

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS

December 15, 2008

5:15 PM

Chairman O'Neil called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen O'Neil, Garrity, Osborne, Pinard

Absent: Alderman Murphy

Messrs: P. Goucher, L. LaFreniere

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 3 of the agenda:

3. Discussion relating to the potential merger of the Planning and Community Development Department and the Building Department.
(Note: Referred by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on 11/12/08. Proposal and updated information previously forwarded to the Mayor and all Aldermen under separate cover.)

Chairman O'Neil stated everyone may recall there were a number of questions asked at the last meeting that we asked the two departments to get back to us on. I don't know how you want to take this. Do you want to take the questions as they are asked?

Alderman Osborne stated anything that is new since the last time we were here.

Chairman O'Neil stated the first question was to provide a more complete analysis of building systems modification including cost estimates with backup data. You have provided that. Any questions on that?

Alderman Pinard stated I think that is referring to what I was asking about with the alarm system and the cost. I thought the cost was pretty high and I wanted to go visit them but I didn't have a chance. What I would like to know is, between the two offices is there a connection somehow, besides crossing the hallway?

Mr. Leon LaFreniere, Building Commissioner, replied there is no connection currently. This proposal would make a connection. We would be putting a door in between the two.

Alderman Pinard asked what is the cost of that?

Mr. LaFreniere replied the cost of the door itself was the \$2,900 from DRG construction. That was the contractor that Tim Clougherty from the Highway Department brought in for us.

Alderman Pinard asked have you had anyone else look at this cost? I am looking at cost saving and that is a lot of money to change a door, \$2,900. It is \$3,000 for the alarm system, and you probably have an alarm system already. Then you look at the cost of a telephone line, and the telephone lines are already there. I just can't put in my mind what kind of major changes you are going to do there. After you consolidate is that going to leave one office empty?

Mr. LaFreniere replied no, I can elaborate on that a little bit. There is a copy of DRG's estimate so it is not quite as simple as putting in a door. There are very few locations where it is suitable to put such a connection. DRG's proposal includes taking out a door, putting in a new door jam, opening up a wall, and he has to put in a new steel door frame. He has to patch walls, repair wood work, paint and trim, fix carpet and do all the work after hours. That is how he came up to the \$2,900 bid. We did talk to Tim Clougherty about this and it is right in line with the number he thought was appropriate and in fact came in a little bit less than what he had suggested we carry for a budget number. I agree with you that \$2,900 is a lot of money but given the extent of the work that would be necessary to take place to make that connection I don't think it is out of line with the scope of work. With regard to the alarm system, in fact you were correct, Alderman, that our first number that we were given as a potential estimate Red Robidias had helped us with. He had basically given us a range that he anticipated that we could run into for making the changes to the alarm system so that we could be all one department. He had given us a number of \$2,800 to carry for the budget amount for that. When we actually got the bid from Pelmac Industries, which again is included in your packet, that number came up to just over \$1,400. It was about half of what we had originally estimated.

Alderman Pinard stated you see where I am coming from. If we talked and there is an instance that I might have been alert or because I have had a little bit of experience with alarm systems that is why I asked if you are going to have another couple of bids on this or are we going to stay with DRG?

Mr. LaFreniere stated we did have two bidders on the alarms and Pelmac was the cheaper of the two. We only had the single bidder for the DRG construction estimate of putting in the door and we relied on Tim Clougherty to give us feedback as to whether that was an appropriate number or not, and in fact he believes that it is. I understand that he believes that it is. I don't want to put words in his mouth. He supported the number that we are carrying. With regard to the telephones, the telephone lines do exist. You are right. We have telephones at desks and things. What we don't have is telephone consoles that have capability for all the extension numbers for a combined department. This wouldn't be replacing the phones. We are just talking about replacing four phones for those people who would be answering the phone. Right now, as I think you are aware, the Building Department uses the automated answering system and we are looking at changing from that. That is one of the goals of our proposal, to get to a point where we have a real person that answers the phone for the entire department. By putting in these phones for the receptionist, she will be able to transfer those calls.

Alderman Pinard asked is there going to be a savings of any kind by changing to that new system of telephone?

Mr. LaFreniere replied the savings results from, of course, the consolidation in total with regard to the salary savings. That is where the savings are, which of course are much larger than these costs. As we move forward, if the consolidation is adopted by the Board, we anticipate the opportunity to analyze whether or not we in fact need all of the current phone lines that we are carrying. We think that we may be able to reduce the total number of phone lines.

Alderman Pinard stated in the long run you will be giving better or quicker service than you are now.

Mr. LaFreniere stated that is what we hope. That is the primary goal of this.

Alderman Osborne asked do you think, thinking back, that there was ever a savings even better than this, a few years ago if you were to combine both departments?

Mr. LaFreniere stated I don't think we have done any analysis of that. It really depends on...

Alderman Osborne interjected we are not talking a lot of money here. How long can you hold onto this \$140,000?

Mr. LaFreniere replied the \$140,000 was a number that we developed at the request of the Committee. That was a number if Planning was at full complement. Planning's appropriation is less than this number. They didn't get an appropriation that would equal their full approved complement. If those numbers were part of the appropriation, part of the adopted budget if you will, then yes. I would say that that is a level of savings that we would anticipate going forward. In actual practice it will be something less than that because Planning was not appropriated at full complement for FY2009. We did run that scenario as well and I think we provided those numbers for the Aldermen last time we met. I think this is a number that is sustainable and will move forward if staffing levels stay where they are.

Alderman Osborne asked if staffing levels stay the way they are and positions stay the way there are and so on and so forth right?

Mr. LaFreniere stated in terms of the range of savings...Obviously costs will continue to rise when you factor in cost of living, merit steps, and so on but those increases would continue for the positions that we are proposing be eliminated. If those positions were not eliminated and remained part of the complement, then yes that savings would stay.

Chairman O'Neil stated just for clarification, this \$140,000 is made up of saving on two positions. Is that correct? They would be under the plan presented, no Building Regulations Director and no Planner II which has been vacant for some period of time.

Mr. LaFreniere stated that is correct.

Chairman O'Neil asked do we happen to know how long that Planner II has been vacant?

Ms. Pamela Goucher, Interim Planning Director, replied Alderman, it took a fair amount of research to try to go back in time to look at the complement. We went back to 1999 and what I got was a year by year number of employees on our complement. That is the complement, so in 2006 we had 14 employees. In that complement we did have the grants writer and we had one CIP funded position.

Chairman O'Neil stated I guess at some point we have got to get apples to apples here. I know there were some moving parts along the way. There was a planner at one point that got moved to the Mayor's Office, I am going to say around 2000 or 2001. At some point we have got to be able to compare apples to apples on the complement.

Ms. Goucher stated I believe you are talking about the coordinator position that changed from 2000 but there was another person that came in in 2001. So that was not eliminated.

Mr. LaFreniere stated when that person went over he went over, as a grants funded position in the Mayor's Office but there was another planner that took that position within the Planning Department, so it really didn't change the complement number.

Chairman O'Neil asked is there any way we can see the apples to apples? With you just reading off the complement it confuses me even more as to where we are at. It's only the last few years there has been a significant drop in personnel but it seems it went down and back up.

Ms. Goucher stated it's only been since 2008 that we have had less than 13.

O'Neil stated I thought you mentioned 15 at one point, 13 and then back up to 14.

Ms. Goucher stated I was reading from the complement that was provided from the Finance Department. I believe they got the complement from Human Resources. I went back and had our administrative service manager try to plug in names for those years to see if we could come up with a match.

Chairman O'Neil asked if you had to give a best guesstimate then how long has that planner II been vacant?

Ms. Goucher replied only since 2007.

O'Neil stated there was an identification in the organizational chart that you provided that there would be at least a couple of upgrades. How do those upgrades reflect this \$140,000 number?

Mr. LaFreniere replied they are built into that number. Those upgrades are in the two deputy positions to reflect the additional duties and responsibilities that they would take on when we would reduce our administrative staff and capacity by 25%.

O'Neil asked so if the upgrades didn't occur the savings would be more correct?

Ms. Goucher asked can I clarify? Are you just looking at the \$140,000?

Chairman O'Neil replied correct.

Ms. Goucher stated I would like to explain that the scenario with the upgrades as proposed with the planners, to a planner III...

Chairman O'Neil interjected I was talking about the deputy positions. Let me go back to last month. There was a handout showing the current deputy planning director would go from a 25 to a 26 and the current building regulations assistant director would go from a 22 to a 24.

Mr. LaFreniere stated if I can add a little note of explanation to that, we put numbers to these for purposes of trying to define as honest a number as we could for the Committee with the most conservative amount of savings. In other words, the highest expense to reflect the most conservative savings number. We are not picking these numbers. That is going to come out of the process that the Human Resources Director will guide with a position review based on the class specifications that we continue to refine with the help of the HR director. What we did is we put these numbers where we thought they ought to be but I don't want it to appear that we are so heavily invested and that is the actual number. We feel that is a worst case scenario but we want to go through the process as I understand to be appropriate where the HR director does an analysis.

Chairman O'Neil stated of those upgrades, there is a one step upgrade for one position and a two step upgrade for another. Are those numbers reflected in a salary number here?

Mr. LaFreniere replied yes, they are in the number that is the most conservative savings that we would anticipate.

Chairman O'Neil asked are they in the full complement number?

Mr. LaFreniere replied the full complement number is separate departments. They are not in that because there is no consolidation in that number.

Chairman O'Neil asked they are in the \$1.7 million number?

Mr. LaFreniere replied yes.

Alderman Garrity stated I have read the portion where you said we asked for justification for the upgrades and what added duties those folks would have. I am reading one particular position, Zoning Board of Adjustment, doesn't that existing individual already work with the ZBA?

Mr. LaFreniere replied he does work with the ZBA as we both do, that individual and myself. We both go to the meetings and provide staff support to the ZBA. If the consolidation went through that would be solely under the direction and responsibility of this position.

Alderman Garrity asked the existing structure now, for the duties for the ZBA, is yourself and your deputy?

Mr. LaFreniere replied yes.

Alderman Garrity asked you would no longer have any of those duties?

Mr. LaFreniere replied obviously any of the duties and responsibilities of the department in total would fall under the director's purview but they would be administered by this particular deputy. I can also tell you that we have had input since we have met with the Committee last from the HR Director. The job descriptions we have further refined. I anticipate we will refine them to an even greater extent. They did an initial review which was of great benefit to us given their workload and slipping this in but they did an initial review and pointed out the fact that we weren't reflecting all of the duties and responsibilities that we anticipate resulting from the fact that we are taking these four top level administrative positions and making them three essentially. We have further refined that and the HR Director hasn't had the benefit of reviewing the refinements after we incorporated her comments.

Alderman Garrity stated Mr. Chairman, I don't know how you want to handle this portion of the consolidation but maybe it would be appropriate to send this portion of the consolidation over to the Human Resources Committee and then have them report to us.

Chairman O'Neil stated I think otherwise we are going to get bogged down on this.

Alderman Pinard stated I have lost track but your two departments have funding. How are you going to fund the two departments? I would imagine you put that in one category, and how much do you have between the two of you?

Mr. LaFreniere replied we would anticipate that if the merger took place that the budgets would be merged as well. That would include our respective salary line items and so on down through the entire itemized budget. Yes we would consolidate the budgets and then realize the savings on the salary end of things because of the consolidation.

Alderman Pinard stated besides the salary and whatever, how much actual cash would you have to operate after the merger?

Ms. Goucher asked are you talking about the operating budget?

Alderman Pinard replied yes. You, Pam, have a budget right now and he has a budget right now. If you combine the two how much would that be for your operation?

Ms. Goucher stated currently the Planning Department has I think \$16,000 in operations. I am not sure what the Buildings number is but we don't usually return any money on our operating. It has been cut significantly over the years. Obviously there would be many savings we could realize. One of the things we pointed out in our reports is that over time we may be able to eliminate a copy machine...

Alderman Pinard interjected I think the people out there would like to know roughly. The consolidation is good but I am personally looking at saving in any way we can. You are operating on one budget now. How is it going to be when you merge? These questions haven't been answered yet.

Mr. LaFreniere stated I think they have, Alderman, because what we have done is we projected a savings in the Salary account because that is where the primary savings is going to come from. We don't have a lot of money in either budget that is dedicated to anything but salaries. My salary budget is about 97.5% almost 98% salaries. Planning has a similar ratio. The scope of the savings will be much smaller. Will we look for them? Of course. That is one of the benefits that we anticipate as a result of this process. We haven't determined whether we can use fewer paper clips or less paper for example and I would anticipate that we probably won't because we are still going to be doing the same functions. Each division will be doing the same functions they do today. I don't anticipate there will be significant savings in the operating budget. I think the savings really comes from the salary budget.

Alderman Pinard stated that is why I asked the question. I think not just this Committee but I think the people watching would like to know what is going on. This is why we are asking you the questions.

Chairman O'Neil stated one of the things that I think Alderman Garrity suggested is to maybe send the salary portion to HR. That might make some sense. I think many of us are having a hard time getting our arms around this savings. I am having a hard time putting my arms around the savings.

Mr. LaFreniere stated we can give you the bottom line numbers. We have spent a long time calculating what those numbers would be but to be honest with you, Alderman, all of the nuances of the process relating to salary grades and ultimate savings and that sort of thing, we always anticipated would be part of the HR review process.

Alderman Lopez asked Leon, the \$6,741, is that going to come out of your existing budget 2009?

Mr. LaFreniere responded we have not identified where that money would come from. We certainly could take it out of the existing budget if the consolidated department was... Those monies could be targeted and identified within the existing budget, yes, if we could take them from the savings.

Alderman Lopez asked what is the total number of employees that you have now combined between the Building and Planning Departments? At present time.

Ms. Goucher asked with vacancies?

Alderman Lopez replied yes.

Ms. Goucher stated we have 7.5 employees and I believe Building has 19.

Mr. LaFreniere stated we have 19.

Alderman Lopez stated so a total of 25 employees.

Mr. LaFreniere stated Building has one vacancy and Planning has 4.5 so we have 5.5 total.

Alderman Lopez stated I think the Committee is going to get into it and if they are I can yield but... If this goes to the HR Committee, Mr. Chairman, I believe that this could be delayed quite a bit. The question is whether we are going to consolidate. With 27 employees, now if there is not going to be any consolidation, they continue moving forward as they are now and not getting some of the work done. In looking at this proposal, I think the biggest question is on what basis would this proposal be approved? I think the HR Director is here. I think the question comes up as to whether or not you had four top positions; you are only going to have three top positions. The question comes up whether one is going to move to a higher grade or not. If the intention is not to move from grade 26 to 29, whatever the case may be, then we should know up front. I am on the HR Committee; I would like to know whether or not that is a basis we are not going to

approve this. Otherwise it is an exercise...I think they have done a lot of work here. I think moving forward the Committee has to look at the merger more so than anything. We will have an opportunity to vote on the grade structure if that is a major issue with people. Right now with seven employees in the Planning Department I don't know how they are doing the work. I really don't. That is my comment.

Chairman O'Neil stated I think the problem is going to be...I don't want to get into the technical part of what a grade should be but we are being presented that there is a savings, but I don't think I am alone in trying to put my arms around what the savings is. I see the savings as two positions. Whether we merge them or not, there is a whole other question about whether vacant positions get filled. All we are really talking about here with the merger is the elimination of the building regulations director and the elimination of one planner II that exists. That is a whole separate discussion whether we merge or not. Based on some of the other things that are going on in the City, I can't see those positions getting filled. I could be wrong. I don't see that relevant. The work load is the work load. That is not going to change whether they merge or not.

Alderman Lopez stated I totally agree with what you are saying. What I am saying is that the consolidation...Is it better to consolidate and utilized the forces that they have at 27? The other issue, if it is approved, they might not be able to fill those vacancies, I understand, but that is a different issue. The HR director must have looked at this or she wouldn't be here.

Chairman O'Neil stated we always welcome Jane Gile to any meeting.

Alderman J. Roy stated I just want to make one comment about what we were just talking about. The reality is that this merger is going to facilitate these departments to work at capacity. Right now they can't work at capacity because they have too many vacancies. I think that is something that is not in the forefront here but it is definitely something that is going to take place if this merger happens. It is not just the elimination of two positions and the savings from that.

Chairman O'Neil stated I don't disagree with what you just said but the organizational chart that I look at doesn't show that. The organizational chart does not show crossover. I agree with exactly what you said but all we are doing and what I have looked at to date is having two department heads to one department head. I don't see any crossover positions or any of that.

Alderman J. Roy stated that organizational chart that you have is showing every position filled with the new numbers. That isn't the case today. That is why I say that they are actually going to be able to work at capacity, and that is one of the things that is actually hidden in here if you will.

Chairman O'Neil stated I think the Committee would welcome getting there. What we have read to date doesn't show that. We don't see any great new change in job descriptions for people saying they can work both the Planning side and the Building side. I think that is where you are going.

Alderman J. Roy stated it isn't. What I am trying to say is that with their new proposal, or the consolidation, if we look at it as a whole, every one of those positions are filled. That isn't the case today. If every one of those positions are filled after consolidation then both departments which have merged will be able to work at full capacity. That is not a possibility today because they aren't at full capacity. They don't have all of their vacancies filled and you are right in saying if we don't embrace this merger with the economic situation we are in, they are probably not going to have all of those positions filled. I not only look at the \$140,000 savings but I am looking at getting these departments up to speed again.

Alderman Garrity stated this has to go to the HR Committee by ordinance anyway so my idea is to send it there. They can either come back to this Committee and say the grade increases are justified or they are not justified and then we could talk about it in this Committee, but we don't have the authorization to do that. We don't make that decision in this Committee so just move it over to HR. Take it off our plate for two or three weeks. They will probably have a meeting early next month.

Alderman Lopez stated Alderman Garrity, I do agree with what you are saying but I do think the problem of going to HR and working out the job description... Doing all the job descriptions before hand and then coming back to this Committee is sort of backwards, for the simple reason that the authority of the merger is not there. Planning should have the opportunity to sit down with their employees and work with the HR Director on what their jobs are going to be. If the merger is there then the department heads will have an opportunity to direct those employees that they will do both jobs if that is what the case may be. Until that authority is there, how can you turn around and take an employee and say you will be doing this and then HR is going to put all that in the job description. It would then come back here and they could say no, I don't want this. So I agree with what you are saying but it is backwards. I have been on the HR Committee for eight years and believe me it doesn't work that way and the HR Director is here. She has to know what has been authorized first before she is going to turn

around and do a job description. Otherwise we are just doing an exercise for nothing.

Chairman O'Neil stated I guess we have a difference of opinion because I want to know if we are being presented a savings of \$140,000. Until those jobs are specked out with grades assigned to them and the proposed merged department filled and vacant positions are priced out... That may be the only reason I vote this thing up or down because the savings is there or isn't there. I am still very much wrestling with this issue of how we are measuring the improvement in service. Alderman Lopez and Alderman Roy are talking about, I don't want to put words in your mouth but you are almost talking like people cross trained. If that is the intent here we should have that in an organizational chart and that is not what I see.

Alderman Lopez stated I don't know, Mr. Chairman, but I think maybe the two department heads can answer some of these questions and they are the experts.

Ms. Goucher stated there are two positions on the organizational chart that do reflect what we see as personnel that would do some shifting of their responsibilities and shifting within the functional areas. There are two function areas. There is a Planning functional area and there is a Building regulations and safety. There are two areas that would continue to be two functional areas. We are looking at some of those individuals and what they do today and trying to figure out if there is a better way to incorporate them into the organization. Just to point out on the organizational chart, what we call the zoning review officer and the community development support specialist, are two individuals that clearly would be part of the bigger picture and if you want to use the word cross training, I don't know that that is the word I would use, but I would use the word that they are clearly going to be part of the bigger department and not part of one specific area. The other issue is that...

Chairman O'Neil interjected Pam, that is the zoning review officer at a grade 18?

Ms. Goucher replied yes.

Chairman O'Neil asked and that is also the community development support specialist at a grade 16?

Ms. Goucher replied yes, those are the current grades of the individuals but that is not the current location, if you will, that they would function in if we were to do two separate organizational charts. The zoning review officer we believe would help us in our site development and growth management, review of cases in a

better manner than currently as he is partially doing that and partially doing code enforcement.

Alderman Garrity asked the two positions that you just mentioned, will they have added responsibilities at all?

Ms. Goucher replied we have spoken to the Human Resources Director, and it is not our intention that they would be added as much as some different ones. It is not our intention that either of those positions warrant grade changes. We are trying very hard to make sure that what we are anticipating as a responsibility is in line with their current responsibilities. Just like at the first presentation. I think Leon outlined to you that the housing inspectors would have a new title even though they currently do some zoning enforcement on the job. The name change was to reflect some of what they are doing. These other two positions that we are looking at, we have been looking at the job description and looking at components that we would like to include or add or subtract in order to make those positions reasonable in the big picture. We suffer from not always having someone right hands on deck with what is going on with zoning review. We try very hard to work with Max and Leon so that we are not sending someone to the Planning Board not having all of the information from the Zoning Board. It is not a perfect scenario right now. We do the best we can and we are across the hall from one another so we work on a regular basis. What this plan is trying to do is take an individual that is much more keyed in to the everyday zoning review so that as the process goes through to the Planning Board and the Zoning Board, we are on top of it. We are not operating like the right hand and the left hand don't know what they are doing all the time. The same with the Community Development Specialist. We are recognizing that there is a lot of computer technology that has to be examined because we work on the HTE module. We have zoning, planning and building permits. Those all have to be intergraded. Leon mentioned last time we are trying to get some scheduling of the inspectors so that they are out in the field more and not in the office as much. That community support specialist we are hoping would be able to work some scheduling. It is still administrative type work but it is different. I guess I get concerned when I hear that our organization chart does appear to try to link them and at the same time recognize that there is a planning function and there is a building function but there is a way we hope that we could recognize it as one.

Chairman O'Neil stated I am looking at the organizational chart that you handed out. There is no reference on here of putting the community development support specialist over to the building regulations side. We have no documentation. You talk about Planners I, II, III and IV. There is no reference in anything we have seen... I could have missed it... That references the community development support specialist doing items on the building regulations side.

Ms. Goucher stated there is a description.

Mr. LaFreniere stated if I could just add to that, I think you are not seeing it because that is the link, if you will, in this chain that most directly coordinates between the departments.

Chairman O'Neil interjected Leon ,if we are being asked to merge the departments we have to see that.

Mr. LaFreniere stated but it is right here, Alderman. The administrative support section is going to be fully integrated. They are going to be fully cross trained. All the customer services reps, right down through the whole section, is going to service both sides of the house, if you will. That is where much of the communication improvements will happen. That is where much of the first contact with our customers happens. That is where the people that come in our door and get their first impression of dealing with the City happens. It is with those people in that section that are...

Chairman O'Neil interjected Leon, let me stop you there for a second. Would you agree looking at this organizational chart that it doesn't show that?

Mr. LaFreniere replied no, I wouldn't agree at all because...

Chairman O'Neil interjected wait a minute, Leon. You have that coming down from the deputy director of planning and zoning. You are not showing it coming down from the director's level that would indicate it is servicing both sides.

Mr. LaFreniere stated as Pamela identifies, this has been a continually refined process but I think it is essentially the same thing. There is no different intent here. The administrative support section has always been, from the get go, intended to support the entire department. When we described in our initial meeting, a couple of weeks ago, how this was all going to happen, the administrative support section is where the bulk of the cross training is going to take place, where that customer contact, we believe, is going to see the most improvement. Are we going to train electrical inspectors to be planners? No, of course not, but by the same token I do anticipate that the building inspector is going to be doing site inspections for Planning. The intent is that we are fully integrated as a department. There was no intent to just look at this from the top down. We tried to look at it from the bottom up.

Chairman O'Neil stated before I go to the other Aldermen, this can't be a work in progress and that is what I am hearing here. When it is moved along, this is what

we intend to do. In my opinion, this has got to be documented so there is a clear understanding. You just said that you intend for the building inspector to do site plan reviews?

Mr. LaFreniere replied no, site compliance inspections.

Chairman O'Neil stated if you had said that previously... I can't put my hands on anything that shows that. You may have said that in a meeting. We won't get the minutes for past meetings for a while. I hope you understand where some of the Aldermen are coming from. We need to see it. You folks have things stuck up in your head and it's your intention. We don't know what you are intending to do.

Mr. LaFreniere stated let me discuss just for a very brief moment what my understanding of the process is. I believe these documents that we have been providing are in support of the concept that the Aldermen are not going to adopt an organizational chart. What they are going to adopt is the merger of the two departments and the structure of the positions down to the nitty gritty of how these positions function. We don't normally get into that level with the Aldermen. When it comes to say, you employee are going to do this function today and you employee are going to do this function today, that is the level I think we are talking about here.

Chairman O'Neil stated I would disagree that the Board hasn't gotten involved in some of the organizational charts in some of the mergers and consolidations.

Mr. LaFreniere stated I am not saying they didn't get involved. I am just saying, I didn't look at it that the Board was adopting the organizational chart. I thought what we were adopting was the merger of the two departments and the basic structure of having two deputies and having the two divisions. We knew we were going to go through a process here. We knew we were going to spend some time with HR after Administration determined whether this was a concept that had merit. We really pulled together a lot of material in a short period of time. The limitation of the time that HR has had to respond to some of these questions that we have had. Will the class specifications be refined to reflect the model of the prospects? Probably there will be some modifications there. I would anticipate that HR would have drafts to adopt in terms of each individual class specification that will obviously be final. Responding to Jane's comment that there should be a break in the organizational chart identifying fictionalal areas. We thought that was a good comment and we put it in. That has happened since we met as a Committee. It has happened since we submitted the documentation. That is why it is not in the package. There is no intent to hold anything back here. There is no intent to make it as a work in progress.

Chairman O'Neil stated I am going to speak for myself. I am not going to sit here and say yes I think there needs to be a merger. I want supporting documents to show what the pros and cons are. I tend to agree with Alderman Garrity, it might be in the best interest of the entire Board that we do send it to HR. If it comes back and five or six people are getting upgrades, it is dead on arrival. It is not going to pass by this Board. I tend to support Alderman Garrity. We are going to get hung up in this Committee for a while until we figure out the cost. I guess we have a difference of opinion on that. With consolidations and mergers it has been very clear what has gone on.

Mr. LaFreniere stated we have certainly made an attempt to do that and responded to the Committee to provide you with those costs.

Chairman O'Neil stated I understand that. I don't see those ties and I am handed a document tonight that shows the tie. You have to sit in our seat for a while.

Ms. Goucher stated can I point out that you mentioned that you didn't see a description on the new community development support specialist and that is in your book. That is in the report that we handed you last week. That was one of your questions, to identify the duties and responsibilities of the support specialist and that is in there with bullets.

Chairman O'Neil stated you are correct, Pam.

Alderman Garrity asked the administrative services manager, is that person going to be supervising additional folks?

Mr. LaFreniere replied no, not beyond what they are supervising currently.

Alderman Garrity stated because I see on your existing Planning, you have an administrative services manager there and there is one currently in the Building Department I would assume, right?

Mr. LaFreniere replied yes.

Ms. Goucher stated that is the position we are identifying as the community development support specialist.

Mr. LaFreniere stated one of the administrative service manager I positions will become that.

Alderman Garrity stated okay I understand. So both administrative services managers are going to have the same grade but one is going to have different duties?

Mr. LaFreniere responded yes, they will have the same grade but they are going to be different positions with similar duties. The community development support specialist that we have identified with the new title will have duties specific to the combined department.

Alderman Garrity stated again Mr. Chairman, this is why I think it needs to go to HR. I just don't want to see it six months down the road where some person is doing added duties. If we are changing a job title, I need to see why that remains the same grade. I don't want this to be in HR four months from now and then Jane is in HR Committee with a grade increase. It happens all the time and again, it reduces some of the savings.

Ms. Goucher stated some of the duties that this particular individual currently does are not the same sort of duties that even administrative assistants would do in other departments. I doubt if other administrative service managers get involved in the bids for demolition for taking down dilapidated buildings. What we showed on the last handout was a breakdown of the responsibilities. One of the things that we still...

Alderman Garrity interjected let me stop you there, Pam. I can see the breakdown of responsibilities but I need something that shows me a position that is kind of the same in the City where it is a grade 16 and that gets done in HR. That is why I think this should go to HR. Otherwise we could sit here until 9:00 and talk about grade increases.

Alderman Osborne stated I would still like to hear on bullets eight, ten and eleven. As I explained I would like to hear what happens with that particular situation. I have to agree with Alderman Lopez in a way. If you want to send it to HR, send it to HR. We are not even sure if we want to combine these two departments. I think if you come out of HR, you are going to hit higher salaries. I said this in the beginning, each department right now is strapped. They can hardly take care of what they have to do on their own right now. I still think filling the positions is the number one thing. Trying to save \$140,000 right now in this time and economy, the way things are going all over the United States, I think we are all crazy sitting here trying to do this for \$140,000. I think the main thing is to get in there and get these departments rolling where they should be with the right help. I would like to hear bullet eight, ten and eleven when you get to it.

Chairman O'Neil stated why don't we go to those, the second page of the cover letter.

Alderman Osborne asked have you found anything in other communities since the last time you have been here?

Mr. LaFreniere replied no, we have not done any additional analysis but we have a comparison in the book where we reached out to Nashua; Concord; Keene; Lowell, Massachusetts; Worcester, Massachusetts; and Burlington, Vermont. We have tried to include the information to the Committee that encapsulates what they do.

Alderman Osborne asked how are they doing with it? Are they consolidated?

Mr. LaFreniere replied no, there is a real mix. In fact in our original report I think we tried to identify that for the Committee. What we found was that there isn't any typical model. Each individual community seems to do it differently. So because there was no typical theme or model, it didn't seem to be of significant value to identify one to try and follow. In fact if you go through all of these different communities, it seems like the larger communities are more often separate. The smaller communities are more often combined. That is about the only theme we could identify.

Alderman Osborne asked if you both had full complement right now, would you really have to merge with each other? Is that a big must here?

Mr. LaFreniere stated I think that if we were at full complement and had the two directors that would be an ideal.

Alderman Osborne stated I think we are fighting over \$140,000 right now instead of going ahead and getting the departments staffed. Let's get on the ball. That is the main thing.

Mr. LaFreniere stated with all due respect to the Committee, and we really appreciate your input, if that is the direction the Committee would like to go then we would encourage you to please make that decision sooner than later because we have invested a huge amount of time in this and it is taking away from other duties. We need to move forward.

Alderman Osborne stated I think you are going to invest a lot more time and we still aren't getting anywhere. That is why I am saying this.

Alderman Pinard stated we have been talking here now for an hour and I would agree with Alderman Osborne. Mr. Chairman, you brought up the situation around the state and the country. The Mayor is going to make a state of the City's speech very soon, I would imagine. Do you think it would be wise to table this to see what direction the City is going to take? I think that Leon, your department has dropped in permits and financials with money coming in. My personal feeling, I agree with you, but is this the right time? I go back to you again, Mr. Chairman, because you brought it out too. Are we going to play a game of dominos here between this Committee and Human Resources and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen? I think we have to make an honest decision here, not only for us but for the taxpayers out there. My recommendation if it is proper, maybe we should just table this to see what direction the City is going to take.

Alderman J. Roy stated I just want to try to explain myself one more time because I wasn't talking about the cross training before. What I was trying to get at, and I didn't do a very good job I guess, was that Planning right now is operating around 42% below their normal capacity. I shouldn't say that. They are operating at 100% capacity with 42% less employees. How they are doing it, I have no idea. My hat is off to them and I congratulate them. You are doing a great job. I thank you for that. My problem with that is that it is okay to do for a little while because of the way we used to do severance to rise to the occasion but when it becomes the norm, I don't think it is appropriate. When we are talking about this \$140,000 savings, which I think is pretty significant in these times, I think we should look at this. I think we should go ahead and look at this because \$140,000 is a lot of money to me. Whether or not it is five or six or two or three people that get a pay increase, it doesn't make any difference. It is still going to be \$140,000 savings. Because of that possible savings and the reality that if we just go along as we have been doing, there is no way that these departments are going to be able to continue to run at 100% efficiency. There is no way, after the Mayor comes out with his budget and we look at the new budget, that we are going to fool ourselves and say that we are going to bring these two departments up to full complement. I don't think that you should table this. I would suggest...

Chairman O'Neil interjected I guess what I don't understand is whether we merge or don't merge what is going to change that issue of 42% less people?

Alderman J. Roy stated this proposal that is being brought forth. It was stated originally that it is a total package where every one of those positions are going to be filled. That was the assumption that I understood when this came forward. Those positions would be filled so that we could see these savings and run at 100% capacity.

Chairman O'Neil stated I guess I wasn't clear on that.

Alderman J. Roy stated I may be wrong. I can ask Leon. I think that is what I understood.

Mr. LaFreniere stated absolutely, our intent was to show what we needed to do to get the job done as a consolidated department. That was filling the positions that we had identified remaining, after the consolidation and identifying those positions that would no longer be in the complement and what the resulting savings would be.

Alderman Garrity stated I like the concept. I am not beating you up on the concept. I like consolidations and \$140,000 is very attractive. I just figured out the average taxpayer in Ward 9 is paying \$4,000 in taxes. That is 35 homeowners that pay \$140,000 in Ward 9 for taxes. I am uncomfortable with the grade increases and things of that nature. Maybe I need to go meet with you and Pam some afternoon. I need to have more knowledge of the responsibility changes before I feel comfortable voting on it. As everybody knows, I serve on HR and I scrutinized the grade increases. I find them unnecessary. I would like to make a motion, Mr. Chairman, that we send the grade portions over to HR. Encourage them to meet the first or second week in January and then report back to us. I would feel more comfortable voting on this merger after that.

Chairman O'Neil stated before I accept that motion I will allow Alderman Lopez and then we will take your motion.

Alderman Lopez stated thank you. I believe the intent when we first discussed this was in merging these two departments. As you are well aware we tried to consolidate MEDO and that didn't happen. This came up to provide utilization of the employees that they have, the existing employees and a complement that they need in order to do the job but provide a better service to the community. I believe that merging this does provide a better service to the community and I think the savings is the secondary aspect of this whether it is \$140,000 or \$120,000. If this is not going to provide better service, as I have heard year after year about Planning and Building being together, then we shouldn't do it. We are talking about a grade structure of a department head that left and retired at a grade 29. We are talking about a grade structure of 25 or 26 or 27 or an individual going from a 26 to a 29 and running two departments. We had a grade 29. I think when you look at the matrix system... Now if the board intends to do away with the matrix system and say, no we are not going to give you a 29 and we aren't going to give you a 25 or whatever the situation is, then we are kidding ourselves. Alderman Garrity is absolutely right. He has been in HR. I am not going to speak for him but it would be very hard if the HR Committee comes back and says we are going

to promote these people and it is going to cost X number of dollars, then we are kidding ourselves. If that is not going to happen with this Committee then to find eight Aldermen or ten on the Board to move the grade structure out... You haven't even talked about that. We all know that in this particular aspect of merging you are eliminating a grade 29 and you are telling an individual to take that position, I think it was four top managers going down to three managers. So there is savings. If the Committee decides to go to HR...Jane could give you that information tomorrow as to what the pay structure would be for moving these.

Chairman O'Neil asked are we going to table it and forward to HR the questions of salary grade, job description and responsibilities? Is that your motion? Table everything and just refer to the HR Committee the pay grades so that we can at least get some handle on that?

Alderman Pinard asked will we get from HR the actual salary of each individual?

Chairman O'Neil stated that would be the goal.

On motion of Alderman Garrity, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to table this item and refer the salary grades, job descriptions and responsibilities to the Committee on Human Resources and Insurance. With Alderman Osborne duly recorded as opposed, the motion carried.

Mr. LaFreniere stated if the Committee wants to provide us with any feedback as to whether the rest of the information has addressed their questions and is there additional information that the Committee will need... As I say, we tried real hard to answer the questions as they came up. I understand the additional comments and questions about the grade structure but if there is any other information the Committee is looking for...

Chairman O'Neil stated the only thing is that we should all get a copy of this new organizational chart. If there is any other information just make sure that you get us everything.

Mr. LaFreniere stated I do have a copy of that. I hadn't intended to hand it out because I know the Committee does not want to get things the night of the meeting. This was something we refined.

Alderman Garrity stated I have questions regarding the administration part of it, but I am going to set up a meeting with you.

Chairman O'Neil stated I am probably going to follow up when I have a chance to digest the meeting.

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

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee