

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Council Chambers

PRESENT: Aids. Bruderle-Baran, Casey, Jenkins, Kopischke – 4

EXCUSED: Ald. Stepaniak

ALSO PRESENT: B. Aldana, Asst. City Atty.; Chief D. Redman, Fire

Ald. Jenkins as Chair called the meeting to order at 7:42 p.m.

Re-structuring of fire department administrative staff

Chief Redman said that in 1998 they completed a significant re-structure of administrative staff. This process established a command staff of five persons. The Fire Marshal retired at the end of March this year and the position is now vacant. The fire prevention area currently has three allocated positions. Historically, fire prevention had a total of four full-time 40-hour positions. Prior to 1998 the fire marshal position had been filled continuously by an employee classified as protective service, but that position has been filled by a non-protective service employee since December, 1998. He said the proposal is to re-assign one 52-hour per week employee to the 40-hour per week position of Fire Marshal. They also plan to fill the 52-hour per week position with a newly designated Deputy Fire Chief who would become the Deputy Fire Marshal. All six administrative staff positions would be classified as protective service employees. The restructuring would provide key benefits including: 1) increasing the total number of work hours dedicated to fire prevention activities, 2) recovering fire investigation expertise lost through the death of one code specialist and retirement of the fire marshal, 3) increasing the number of staff available for incident command support functions from five to six employees, 4) providing for more effective department management by having a more senior officer available during normal business hours, 5) lowering the cost for the value of operational improvements, and 6) reducing the overtime/fill pay and reducing the use of captains acting as shift commanders.

Chief Redman said that any option will result in expenditures below the 2005 budgeted amount due to short term savings resulting from periods of vacancy, hiring a new or promoted employee at lower pay steps, and/or hiring a replacement firefighter at lower steps. He recommended re-structuring the fire department administrative staff by reducing the personnel allocation by one Fire Marshal and adding one Deputy Fire Chief.

Ald. Kopischke noted that in the long term this will be an increased cost; however, the justification is a more efficient command structure. Chief Redman added that they would have more staff committed to fire prevention issues.

Ms. Aldana said that one of the changes is that the new person would be in protective service which means a higher contribution to the retirement and pension services. Chief Redman said they currently use staff officers to do the investigation process. It would be beneficial to have the command staff assigned to the fire prevention area.

Moved by Ald. Bruderle-Baran, seconded by Ald. Casey to recommend approval of administrative staff re-structuring in the fire department – 4

The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk
City of Wauwatosa