



CITY OF WAUWATOSA
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EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, December 11, 2012

Back of Council Chambers

PRESENT: Alds. Causier, Berdan, Hanson, Organ, Wilson – 5

ALSO PRESENT: J. Archambo, City Admin.; A. Kesner, City Atty.; B. Aldana, Human Resources Dir./Asst. City Atty.

Ald. Causier as Chair called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Proposed elimination of residency requirements

The Human Resources Director answered a question why this item came back to the committee. Ms. Aldana explained the two cycle policy for an ordinance change. This is back at committee for the second round of the cycle.

The item that came to the Committee on September 4, 2012 was for a proposed amendment to residency ordinance. The committee discussed this and asked that additional information be provided for a meeting at a later time.

The issue of whether to modify the City's existing residency requirement has been considered a number of times in past years. This year the issue has been introduced to this Committee with a request to relax the residency requirements. At the September meeting, the Committee indicated an interest in eliminating all residency requirements for City employees, after the Committee considered eliminating residency for some but not all positions. Further information was provided to the Committee on October 26, 2012.

After a lengthy discussion on November 27, 2012 a motion was made to remove the residency restrictions across the board with a 2-2 vote.

The committee expressed frustration that the residency issue seemed to keep coming back to the committee when staff felt a change was necessary and requested that it not.

Ald. Hanson felt strongly about not making any changes to the ordinance. He felt that the plan is working and there is no need to change it.

Ald. Wilson felt the need for clarification on some guide lines. He suggested that waivers be allowed if it were necessary for the three positions of Police Chief, Fire Chief and Public Works Director.

Ald. Berdan noted that one of the reasons it was here tonight was due to the motion made to eliminate residency requirements when staff requested to relax not eliminate residency requirements. She also said it may keep coming back because there is a need to change the policy. She felt the whole council needs to weigh in on this item. City staff has said that they do have problems recruiting and thus waivers have

been requested and granted in the past.

The committee discussed whether applicants were more likely or not to apply for a position if residency were required. It was determined that there really was no way to prove this either way.

Ald. Organ commented that she didn't feel that changing the ordinance is in the City's best interest.

Ald. Causier noted that she voted against removing residency restrictions last meeting but felt you could make an argument either way about it. She felt there needs to be a concise way of doing things and that currently there is disparity. She suggested leaving the residency in place as it is, but a decision should be made whether waivers would be granted or not.

The City Administrator said his primary concern is that the policy is clear and consistent as the policy has changed so drastically over the years.

Ald. Causier felt if waivers will be granted for some employees and not others the residency ordinance becomes meaningless. City staff did not remember a time when a waiver was requested and not granted.

The committee also discussed a reason an applicant may not apply when residency is required is that finalist names for a department head position become public. Some might prefer their current employer not know they are seeking other employment, especially when there is a concern that a waiver may not be granted if requested.

Moved by Ald. Berdan, seconded by Ald. Wilson
to recommend that these three positions be required as a
condition of employment to be residents within a year of
hire: Fire Chief, Police Chief, and the Public Works Director.
The ordinance should provide that the City may by policy
consider residency or response times of candidates or employees
if operational needs warrant this. The City Attorney is required
to be a resident under a separate Charter Ordinance. The City
Administrator is required to be a resident under the terms of his
contract with the City – Ayes: 3 Noes: 2 (Hanson, Organ)

The meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk
City of Wauwatosa

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