow chart, each of those colored boxes indicates a separate functional area of the department. The status of the individual positions whether vacant or occupied is actually within the circle that represents the positions. So each of the circles represent a position, the labor grade and step of the incumbent in that position, as well as the salary…

Chairman Gatsas stated let's go slow. Let's look at the green. It says planner III. Give me an explanation. There is a lighter shade of green.

Ms. Pamela Goucher, Interim Planning Director, stated there are four circles, if you will, on this sheet that I would say fade. They are very light and they fade. If you look at the left corner of the chart it says they indicate eliminated positions. If you look at the Planning area under the green and the pink the faded positions indicate what the Planning Department has funding for.

Chairman Gatsas stated the shaded ones are elimination. If I go to the planner II and it says $64,000 is there somebody in that that moves to the planner III to $71,000?

Ms. Goucher replied correct.

Chairman Gatsas asked is that just a move in rate?

Ms. Goucher replied correct.

Chairman Gatsas asked the planner I that goes from $54,000 to $61,000, is that another position that is full and that moves to that position?

Ms. Goucher replied correct.

Chairman Gatsas asked the Planner IV, that is off to the right that is faded kind of a pink color…

Ms. Goucher interjected that is currently vacant. It was funded this year in 2009. I am asking for consideration of eliminating that in lieu of creating a new planner I which is the grade 18, step one, $40,779. The planner IV and the planner I kind of cancel each other out in terms of…

Chairman Gatsas asked this is new and that is vacant currently?

Ms. Goucher replied it is vacant.

Chairman Gatsas stated I think you have done a great job with this chart. It is easy to follow and I think we can get to a conclusion of where we want to be. Let us start on the very far left where it says planner II and that is a new hire.

Ms. Goucher stated that is the grant funded position, limited term.

Chairman Gatsas asked have they been hired and these are federal funds?

Ms. Goucher replied correct, as is the one on the right.

Chairman Gatsas stated let us go down to the community improvement program, special projects. You have a planner IV. That says NC, I assume that is no change.

Ms. Goucher replied you are correct.

Chairman Gatsas asked is that filled?

Ms. Goucher stated that is correct.

Chairman Gatsas stated then you go down underneath him or her and you have a planner III, a planner II and a planning technician. I see that there is no change with the planner II. The planner II is a vacant position, is that correct?

Ms. Goucher replied it is vacant. I do have authorization to fill that.

Chairman Gatsas stated the planning technician is no change. We have already touched on the green because that is just looking at raising the rate from $64,000 to $71,000. We have taken care of the pink. Let us go down to the lemongrass. There is no change in the plans examiner.

Mr. LaFreniere stated that is correct Alderman. There is no change in the plans examiner.

Chairman Gatsas stated if we look at the next circles there is no change in either one of those four.

Mr. LaFreniere stated that is correct.

Chairman Gatsas stated in the blue there is no change. Are any of those lemongrass positions vacant?

Mr. LaFreniere replied no. Under building safety inspections those are all full.

Chairman Gatsas asked over on the blue side?

Mr. LaFreniere replied those are all full.

Chairman Gatsas stated I assume because you haven't shown me any changes all those rates are currently being paid at the rate they are listed at.

Mr. LaFreniere stated that is correct.

Chairman Gatsas stated let us move to the yellow. There is no change. There is an administrative assistant. Is that the part time person that is vacant currently?

Ms. Goucher replied right now it is half funded. We have a person in that position at 20 hours.

Chairman Gatsas stated that is no change.

Ms. Goucher stated if the proposal went through, that would be either one full time position or two part time positions.

Chairman Gatsas asked is this part time currently?

Ms. Goucher replied correct.

Chairman Gatsas stated at half of that rate, so it is about $15,000. The next group of yellow there is no change and you have a vacancy at a customer services representative rate.

Mr. LaFreniere stated that is correct.

Chairman Gatsas stated let us move up to the bigger ones. What you have there we didn't shadow for some reason…

Ms. Goucher interjected we shadowed the one position. Those other two are not eliminated nor is the title necessarily changing.

Mr. LaFreniere stated of the four positions that currently exist only one is being eliminated.

Chairman Gatsas stated correct but obviously when I am talking about shadowing, you had some other shadow that showed the pay increases.

Ms. Goucher stated you are correct.

Chairman Gatsas stated so if you had put a shadow next to the other two, I would have known but you put it underneath so that is acceptable. Now that I have asked my questions…So you are going from how many current employees without the grant funded positions?

Ms. Goucher replied if you look at the bottom between the two departments there are 32 in the complement and two grant funded to bring it to 34. In the proposal we are looking at 30 positions and two grant funded. We have eliminated two positions.

Alderman Lopez stated for my own benefit and maybe others, the difference between a planners I, II, and III, could you explain that? If you hired a planner I what does that mean to me?

Ms. Goucher replied a planner I is generally right out of college. It is typically right after a master's degree or a bachelor's with a couple years of experience and most of their work is done under direct supervision. They have very little independent work in their positions.

Alderman Lopez asked how about a planner II?

Ms. Goucher replied planner II steps it up in terms of the experience and the knowledge required for the job. The way I guess I could best explain it from a planner I, II, III and IV is that if you were to look at the job descriptions, they talk about some, considerable and extensive, in terms of the amount of experience somebody has. They talk about the knowledge portion in terms of being comprehensive which is really either the department head or a deputy level or thorough, substantial or some. A planner I would have some experience maybe or might be right out of college and they might have some general knowledge. As you move up the experience and the knowledge incrementally go up. The Human Resources Department actually has a category so when we advertise we follow their guidelines for experience. Some implies one to three years. Considerable implies four to six years and extensive is seven or more years of experience.

Chairman Gatsas asked Jane, what does AL mean? Such as the grade 19, step AL1.

Ms. Jane Gile, Human Resources Director, stated that means it is a longevity step. After they reach grade 13, after another five years they get a longevity step.

Alderman Lopez stated I think you did an excellent job in providing this. Tell me a little bit about CIP. How does that help Planning?

Ms. Goucher replied in Manchester it is sort of a hybrid. In other communities there is usually somebody who works on the Capital Improvements and then there is usually someone who works on community improvements primarily CDBG projects and deals with the HUD monies. In our case, our CIP program basically tackles both. They are not only responsible for making sure that all 40 plus non profit agencies that get funding are monitored correctly and are following all of the procedures necessary to continue receiving the HUD grants and HOME monies for example and they are also responsible for making sure that we continue to get clean audits from HUD. Without proper oversight, proper monitoring and without a clean audit we jeopardize the federal and state funds. From a perspective of how it relates to Planning, you have planners that are looking at a neighborhood and a community in the broad sense. When they have access or know which funds are available to the City, they are able to look at the community needs. They are able to look and see clearly if we are going to need some monies for public facilities whether it is Highway or Police for example. Clearly there has been a discussion within Planning that we have got to do something with our neighborhoods and let us see if there are some appropriate funds that could be linked into neighborhood revitalization. While they are their own little division, if you will, within Planning, the importance of it is that there is a tie-in because other communities that are often working in a vacuum and you don't have the planning component brought into the CDBG funds or looking at the capital improvements of a city. I do think that it is a very good tie-in. I know that the CIP manager has been here for a long time. He has been independent for some years. He has been with other divisions and has said the best thing that happened to CIP was tying it into the Planning program because they were able to have the broader perspective on what the community is trying to do and they can best allocate the funds and work with the Aldermen and department heads in trying to divvy it up.

Alderman Shea stated just to carry that a little further, what component is financial for the people in the CIP and what is Planning? In other words, would you say it is…I know there is a certain dependency upon the Finance Office to get the financial figures in order. What would you say, Pam?

Ms. Goucher stated the tie-in is really to make sure that when we are looking at the balances that we are getting from all of these projects that we are either responsible for, like the non profits or that the departments have, that there is a tie-in with the financial HTE system. It is sort of a checks and balance. Within the

positions our planning technician person is very much working on the finances and keeping the books straight and doing the draw downs from HUD. The Finance Department doesn't do the same type of draw downs that our department does with the reimbursements. For example the majority of the salary and benefits of the CIP planners, as long as they are working on CIP related projects…

Alderman Shea asked in your opinion, would the best place for them be in Planning rather than in Finance?

Ms. Goucher replied absolutely.

Alderman Shea stated the budget itself is predicated upon what the Mayor decides to give you. If this were to be approved do you have any exigencies as far as how you would meet your budget obligations? Is there anything in your thinking that would indicate that you would be prepared in the event that you would not get the necessary amounts of money? In other words I realize right now you need additional help in the Planning Department, but assuming the worst case scenario, there is a drastic cut in the budget that the Mayor presents to you, are you prepared to make any kinds of drastic steps in order to meet the obligation that you would have to meet in terms of expenditure? Have you thought about that at all in terms of maybe cross checking?

Ms. Goucher asked are you asking the question if we are left as individual departments or if we are to move forward as one?

Alderman Shea stated no, in the case of a merger, are you prepared that you would be able to meet expenditure obligations in terms of meeting whatever the Mayor presents to you?

Ms. Goucher replied I guess I am hoping that, if you look at the sheet that we handed out, we are looking at savings with the proposal so I am hoping that that is…

Alderman Shea interjected that is for two years.

Ms. Goucher asked if they cut beyond that? Is that what you are asking?

Alderman Shea stated yes, beyond that because that is eliminating I think the salary of the former director. Assuming that is obviously realized and that there is a considerable amount less than you are to be given, would you be able to do something in a merger that would allow the concept to be forthcoming but still meet that particular difficulty? That is what I am asking. Have you thought about that at all?

Ms. Goucher replied I guess I have looked at it that I think if we were to merge certainly we would have more resources to tap into. That is definitely an issue that we appreciate however, I do think that this is pretty bare bones. I do know that should we have to be faced with that then I guess we would have to look at whether or not there are layoffs involved. In the Planning side, if you will, there are a couple of positions that are not filled right now. We are hard pressed to get the work done in our department right now and I suspect that would continue should we have to not have any planners. We cannot tap planners from Building. We can certainly tap some of the administrative support but we are struggling without having the Planning staff and that includes Bob because Bob was first and foremost a planner. We are missing that too.

Mr. LaFreniere stated it is difficult obviously to respond to a hypothetical when none of us understand yet what the scope of the issue is going to be, but clearly we are in very challenging times. That is something that we are cognizant of. I would like to think we will be in a better position to respond to the resource limitations that we are all faced with, with a proposal like this that goes in the door saving money. It also provides us, as Pamela has alluded to, with the opportunity for some economies in scale with regard to having a larger pool of resources, if you will, in the form of staffing to allocate as necessary to the duties and responsibilities in the department. Can I tell you that the merger will facilitate getting everything done if there is a major reduction beyond the numbers that we have determined are necessary to maintain services? No, but we are certainly better positioned to react to cuts in resources with this proposal than we would be without it, in my mind.

Alderman Shea stated what I was trying to get at is if you were kept separate, you would have to possibly draw up some sort of situation. Is that more beneficial or is it better that there be a merger and then there might be a little bit less of an impact as it were, on the departments operation. That is really where my thinking is coming from. It is not so much from the point of view…I don't know what the Mayor's thinking is going to be. I think just listening to the radio or the television, I believe he has indicated that he is not in favor of a merger. That is my understanding by listening to him. However, it may be more beneficial to have a merger if there is some sort of control over how it evolves and so forth.

Mr. LaFreniere stated in my discussions with the Mayor I have understood that he was in favor. The merger, I believe, will afford some opportunities in the form of being able to consolidate our administrative support functions…

Alderman Shea interjected excuse me for interrupting. When did you speak to the Mayor?

Mr. LaFreniere replied I have spoken to the Mayor a number of times. The last time was probably a week and half ago.

Alderman Shea stated last night I heard him on TV say that he wasn't in favor. I am not sure. He mentioned that. I don't want to put words into anyone's mouth. I just heard him say that. Maybe if you spoke to him later on this afternoon maybe that is different.

Mr. LaFreniere stated I will follow up on that.

Chairman Gatsas stated we are going to get this merger done because certainly it has been worked on long enough. The only thing that I see is when you have a merger you always look for synergies. You look for the ability to cross train people from one side to the other. When I look at this schematic it is very clear that there is nobody on the Building side that does things on the Planning side, other than administrative assistants. I would assume…

Ms. Goucher interjected there is actually one other person that is sort of a jump ship if you will.

Chairman Gatsas stated all I am saying is that the code enforcement supervisor, there is no way they can go to a planner IV. There is no cross situation that when you look at a merger you can say, we can get rid of Leon because Pam can do his job. She is doing it now and you look at that merger and say there is something that you can eliminate. When you look at this there is no position on one side or the other, except for administrative. You have your customer service people; I have to believe you have customer service people. Those three people at the bottom are probably the most important people that are going to meet customers first.

Mr. LaFreniere stated absolutely.

Chairman Gatsas stated give me an explanation of what administrative assistants are. Your secretary and Pam's secretary?

Ms. Goucher replied in the case of the two that you see right there showing as administrative assistants, each one of them currently has a responsibility to the Zoning Board and Planning Board for minutes. They need to help with preparation of agendas, abutter notices and minutes as well as answering the phone and helping the walk-in staff. That is in the Building or the Planning Department. They are generally the support staff. Their title is somewhat different because they are dealing with minutes and paper probably a little bit

more than the customer services representatives who are primarily dealing one on one with the people coming for permits.

Chairman Gatsas stated now if those two people are doing that, what is the administrative service manager doing?

Ms. Goucher replied that is the budget person. That person is responsible for all personnel and the EIS forms for payroll.

Chairman Gatsas stated explain to me why we need that person because I don't see that person on the other side. Has he or she been eliminated?

Ms. Goucher stated that is the community development support specialist that you see on the chart.

Chairman Gatsas asked should that have been over at Building?

Ms. Goucher stated there are three positions, if you will, that are on the left hand side of your chart…

Chairman Gatsas asked have you moved positions that would have been on the right to the left?

Mr. LaFreniere replied we have consolidated the administrative support section into a single unit. That was the attempt so that we could have support going to the entire department.

Chairman Gatsas asked who have you moved from let's say Building to Planning?

Ms. Goucher stated there is also an individual, the zoning review officer.

Chairman Gatsas asked that you moved the other way?

Ms. Goucher stated the zoning review officer is someone that currently is doing more of the zoning enforcement. We are trying to have that individual tie in with our reviews on developments that come before us because we have had to rely on anyone that we could work with in the Building Department that was free. We are trying to designate.

Chairman Gatsas stated let me try and get clarification. Who has moved from the Building side to the Planning side? Are any of those employees that are on the Planning side coming from Building?

Mr. LaFreniere stated of course we haven't really looked at it that way because we are looking at it as a single department but under functional areas, Pamela has just identified the zoning review officer that is on the Building side currently. That is also under the Building safety and inspections unit.

Chairman Gatsas stated this was under Building. Let's see if we can get the answers a little quicker.

Mr. LaFreniere stated that takes the pressure off of missing one of the planners that is going to be eliminated. In terms of fiscal movement we have looked at the two administrative assistant positions. As Pamela has indicated there is some similar function area there but they are responding to different demands, so far as one is support for the Planning Board minutes and administrative requirements and the other is for Zoning Board. What we are hoping to do there is to level out the peaks and the valleys and combine those efforts. That is a combination effort. The community development support specialist will function to serve the entire department. They will provide our internal IT support as well as managing what we hope will be a new program that will enable us to have inspection scheduling done by our administrative support section. This would allow for the inspectors to be out in the field for more time.

Chairman Gatsas stated let me ask you a question. Can you take the administrative service manager and put them to take care of one of your Boards and take the administrative assistant that is part time and put them into the customer service side at full time?

Ms. Goucher replied I can tell you right now that the administrative service manager doesn't have a spare moment in the day and barely gets lunch most days. I can tell you that the part time administrative assistant is not getting nearly all the projects done that we need done because she is only part time. We have mountains of filing that stack up and mountains of requests for research. We have to tell people that it takes a few days to retrieve files from the basement because we can't get down there.

Chairman Gatsas stated at this moment I will believe what you just said. Have you done a desk audit on the administrative service manager?

Ms. Gile stated we can do one if you would like.

Chairman Gatsas stated yes, but I don't want it to take four weeks to do it. Do we have that job description?

Ms. Gile stated the job description should be in your materials.

Mr. LaFreniere stated the job description for the community development support specialist was reviewed by HR.

Chairman Gatsas stated so the job description I have. I will take a look at it and then I will ask you further questions.

Ms. Goucher stated you have the community development support specialist description. I don't think that you have the administrative service manager because we were not proposing changes to that position.

Chairman Gatsas asked are the changes in this book? Do we have them?

Mr. LaFreniere stated no, because there were no changes proposed.

Chairman Gatsas asked are you talking about an increase in wage from the $43,000 or is it still the same?

Mr. LaFreniere stated there was no change proposed.

Chairman Gatsas asked has the increase that you have proposed and the list of criteria that they are going to be working off of changed?

Ms. Goucher stated we specifically met with the HR Department to discuss the changes and they felt it was compatible and consistent with the positions as it is currently.

Alderman Lopez stated the Planning Department in my viewpoint is a different animal, for lack of another word. I read some of the documentation that was provided to the Administration Committee. If we continue on the course as we are and we don't merge these two departments' in my viewpoint, they have already told us that lack of planning is going to happen, neighborhood planning is not going to be energy efficient.

Chairman Gatsas stated let me just assure you that we are going to recommend out of this Committee that we merge the departments.

Alderman Lopez stated thank you. I appreciate that and I won't go through the rest of the list. The other thing I wanted to bring to your attention is this other document on savings.

Chairman Gatsas stated I was going to go through this. I have made some movement in this chart. Let me give you the movement that I am considering and see if we can get a recommendation that we can move forward with.

Alderman Shea stated one of the points I would like to bring up, if I may, is that you have someone that works for the Planning Board that administers the minutes and so forth. You also have someone that works for the Zoning Board.

Ms. Goucher stated that person is actually full time on the Building side right now. That is why we were trying to…

Alderman Shea interjected is there much of a differentiation in their classifications?

Ms. Goucher replied they are both considered administrative assistant II positions. They are both a grade 13. One of them has been there many years and one of them just started a year ago, if you are looking at the differences in the salaries.

Alderman Shea stated the other point I have, again I am not sure if I can take it up now, but I deal almost exclusively with the zoning inspector. I call him often, as other Aldermen do. In the merger, is this particular individual going to be given additional help? Is he going to have less help? How is that going to be impacted? That is very significant as far as I am concerned.

Mr. LaFreniere stated I agree with you and that is a specific component of this proposal. That individual would actually be the person who would move under the site development arm and be the zoning review officer. He would be reviewing plans and doing research. The person that you would call would now be, under this proposal, the code enforcement supervisor who would assign the complaint or concern to one of the code enforcement inspectors. Currently one of these code enforcement inspectors is assigned solely to zoning. That will probably stay but the fact of the matter is that any one of these inspectors will be empowered through this consolidation to be able to respond to zoning issues.

Alderman Shea stated in other words, when I call the zoning inspector now, he is the one that more or less has to answer my concerns. You are saying that I will still call him as an Alderman and he will then respond by…

Mr. LaFreniere stated it will just be a different individual who is going to be responsible for the field work.

Alderman Shea stated I won’t call him, I would call someone else and that particular person then would allow one of the…

Mr. LaFreniere stated he would see to it that the complaint was addressed.

Chairman Gatsas stated let me go through some of these. If you take a look at the planner II, if we look at a step of 19/2 instead of the 19/5 because it is vacant, it is $44,942. That would go down to a 19/2 as you just hired a planner II under limited term, grant funded. That number is $44,942.

Ms. Goucher replied I will tell you that is possible. I would also like to make one comment. We had a hard time getting that person that is starting.

Chairman Gatsas stated let me just go through these and then we can have the discussions on how difficult it is to fill them. Some of these are filled. The only one I am playing with is a vacant one right now. If we go to the green color and leave that at a grade19, step AL1 at the $64,000 level because they are already doing the job at that point… To move them up to a planner III just to move a step and move grades and move an increase in wage…They are already doing it. They are doing the work at that level, if we look then at the pink and leave that level at a planner I at a grade 18, step 11 and the $54,803. Then if we move down to a new position which is a planner I, in pink that is fine at a grade 18, step one. The other change would be to move the administrative assistant, you are saying to full time. The customer service person I believe whether you start that one at a part time and move the other one to a full time. The grade 13, step 2 you are going to increase to a full time and right now they are part time.

Ms. Goucher stated either that or two part time people, correct.

Chairman Gatsas stated I would rather see you with a full time person there and then move the customer service position to at least start as a part time person. Moving to the top, the building director would go in at a grade 26, step AL1, which is what it is currently. The planning deputy director would stay at their current and the building deputy director would stay at their current because there is a 3% coming in the next bump in 2010. I am not giving someone a raise today and looking at another bump in 2010 of another 3% because that is unreasonable. Right now with the economic times I think a 3% raise is very generous. That is where I am at.

Ms. Goucher asked did the planner IV disappear off the radar for you too?

Chairman Gatsas stated the planner IV you have eliminated already.

Ms. Goucher stated I eliminated him to try and get two current positions that are working above their grade bumped up. I have authorization to fill that planner IV position.

Chairman Gatsas stated I just took him away.

Alderman Lopez stated I would like to work from the top down with the same idea as Chairman Gatsas. What would the salary be if we went from…The present salary for grade 25, step 13 is $93,720. If we went to grade 26 at what step would a grade 26 be? Has anyone looked at that?

Chairman Gatsas stated grade 26, step one is $70,065.

Alderman Lopez stated what I am trying to do is to find out what step would get us close to the $93,000 that they are already making.

Mr. LaFreniere stated step 11 is within $442 of the existing salary. That is the closest.

Alderman Lopez stated so someone making the $93,720 would be a grade 26, step 11 in order to get the same...

Chairman Gatsas stated that is $97,000. That is a $4,000 raise. That is more money.

Ms. Goucher stated a grade 26, step 11 is $94,000. It is $400 more.

Chairman Gatsas stated I am looking at the chart…

Mr. LaFreniere stated yes, Mr. Chairman. I think what Alderman Lopez is proposing is if we didn't follow the chart. The chart follows the ordinance. The ordinance dictates what the pay levels should be based on the classification system and how the positions are allocated. I think what Alderman Lopez is suggesting is that we keep those levels but recognize the grades.

Alderman Lopez stated that is correct. That is basically what I am saying. The top echelon is whatever they are making now, which one is making $76,000 and the other deputy is making $93,720. If you go to a grade 26 and lower the step to equalize that, what would that pay be?

Ms. Goucher stated it would be $400 more.

Mr. LaFreniere stated it would be step 11 as opposed to step 12.

Alderman Lopez stated okay so it would be grade 26, step 11. How about the grade 22?

Mr. LaFreniere stated it happens that it is the same. It would be a step 11.

Alderman Lopez stated it would be a grade 23, step 11.

Mr. LaFreniere stated in the proposal to meet the ordinance…

Alderman Lopez interjected let's go to the director position. You are making $102,893. If we gave you a grade 29 what step would that be?

Mr. LaFreniere stated the closest would be a step eight as opposed to the original proposal which was a step 11.

Alderman Lopez asked what would your salary be?

Mr. LaFreniere replied a step eight is $105,564. A step seven is slightly less than the existing.

Chairman Gatsas asked why would you try to move steps and not just leave them in the position they are in?

Alderman Lopez stated in my viewpoint, in order to follow the line and maybe Jane can help me on this…In sending somebody to a position, if you are going to go to a grade 29 and go to $115,000 you would say you are making $102,000 now, what is the closest step in grade 29.

Chairman Gatsas stated in the private sector, if we say this is what the job pays…

Alderman Lopez interjected I understand what you are saying.

Chairman Gatsas stated why are we going anywhere else other than where the wages are currently?

Alderman Lopez stated I think in the matrix system, that is number one. I know what the Aldermen are saying…Go there as $102,000 and that is it.

Ms. Gile stated I understand the point you are trying to make in terms of keeping them at the same job. However, the job responsibilities have changed and what we are recommending is that there is a grade increase. The grade would increase,

if that is what I am hearing you say Alderman Lopez. However, what you are trying to do is maintain the salary that is closest to that grade.

Chairman Gatsas interjected I understand that it is additional supervision but before that person only had one director under them. He now has two. I would say that giving him two assistants probably lightens the load from the top down.

Ms. Gile stated in terms of the director's responsibilities, levels of responsibilities, the buck stops with the director. They are now going to be…

Chairman Gatsas interjected the buck stops with the customer service person that the person who walks in from the street sees.

Ms. Gile stated in terms of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen would be primarily dealing with the director of that combined department. At their level of responsibility, they would be held accountable for both the planning functional area as well as the building area.

Alderman Lopez stated I believe that there is an ordinance in place on personnel and that is where I am trying to come. I am trying to come to the ordinance aspect of it. I believe in this merger. I don't believe in top management getting all of that money. In the future going into 2010, you are still in the matrix system but we are going to put you in the closest step that is going to get you to that $102,000, $93,000 and $76,000. Help me out Tom. If we have an ordinance would we have to change the ordinance if we do it the way the Chairman is suggesting or would it be better to get them close in the matrix system?

Mr. Thomas Arnold, Deputy City Solicitor, stated I think I understand what you are saying. You could do it either way. There are probably several ways to reach your goal of reorganizing the department but not increasing salaries. You have suggested one way and Alderman Gatsas has suggested another.

Alderman Lopez asked is it in violation of the ordinance? Don't we have an ordinance?

Mr. Arnold replied you do have an ordinance. However, if and when the Board passes a consolidation plan, this plan or some other version of it, you could include in that ordinance something along the line of what you do with the procurement code once in a while. Other ordinances not withstanding, this particular position shall be at this grade and this step.

Ms. Gile stated I guess how I would feel is that if that job warrants a particular grade then they should be compensated at that grade. We are talking about the position. We are not talking about anything else. If that job has been scored and warrants a particular grade, my recommendation would be to place that person in that grade. The ordinances currently say if someone is promoted they get a 10% increase. According to what Attorney Arnold has just stated, there may be ways that we can accommodate that in terms of a recommendation. My recommendation would be to place them at the grade that the positions warrant.

Alderman Lopez stated or closest to that.

Ms. Gile stated closest to the grade but the step would be the difference.

Alderman Lopez asked what would happen if we turned around and made a recommendation saying that the building department will go over to planning and you are going to be the director and make the same salary? That is what the Aldermen are saying.

Ms. Gile replied I guess from my perspective, I think you have just changed his responsibilities considerably. Now he has double responsibilities in terms of two departments. The scope of his responsibilities have greatly… There are a lot of additional responsibilities that would come with that territory. He would be the spokesperson for the combined departments. There are a lot of other things that would entail. In terms of the equity of doing that I would see that would be problematic.

Alderman Lopez stated I will get back to that but I wanted Pam to comment on the elimination that was mentioned.

Ms. Goucher stated I really will struggle greatly if I do not have a planner III or a planner IV responsible for the Planning Board's projects. Prior to the retirements there were three of us that went to the Planning Board… Myself, the planner IV and a planner I. Since the retirement of the planner IV, the planner I person has taken on, I would say close to 90% of that person's responsibilities. Because there isn't a director and the planner IV retired I also counted on my other planner II in the long range GIS to take on a lot of other projects that he had not previously done, a lot of the rezoning requests and a lot more work trying to help out with the Planning Board. The Planning Board is a lot of work. I am pretty certain that I won't have a planner for the Planning Board.

Alderman Lopez stated you made a comment that the planner II, grade 19, step 5 would go to a grade 19, step 2. What is the salary on a grade 19, step 2?

Ms. Goucher replied $44,942. Are you talking about a grade 19, step 2?

Alderman Lopez asked have you turned down offers in that area?

Ms. Goucher replied the one that is a new hire for next week that had to get reopened because I did have a turn down on that position at that grade in October. That is why we were able to get a step 2. The other vacant planner position that is in the CIP component, we have to have an individual that is very cognizant of the HUD, Home and CDBG regulations. It is a very narrow field of people that can do that. I am concerned. The amount that was carried in 2009 was almost $60,000. That was the incumbent that left in October. I think it was $59,000. The salary of $49,000 is considerably less and I have no doubt we will have people applying, but I have gotten people applying for the community development limited term position that are nowhere near the qualifications that we need. We will get applications. I don't believe we will get somebody who will be able to jump on board immediately. We don't have the staff to do hand holding. We are in the CIP budget process. I think that we can look at a planner I. We usually post them at that level, but quite frankly I think we are not going to get someone who can jump in with this.

Alderman Lopez stated I think the Parks and Recreation Department has the same problem. I look at the top echelon. If we can come to some conclusion up there I believe the structure that you put together is a working structure for both departments in the merger concept. We can come back if the decision is to go to grade 19, step 2 and you can't find a planner for grade 19, step 2.

Ms. Goucher stated what you are talking about with potential shifts with the upper three positions amounts to somewhere in the vicinity of $15,000 that the City would not pay out. I would, in a heartbeat, be happy to do that if I could get these other planners promoted.

Alderman Lopez stated I understand that. I believe that a lot of these people are doing a lot more than their job description because you only have seven and a half bodies and you are supposed to have 12.

Ms. Goucher stated you can pretty much find somebody in that department until 6:00 P.M. every night and on the weekends.

Chairman Gatsas stated what I came up with, if we change the customer service person to start on a part time basis and make the other changes that we talked about, you are in at $1,641,000. That is all in. The number is $1,641,279 based on the following changes: leaving the building director at $102,000; the deputy planning at the existing $93,700; the building deputy director at $76,000; the

planner II under community improvement program at $44,942; leaving the planner II at $64,077; the planner I at $54,803 under the site development; the zoning review officer being the same; filling the vacant planner I position; the administrative services number is the same; the administrative assistant is the same; changing the administrative assistant II to a full time position and that comes out to $1,641,279. Here is the problem I have. I understand your plight. If you look to do a reorganization and come back to us and say I couldn't fill the position, rather than looking at where code enforcement is and saying the comparable on the other side is getting a bump of $7,000 so why am I not getting it?

Ms. Goucher stated that is not comparable.

Chairman Gatsas stated I am telling you visually that is what people are going to see. I am looking at this and saying you are pretty close to having a position that you can move forward with. I think this is a good starting point. If we have the other $4,000 to get the plans prepared so that it is easy for both departments to get together then this makes us able to move forward. The other thing I would like to look at is this code enforcement. You and I went through this about two years ago. I would like to know how many houses they are going to on a daily basis. If I have to ride around with them to find that out I will. Maybe we can eliminate a code enforcement officer and move it into another planner. Now as one department that is what we need to start looking at. We need to look at where we are getting the biggest bang for our buck. If you say it is important that we have a planner than maybe there is a replacement on the other side. We have a code enforcement supervisor and then four code enforcement inspectors. I think we went through that exercise, Leon, four years ago. We found that there was an awful lot of time missing in between inspections; if you remember. I never pressed it after that but I remember clearly.

Mr. LaFreniere stated I know we had a discussion comparing the inspection numbers of the construction inspectors versus the housing inspectors.

Chairman Gatsas stated no, we had it on code enforcement.

Mr. LaFreniere stated that is the housing inspectors, the code enforcement inspectors. They really have a very different job than the other inspectors.

Chairman Gatsas stated I am not looking to compare them to the building inspector or the plumbing inspector. We have five people there. How many places do they go to? What are they giving for citations? How many times are they returning to the same property? I think that is a place that we need to either increase the synergy or take a position out and move it to Planning. The last time

we looked they were making three return visits to a property without giving a citation.

Mr. LaFreniere stated the citation is just one of the tools to get compliance. If they are getting compliance without the need for citations then that is an effective move, in our experience, method of doing things.

Chairman Gatsas stated I agree with you but if someone is going back three times, then their return in the middle somewhere is not cost efficient.

Mr. LaFreniere stated it is not unusual in these times to have to go back multiple times to troubled properties.

Chairman Gatsas stated I know we had that discussion and maybe we can have it again.

Alderman Lopez stated I want to go over the numbers. It came down to $1,641,279 and that is from a total consolidation of $1,811,140.

Ms. Goucher stated I think I am speaking for Max and Leon as far as the numbers at the top, the $15,000 to make this move forward and eliminate raises essentially for the top three; we are on board with that. I will lose my planners.

Alderman Lopez stated that was my next question. With the workforce that you have, I think in moving the planner II to the Planner III we started this conversation by the experience and knowledge that a person has and if you lose them that puts you behind.

Ms. Goucher stated part of what has happened in our department is that we have a vacancy. Historically over the years a vacancy comes up. If a vacancy of a planner I comes up and someone comes on board that is more qualified and they are willing to accept it at that level, there is the expectation. If you have worked in that position for ten or fifteen years and you are no longer being supervised on a daily basis because you have so much experience and knowledge, you can take the calls from the developers, help them with the regulations and you can pretty much put a plan in front of me ready to sign because they have done all the leg work. It is difficult to keep telling somebody that we can't give you any more money because there is nothing in the budget. The two people that I have there both have offers. The one in the green has had offers of salaries for more than I am making. He stays because he likes it.

Chairman Gatsas stated I have no problem if we leave them at that point and move them July 1st to a planner III at $71,000. I don't have a problem doing that. My

problem is if we move them today and then they get the 3% increase in four months.

Alderman Lopez stated that is a compromise.

Ms. Goucher asked are you saying that if I move them to the position and give them 3% less so that it then kicks in in July?

Alderman Lopez replied no.

Chairman Gatsas stated I have no problem moving your planner II to a planner III at $71,225 effective July 1st. I have a problem moving them there today and then July 1st there is another 3% coming.

Alderman Lopez stated you also don't have a problem with the planner I moving from $54,000.

Chairman Gatsas stated I have no problem doing that based on that same premise.

Alderman Lopez stated I can agree with you on that effective July 1st on those. The top echelon is another issue.

Chairman Gatsas stated we can have that discussion during the budget period. We need to look and see how this is going to work. I don't think we are waiting to implement this in six months.

Alderman Lopez stated no, we want to implement it right away.

Chairman Gatsas stated right so if it goes to the full Board we are going to see a working position in the next four or five months. We can have that discussion then.

Alderman Lopez stated I completely agree with you. I just want to make it clear that with the top echelon, when I speak of that top echelon I am talking about the director and two deputy directors, intent is to leave their salaries as is. The City Solicitor said that is okay and we can do that. You are comfortable with that as well. Come next year they will get their increases.

Ms. Gile asked are we recommending that they be placed at the grade that is appropriate for the position?

Alderman Lopez replied yes.

Ms. Gile stated then we would have to come up with a salary that is on that grade. Otherwise it is going to mess things up a little bit, that is all.

Alderman Lopez stated the City Solicitor said that we can mess it up.

Chairman Gatsas asked why can't we just leave him at a grade 26 step AL1?

Ms. Gile stated I thought that is what Alderman Gatsas was saying, so that is different from what I am hearing right now.

Chairman Gatsas stated we are going to leave them all at the same positions and grades that they are at.

Ms. Gile stated I heard two different things. One was to keep them at the same salary and the other that I heard was to keep them as close to the same salary but at the grade that the position warrants.

Chairman Gatsas stated I am saying we leave them at the same grade that they are at currently. The same number.

Alderman Shea asked aren't we doing that for all the other positions?

Ms. Gile stated the other position responsibilities have not changed. The reason why there was a planning director position, the person that was in the position before was a grade 29. The new position is Director of Planning and Community Development. That position warrants a grade 29.

Alderman Lopez stated I understand both positions that you are speaking of.

Chairman Gatsas stated I think we just heard from the department head and the deputy that they are willing to do this and leave it alone.

Ms. Goucher stated I thought that what we mentioned, when we had a discussion with Jane earlier, was that we understand that nobody wants to give those of us highly paid raises. I appreciate that. I understand that. I have a harder time swallowing the recommendation that Human Resources says regarding the positions and not recognizing that grade. I don't have a problem with not getting a raise in the salary. I have a problem that I have been told that my position changes, I have more responsibilities and it is not being recognized on a grade. I don't have a problem with not getting a raise.

Mr. LaFreniere stated I would concur with that position. I think it is important and it is difficult for me to argue this point without sounding selfserving but I am really talking about trying to maintain the integrity of our salary program and structure with regard to classifying positions. If you take a look at the directors position…

Chairman Gatsas interjected I am going to stop this conversation because seeing that I am the Chairman, I have the ability to do that. At some point we might be talking about salary for the whole City. When we start looking at the 3%, I have a serious problem with that. Let's leave the conversation alone because when we are done…As I said to you we can have those discussions in the budget. If you want to continue we can continue and we may do a real consolidation.

Mr. LaFreniere stated if I could just say one thing, I understand your positions and what we were proposing was something that I felt got exactly there. If we agreed that there would be no increases for those management positions…

Chairman Gatsas interjected I don't think we can do that legally. I don't think I can move you to a grade 29 and leave you at $102,000. My bet is that after a point you are going to find a lawyer and come back and get the additional funding. We can't do it.

Mr. LaFreniere stated we have talked to the City Solicitor and the Human Resources Director about that.

Alderman Lopez stated he said you can do it. You have two people being paid $100,000 a year.

Chairman Gatsas stated I don't think that is what he understood. Do you understand leaving them at a grade 29 at $102,000 and breaking the salary matrix that we have?

Mr. Arnold stated what we discussed is essentially getting to the point of not having any salary increases. As I said, you suggested one way of doing that and the other way that was suggested that is also possible is recognizing that they should be in a new salary grade but not following the present ordinance you put them in a step that is not 10% more, if I remember correctly, you put them in a step that most closely matches their present salary.

Chairman Gatsas asked you are looking to say to me that a grade 29 we can move to what grade? He is at a grade 29, step one. You cannot change that step. What do you change it to? A grade 28?

Alderman Lopez stated you can change it; this is a reorganization. You change it to whatever is closest.

Chairman Gatsas stated you have to be in the grade 28 category to get to a number like that.

Mr. LaFreniere stated at the risk of creating any more turmoil in this, the grade 29 steps start at $85,800 and go up to $122,000. This would actually be a pay cut; the closest step is $400 a year less, which is not a big deal at this point but it is $102,489 at step seven. If you put it into the appropriate step there would be no increase.

Alderman Lopez stated right, at grade 29, step seven would give you…

Mr. LaFreniere stated it would be $102,489 and my current salary is $102,893. A grade 29, step eleven reflects a 10% increase which we have already said we don't think should happen either.

Chairman Gatsas asked are you looking at this sheet? What does that sheet say to you? I can only go by what is given to me. What does it say? That is my question.

Alderman Lopez stated what I am saying is that I made a proposal and I am trying to get it…

Chairman Gatsas interjected I am looking at this and it says a grade 29, step one is at the top so I am saying if a grade 29, step one is $115,000, how can a grade 29, step eight be less money?

Ms. Goucher stated it is grade 29, step 11.

Alderman Lopez stated that is an error. Now you understand what I am saying. You are right. I missed that there. A grade 29, step eight would give you how much?

Mr. LaFreniere stated a grade 29, step eight is $105,564. A step seven is a $102,489.

Alderman Lopez asked what would the step be for a grade 26, closest to $93,700 for the deputy?

Mr. LaFreniere stated that would be a grade 26, step eleven, which would go to $94,162. That is a difference of $442.

Alderman Lopez asked how about the grade 23, step 11AL?

Mr. LaFreniere stated a grade 23, step 11 which would be $76,864. That is a $653 difference.

Alderman Lopez stated that is the point that I was making. Thank you Mr. Chairman. There was an error there but we have it right. I think you see where I am going.

Chairman Gatsas stated I have no problem with that. The problem I have is somebody telling me that a step that is higher is less money when I am looking at it. So what you are saying is that…Let me ask you the tough question. Are we going to the $105,000 or the $102,000 salary? Does this Board have the ability to give him $400 to get him to the even number so that he is not losing $400 in wages?

Ms. Gile stated I would have to defer to legal counsel on that.

Chairman Gatsas stated it really wouldn't be $400. It would be whatever the matrix is for the last six months so it is probably $200. Do we have that ability?

Ms. Gile stated the question is whether or not we have the ability to get him to the level that he is currently being paid with a cash up front payment or something of that nature, in order to equalize it so that he wouldn't be losing any money.

Chairman Gatsas stated one is going to be a $3,000 raise or it is going to cost us $100. That is up to you but I know that you always relate to a different status than I do.

Alderman Lopez stated let me put it this way, since we have talked about the planner effective July 1st, correct?

Chairman Gatsas stated that is correct.

Alderman Lopez stated so if we make this all effective July 1st and merge both departments then everything is in sequence that a grade 29, step eight, a grade 23, step 11, grade 26, step 11. If it is fair for the low echelon to do that down here than it is fair for everybody to be equal on the same thing, would you agree with that?

Mr. LaFreniere stated yes.

Ms. Goucher asked are you looking to do this for July 1st as opposed to now?

Alderman Lopez stated no, what I am looking for is when we are talking about the salaries and structure that is effective July 1st. We know that come July 1st we are going to pay X number of dollars at the grades discussed. We would complete the 2009 budget as it is but you are merged.

Ms. Goucher asked so the two planner positions that I am trying to get promoted would essentially stay where they are for the rest of this fiscal year?

Alderman Lopez stated that is correct, and then you move right into the new salaries as we go through the process.

Chairman Gatsas asked what you are saying with the top three positions, they will stay at their current positions and then July 1st they will move?

Alderman Lopez stated yes.

Chairman Gatsas stated I have no problem with that.

Alderman Shea asked if the merger is approved say at the next Aldermanic meeting or the one beyond that, are you able to get together to do that? What is your time schedule?

Ms. Goucher stated obviously it is going to be somewhat of a process. We have talked to the staff. We have had meetings with our staff because we wanted to make sure they knew about it.

Alderman Shea asked when is a good time for your folks?

Ms. Goucher stated if we knew that there was a vote to make it move forward and be official as of July 1st I think that we would be trying to get as much as possible in order the next few months. We would start as soon as someone says they want the merger to go through.

Alderman Shea asked would we have to bring this back to the Committee on Administration?

Chairman Gatsas stated no, what I think we should be recommending to the full Board is that this merger go forward and go into effect March 1st.

Alderman Shea asked could you folks be ready by March 1st?

Mr. LaFreniere replied the challenge will be of course, we still have yet to meet again with the Administration Committee.

Chairman Gatsas stated I think we would make a recommendation to the full Board.

Alderman Lopez stated I agree with the Chairman. I agree. I think the key element here is if the full Board says that they agree and move forward to be effective July 1st. I don't think you need a date of March 1st but I would ask the Chairman. When it is approved by the full Board that you are merged, you are merged.

Chairman Gatsas stated I think they just need a few weeks to do their renovations.

Ms. Goucher stated I am not as concerned about the renovations as I am that telephone-wise we have to figure out how we get the system in sync and those things.

Alderman Lopez stated I understand that they have to cut out for the door but at least the authority is given to them to merge.

Mr. LaFreniere stated what that would mean is that we would probably come back subsequent to the Board to tie up any lose ordinances for names of the departments that appear to change to a single name and that sort of thing to make it all legal.

Chairman Gatsas stated I would say to you that you have from now until the next meeting you can work with the Clerk and get those all done for the next meeting.

Mr. LaFreniere stated we have most of that in place.

Alderman Lopez stated I appreciate that because this has gone on too long. Either we are going to do this or not do it.

Chairman Gatsas stated we just took care of it in an hour.

Ms. Gile asked are the job specifications all approved as well?

Chairman Gatsas stated I will leave that in your capable hands because I don't believe in micromanaging. If the work doesn't come back the right way then you will hear from me.

Ms. Gile stated the job specifications do have to be approved by this Committee.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to approve the new organizational chart and class specifications as proposed in the consolidation of the Planning & Community Development Department and the Building Department to be effective March 1, 2009 and the corresponding salary structure as identified in the organizational chart to be effective on July 1, 2009.

TABLED ITEMS

5. Discussion relative to the New Hampshire Retirement System pursuant to RSA 100-A.
(Note: Referred from the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on 9/16/08; Recommendation to be submitted by the Human Resources Department; Tabled 11/12/08)

This item remained on the table.

6. Discussion relative to the guidelines of the Bright Ideas Evaluation Committee awards.
(Note: Referred from the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on 9/16/08; The Committee has requested members of the Quality Council to appear at the next meeting to discuss the issue further; Tabled 11/12/08)

This item remained on the table.

7. Recommendation of the Special Committee on Parking in the vicinity of high schools to approve immediately a Seasonal Parking Control Officer for the Parking Division to enforce the new regulations for a new Residential Parking Permit Zone #8.
(Note: Referred to the Committee by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on 9/2/08; The Committee received and filed the proposed parking permit zone on 12/01/08 related to this position request; Tabled 11/12/08)

This item remained on the table.

8. Communication from Jane E. Gile, Human Resources Director, recommending that the Committee upgrade the part-time parking control officer from a salary grade 10 to a salary grade 11; and upgrade the reserve police officer from a salary grade 18 to a salary grade 19.
(Note: The Committee has requested additional information from Human Resources on this item; Tabled 8/5/08)

This item remained on the table.

9. Recommendation from Thomas Clark, City Solicitor, regarding Section 33.011 Retired Employees; Policy on Rehiring, if available.
(Tabled 8/5/08)

This item remained on the table.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to adjourn

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee