



**CITY OF WAUWATOSA**  
**EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES • FEBRUARY 25, 2014**

**Regular Meeting****Common Council Chambers****7:00 PM**

7725 West North Avenue, Wauwatosa, WI 53213

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Kathleen Causier	Alderwoman	Present	
Craig Wilson	Alderman	Present	
Tim Hanson	Alderman	Present	
Jill Organ	Alderwoman	Present	7:22 PM
Cheryl Berdan	Alderwoman	Present	
Beth Aldana	HR Director/Asst. City Atty.	Present	
Anthony Brown	Asst. to Administrator	Present	
James Archambo	City Administrator	Present	
Alan Kesner	City Attorney	Present	
Dennis McBride	Alderman	Present	
Kathleen Ehley	Mayor	Present	
Gregory Walz-Chojnacki	Alderman	Present	8:09 PM

**EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE ITEMS**

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

1. Discussion regarding the role and duties of the committee

Ald. Causier explained that she requested this item on the agenda due to the shift of Employee Relations Committee agenda items since Act 10.

Ms. Aldana commented that she is not opposed to ending the Employee Relations Committee, but she would suggest not splitting the employee-related items to different committees. She suggested that there should be one committee that addresses all employee-related issues. Items reviewed by Employee Relations since Act 10 have included items related to the two remaining unions and items related to the new compensation plan. She noted that mid-year employee issues would be lessened in the future due to their inclusion in the budget process. Looking forward, the City hopes to modernize the employee benefit plan and change the plan to ensure that the best employees are attracted to Wauwatosa and retained. In addition, retirement benefits will be reviewed and items will be brought to the Committee level for discussion.

Mr. Archambo agreed that it does not necessarily matter which committee covers these employee-related issues. Employee Relations previously addressed a major portion of the City's budget, but the changes of Act 10 reduce the impact of this Committee's decisions on the City's budget. Residency was also a major issue addressed by this Committee and that issue is no longer decided by municipalities in Wisconsin.

Mr. Archambo noted that his remarks are not meant to steer the Committee's decision, but to highlight how the Committee items have changed.

Ms. Aldana added that appointment approval of department directors would still come to the Council.

Ald. Causier asked for clarification on the modernizing of the benefit plan.

Ms. Aldana remarked that the benefit plan needs to be updated. It will be analyzed at the Staff level and then come to Council for approval. This could be a change of insurance provider or levels of the package.

Ald. Causier asked Ms. Aldana for her opinion regarding where employee-related items should be discussed, if Employee Relations were to be dissolved.

Ms. Aldana noted that there could be purely economic items that are employee-related and appropriate for the Budget and Finance Committee, but many employee-related issues are difficult to breakdown to purely financial questions and the bigger picture may be lost if there is no centralized committee addressing all employee-related items.

Mr. Brown described the handout, which included a breakdown of Employee Relations agenda items from before and after Act 10.

Ald. Hanson asked Ms. Aldana to describe the City's current retirement health benefits.

Ms. Aldana explained that there were modifications made to employee retirement benefits in 2008 and 2010. These changes created three separate employee groups that receive different retirement benefits. Prior to 2008, the City paid 100% of premium for all employees from eligibility, 15 years served and 55 years in age, up to age 65. In 2008, the benefits were modified to require all employees hired after 2008 to contribute approximately 50% of the health premium with the same eligibility requirements. In addition, a sick leave conversion for retiree premium costs was added in 2008 in lieu of the City's premium contribution. In 2010, another modification was made that required employees hired after September 1, 1991, and before 2008, to contribute 5% of premium.

Ald. Wilson remarked that this topic is an important one, but suggested that an across the Council discussion, including all Committees, may be necessary to make an informed and well vetted decision. He noted that Employee Relations seems disconnected from City budget and policy questions. City operations are taken care of by Staff, money and expenses are covered by Budget and Finance, and the remaining duties of the City are all marketing related. Simply put, these marketing duties are how the City treats employees, residents, and businesses. Items, like the 2010 ICMA report and fire department issue, highlight the need for marketing services. The Council must define how and why the City provides what it provides. Many issues covered in Committees spur policy issues and the Council has formed a bad habit of going to separate Committees for each item discussion, rather than marrying the two. As a separate committee, Employee Relations somewhat reinforces the bad habit of silo decision making when items of great fiscal impact are decided in isolation.

Ald. Berdan agreed with Ald. Wilson that the Employee Relations Committee is often attempting to create policy and faces efficiency issues due to their size.

After being prompted by the Chair for a broader scope opinion of committee structure, Ald. Berdan remarked that she would not suggest reducing the size of the Council, but may consider a change in the committee structure, possibly creating two large Committees, Finance and Internal Affairs, which would cover finance, licensing and legislation, and Development and Community Affairs, which would cover development, traffic and safety.

Ald. Causier noted that there is now an employee handbook, replacing union contracts, and the question remains if there should be more Council oversight, rather than less. She agreed with Ald. Wilson that issues that impact the City should be looked at from a bigger picture viewpoint.

Ald. Hanson stated that Police and Fire are still 45% of the City's budget. He noted that contract negotiations are often based on comparables, so the City does not have much control. While it is good to be proactive, he remarked that the City should wait to change the committee structure.

Ald. Wilson remarked that employee contracts are a prime reason to expand item review to a broader scope, rather than keep such significant items isolated in a single committee. To Ald. Berdan's committee structure idea, he added that committees could break off into smaller groups in order to thoroughly understand items that

require further discussion. He reiterated that the decision regarding the fate of Employee Relations must be decided from a broader point of view.

Ald. McBride commented that the idea of two large committees eliminates cross Council interaction and inhibits collegial spirit. The committee structure has changed over time, but the committee structure should allow enough interaction and discussion to generate a collegial atmosphere.

Responding to a question, Ms. Aldana stated that the Employee Relations Committee is not required by State Statute, but it is currently listed as a Council Standing Committee in City Ordinance.

Ald. Organ commented that committees may have life cycles. She opined that the current committee structure works well, but agreed with Ald. McBride that increased crossover between committees would benefit the Council as a whole. There may be additional employee issues due to the shift to an employee handbook, but changing committee structure is still a viable option. However, there is not a strong need to dissolve the Employee Relations Committee at this time.

There was consensus between members to continue discussion of this item at the next Employee Relations Committee meeting, March 11, 2014.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>HELD</b>	<b>Next: 3/11/2014 7:00 PM</b>
<b>TO:</b>	Employee Relations Committee	

2. \*Discussion of City Administrator's employment contract

Moved by Ald. Wilson, seconded by Ald. Berdan to convene into closed session per Wisconsin Statutes 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

Closed session convened at 7:50 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

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Carla A. Ledesma, CMC, City Clerk