



CITY OF WAUWATOSA
7725 WEST NORTH AVENUE
WAUWATOSA, WISCONSIN 53213
Telephone: (414) 479-8917
Fax: (414) 479-8989
Web Site: www.wauwatosa.net

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, January 26, 2010

Committee Room #2

PRESENT: Alds. Donegan, Ewerdt, Walsh, Krol, Berdan – 5

ALSO PRESENT: A. Kesner, City Atty.; B. Aldana, Asst. City Atty./HR Dir.

Ald. Donegan as Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Discussion of the compensation package of the mayor

Ald. Donegan advised that the ongoing discussion was regarding the compensation of the mayor.

Former alderman, Richard Bachman, 2229 N. 115th Street reminded the committee that he sat on the committee that originally discussed the mayor's position when the city hired a full time administrator. Mr. Bachman said at that time the intent was for a part time mayor, although this was never put in writing.

Tom Gaertner, 6829 Terrace Court, asked the committee chair for his take on the form of our city government. Ald. Donegan advised that it is a strong council form of government with the city administrator as chief executive. Ald. Donegan commented that the state statute provides that the mayor is the chief executive. The city ordinance delegates most of the executive duties to the chief administrator.

Mr. Gaertner expressed concern that the mayor's compensation package of approximately \$21,000 was overlooked when discussing the salary. Combined with the salary this is roughly \$44,000 annually. He questioned why the committee hasn't discussed this piece of the compensation which he felt was quite generous.

Ald. Nikceovich noted that she had been hoping for a broader discussion. She felt that the wages have been frozen in time. She felt that at a minimum the committee should come up with an annual wage adjustment which would commensurate with other city employees. Ald. Nikceovich disagreed with labeling the position part time. She said our current mayor and the previous mayors have spent excess of a 40 hour work week.

Ald. Nikceovich felt that the city structure needs to be looked at. She felt that a stronger leadership role should be addressed, possibly by an ad hoc committee.

Mr. Gaertner further noted that he felt there was nothing wrong with the current system and the council shouldn't be defining the mayor's role, time or duties. He said the city has a history of mayors that did not work for the money but for their civic duty. He had a grave concern that if the mayor and aldermanic positions were lucrative paying that there would be an increase of partisan politics.

Ald. Meaux disagreed that an increase in salary is needed or that there was a lack of leadership. He felt that a larger salary would not bring more qualified candidates to fill the perceived gap. He noted that people have stepped up because it is their civic duty. He has listened to the argument that we need to keep up with the Joneses but didn't have a problem that the city stand out on its own and not pay a high ticket price for a mayor.

Ald. Herzog commented that he is not in favor of making any changes, that the city is well run. He said we pay our administrator handsomely and if we make a change both positions would have to be looked at. He felt that this is the worse time to discuss salary increases and felt the item should be tabled. This would send the wrong message to the constituents. He suggested a study or something be put into place for salary increases. He suggested also looking at our judge's salary which has also been frozen in time.

Ald. Krol commented that Ald. Ewerdt was very sincere in bringing this issue to the committee as it appeared it had been ignored over the years. He thanked everyone for their comments and noted that city officials are more accessible than back in the 70's via emails, texts and voice mail and spend a lot more time on the job. Ald. Krol agreed with Ald. Herzog that the municipal judge's salary should also be addressed as many things have changed over the years in that position also. He suggested holding this item until the 2012 budget cycle and discuss at that time a cost of living adjustment.

Ald. Walsh commented that this is the third meeting spent on this issue. He questioned why the salary would be increased when there hasn't been a hard time attracting candidates. He felt that the position is a part time position and the mayor has to hold themselves accountable to their constituents. The onus is on the city residents to make that decision.

Moved by Ald. Walsh to hold the mayor's salary
at \$22,500

Motion dies for lack of a second.

Ald. Berdan commented that when the discussion first started it was a fact finding mission. The committee started out with a job description or lack thereof. She felt that the amount of time and work done would be at the prerogative of the mayor and if people don't like it, they can vote in someone else. She noted that she had not heard from enough constituents on this and the committee has to decide if it is a valid issue to continue discussing.

Ald. Ewerdt asked Ald. Donegan for his opinion. Ald. Donegan said he is in agreement with Ald. Herzog. The city is attracting good candidates and therefore doesn't feel the need to make this a bread winner's salary. He felt that the benefit package has kept up with inflation. Ald. Donegan said he felt the mayor works more than part time as have the last three mayors. He doesn't feel it is fair for the mayor to be paid so little with all the work they do. He noted that the city ordinance prohibits the mayor from taking another position that would prohibit them from doing their job. In all fairness he felt the position deserves a little more money. He commented that most of the objections he has heard regarding this were that it was outrageous to consider an increase in these economic times. He felt they were implicit that in better economic times it would be O.K. In 2012 things may be better. He felt an increase somewhere in the \$30,000 range would be appropriate to look at during that budget cycle.

Ald. Ewerdt commented that fairness and equity are the key words mentioned regarding the mayor's salary. He felt that the mayor of Wauwatosa should be able to afford to live in the city and cannot on the current salary. He commented that he doesn't want to change the government structure but suggested a salary of \$35,000 with a 1% annual increase.

Moved by Ald. Krol, seconded by Ald. Berdan
to hold this item until the first meeting of Employee
Relations in July 2011, before the budget
process begins for the 2012 budget – Ayes: 4 Noes: 1 (Walsh)

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk
City of Wauwatosa

mks