



**CITY OF WAUWATOSA**  
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## **EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**

Tuesday, September 7, 2010

Committee Room #2

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

ALSO PRESENT: J. Archambo, City Admin.; B. Aldana, Asst. City Atty./HR Dir.

Ald. Donegan as Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### **Deliberation of recommendation to Council regarding imminent negotiations of city employee union contracts**

The meeting was moved to Committee Room #1 as room #2 was not large enough to accommodate everyone in attendance.

Randall Daut, 2420 N. 84<sup>th</sup> St., urged the committee to seek restraints in city employee benefits. He said his home has had numerous basement backups and the infrastructure of the city needs to be a priority. He said there are homes in his neighborhood that are not selling and he felt this is due to the basement backups. Mr. Daut said city employees should be compensated fairly, not over compensated.

Hank Wendt, 9502 W. Goodrich Ct. said he has had the honor and the privilege of serving as a firefighter in Wauwatosa for 25 years. He said he has seen significant changes in the fire department over the past ten years.

Mr. Wendt said there has been a struggle to meet the government staffing standards safely. He noted that with Chief Redman's cooperation the fire department has been able to maintain the highest level possible all the while the budget gets tighter and tighter. He suggested that there has been degradation of public safety in District 8 over the last 18 months due to a rig being shut down almost 50% of the time which impacts the residents.

Mr. Wendt said he has sat in numerous meetings where it has been stated that the city has an AAA rating maintaining the best asset to debt ratio and is financially sound. Mr. Wendt commented that the city claims to have a major hole in the budget. What has been heard is that the employees are paid too much and the benefits are too great. Per Ms. Aldana's comparison of like-municipalities, she previously reported that Wauwatosa is in the middle of the pack. They are neither the highest nor the lowest paid employees.

Mr. Wendt advised that over the years council has maintained city taxes and done so well. He said there has got to be a reliable revenue stream or the infrastructure will collapse which is what is happening. He felt that city leaders need to tell constituents that in order to maintain the customer service they have grown to expect, there will have to be an increase in taxes. He reiterated that the perceived deficit problem is not the employee's fault. He asked that the city leaders stop blaming the employees. In the past the unions have worked with the city. This is not the way to do business cooperatively.

Mayor Didier explained that throughout the budget process and income forecasting with the infrastructure needs, capital needs of departments, wages and benefits the budget numbers started to grow. The pie chart

of wages and benefits started to make up the majority of the budget. The reality is that tough decisions need to be made so it is not lop-sided. Mayor Didier said as the budget was put together the city was in an unacceptable 11 – 12% increase range. She said she was not advocating a 0% levy, but to raise taxes in a reasonable amount for an end goal. She felt there needs to be a smart plan and smart business decisions must be made.

Mayor Didier said they have looked at managing overtime costs, shutting down city hall at 4:30 p.m. instead of 5:00 p.m., better technology to reduce work load, and increase in insurance premiums of 10% which is where the discussion will start. They Mayor noted that state aid has been reduced as well as the various state funded mandates.

The committee discussed the concerns of residents. The cost of services is going up while home values are declining.

Ald. Organ said she didn't think the employees are being blamed for the budget. The taxpayers cannot bear anymore and the city cannot continue down the same road. She said she was not in favor of cutting services, layoffs, or furloughs and felt the compensation package is where changes need to be made.

Ald. Donegan noted that the city is expected to provide services for its citizens and has failed to deliver basic services in infrastructure for the past 16 – 20 years. He said that taxpayers tend to think that a 2% – 3% wage increase is the appetite of the city, while most of the homeowners have not gotten household incomes that have grown and are flat to negative. He asked why city employees should be entitled to make increases greater than our constituents. The only people he knew getting raises were Wauwatosa City employees.

Ald. Donegan commented that the committee spent six or seven meetings reviewing employee costs and benefits. He said the city has a high quality compensation package. The wage level compared to the market place is much higher, primarily clerical and non-skilled positions. He said the fully funded pension plan allows most employees to be able to retire in their fifties. The insurance premiums paid are \$40 a month for family coverage with a \$400 deductible.

Moved by Ald. Donegan, seconded by Ald. Organ  
to recommend that council directs administration to  
produce a 2011 and 2012 budget that holds expenditures at  
the same level as in 2010 and to negotiate accordingly.

Ald. Donegan said that there are many options as to how to get to the objective to hold the compensation package level. He suggested if the city cannot bargain this, it would result in position eliminations.

Ald. Berdan felt she was not ready to declare that we say this at this time.

Vote on the motion - Ayes: 2 Noes: 3 (Ewerdt, Walsh, Berdan)

Moved by Ald. Ewerdt, seconded by Ald. Walsh to convene into closed  
session per Wis. Stat. 19.85(1)(c): Considering employment, promotion,  
compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over  
which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility,  
and may reconvene into open session. Ayes: 5

The committee convened into closed session at 7:04 p.m.

The committee reconvened into open session at 7:35 p.m.

Moved by Ald. Berdan, seconded by Ald. Ewerdt  
as one component of the 2011 budget, the Employee  
Relations committee recommends that staff targets  
a zero percent increase – Ayes: 5

The meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk  
City of Wauwatosa

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