

CITY OF NORWALK PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES

**CITY OF NORWALK
PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

JUNE 13, 2002

ATTENDANCE: Douglas Sutton, Chairman; Peter Wien, Barbara

Hudgins, Matt Miklave, Betsy Bain, Fred Bondi

(8:15 p.m.),

STAFF: Sara LeTourneau, Director of Personnel &

Labor Relations, John Schlosser,
Personnel Administrator

OTHERS: Art Scialabba, Ms. Diane Lauricella, Peter Romano, DPW, Assistant Director Operations, Ms. Maria Bryant.

PUBLIC HEARING

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing at 8:10 p.m. and asked those who wished to speak to identify themselves and speak on the subject at hand.

Mr. Scialabba opposed the increase of 3% for the Corporation Counsel that is a part-time position. The City Clerk who has already received a substantial increase when the Grants position was rolled into the City Clerk's position and will not be in that position for another five months should not be increased. Assistant to the Mayor is making \$79,000 and has only been employed from February 2002. He commented that these raises were pay back for political promises. He had no problem with other employees receiving increases for years of service but objected to people having raised with less than one year's service in the position they now hold.

Ms. Lauricella stated that the increase is not just a cost of living raise. She stated the system is broken and the Ordinance List is the broken portion. Her comment was not just about an increase, but who is receiving the increases. She felt it was a time to find out what the Council expects from the people in those positions. She stated that the previous administration did not demand accountability for individuals in the positions. She further commented that whether the job was well done or not the person was paid. She referred to the P&Z department as a broken part of the system. She felt it did not embrace suggestions from the public on getting people to come to public hearings on City building issues.

She further commented that the Personnel Department meetings where across the board raises were at issue was another poorly run area. She felt that there has been an unwillingness to perform the actions required for properly evaluating employee performance. She asked that there be personnel evaluations that would determine the performance of employees of this City. She further stated that the Committee asked to review evaluations and the information was not given. She stated that the ordinance gives the committee the right to review. She also noted that there should be evaluations of the long-term employees to review performance. She felt that if a director does not believe in evaluations, does not support the issue or make it move forward in a positive way, then she thought it was a problem and the individuals do not deserve to have a 3% increase.

She commented that the Director of Health has not serviced the public in a way they deserve and respect. She referenced the Hatch & Bailey noise and dust created by this business. She had two letters from the Springwood Association stating the situation and the neighbors feeling of not having been recognized for their complaints. She said the person in charge should be aware of what problems stone dust can cause to the citizens. The citizens have a right to have some input from the Health Department. It appears that there is a breakdown in the communication with the person in the position that is line for a raise of 3%.

Finally she commented that she wants things to be done fairly, not politically. As an advisor to local associations on environmental

issues she receives calls that should be handled by City employees.

Her reason for coming was to express that the system is broken and that this has to be put on the table prior to contract negotiations. She said accountability is not a negative, but will help the City employees to perform at their best. She asked that the system be made fair through the Personnel and Labor Relations Committee.

Ms. Bryant of Norwalk stated she got involved in saving 93 East Avenue and realized that there is a problem in the system. She stated that they are performance evaluations and performance maintenance. She said that people were working but did not know what the objective was. She stated a lot of research was done to save the building. She felt the public hearings are just a form of entertainment and is of no real valuation. She asked that the Committee consider creating a system that reinforces initiative, innovation and thinking beyond hitting the "wickets". She gave the Chairman a paper from North Carolina from a company that uses the "Balanced Score Card" to evaluate employees and uses salaries to achieve larger objectives.

The Chairman commented that public hearings are genuine and the Council does care about what citizens have to say on City matters. He said that what is said is not taken lightly and the citizens voted the individuals to run the City and that is what is to be done.

**** MR. BONDI MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.**

**** MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

The Chairman thanked the public for coming and closed the hearing at 8:35 p.m.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING

**** MR. MIKLAVE MOVED TO AMEND THE AGENDA TO**

**REFLECT THAT THE PUBLIC HEARING PRECEDED
THE CALL TO ORDER.**

**** MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 9, 2002

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

Page 1, "Others", the time the Mayor left the meeting was deleted

Page 1, paragraph 2, promoted should read demoted

Page 3, paragraph 7, line 1, Mr. Miklave should read Ms. Hudgins...she....; Committee should follow DPW

Page 5, paragraph 1, delete the last sentence of the motion beginning with the word "For..."

**** MR. MIKLAVE MOVED THE MINUTES AS AMENDED.**

**** MOTION APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE WITH TWO
ABSTENSIONS (MR. WEIN AND MR. BONDI)**

The March minutes are still not received. Ms. LeTourneau will continue to follow up on the minutes.

**DISCUSSION/ACTION ON ORDINANCE REVISION RELATIVE TO
THE SALARIES OF CERTAIN CITY OFFICIAL OF THE CITY OF
NORWALK**

**** MR. BONDI MOVED TO APPROVE A COST OF LIVING**

**INCREASE OF 3% FOR ORDINANCE LIST POSITIONS
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE FOLLOWING:**

**ASSISTANT TO THE MAYOR, CITY CLERK,
PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR, CORPORATION
COUNSEL, DIRECTOR PERSONNEL AND LABOR,
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC
WORKS.**

Mr. Miklave asked what the increase would be for the others on the list. Mr. Bondi explained that the Assistant to the Mayor, Corporation Counsel, and City Clerk are at 0% because they are brand new employees. The other positions also have no increase because of their activity since November and what has transpired in those departments. There has been an inability to manage the departments properly by these individuals.

Ms. Hudgins inquired what positions were part-time. Two were part-time one was full-time said Ms. LeTourneau.

Ms. Bain noted that the comment during the public hearing that the part-time increase of 3% would equal 6% was in error. She said that this calculation was based on a part-time salary not a full-time one and would not equal 6%.

Mr. Miklave stated that he was against the motion. He recalled that the Mayor asked that a 3% increase be made in conjunction with the NASA contractual agreements. The Mayor did not have the opportunity to go through each employee's evaluations prior to the position he took. He stated that the increase at this time for this administration is correct. He noted that the Assistant City Clerk would be receiving \$800 less than the City Clerk. By freezing the Corporation Counsel salary but increasing the Deputy Counsel salary, the Corporation Counsel is making \$40,000 less than the Deputy. He was reluctant to carve out certain positions and lock them in as it would be difficult to separate them out down the road.

Mr. Bondi replied that over several years of his being on this Committee the Corporation Counsel was not given a raise. The Deputy has been in position longer than 15 years therefore his salary amount is larger. Mr. Bondi stated that he recalled that the City Clerk is performing two jobs, Grants Co-ordinator and City Clerk. Ms. LeTourneau said she could not verify that statement as she does not perform payroll functions.

Mr. Miklave understood Mr. Bondi's position and felt there was a lot of merit to what he said. He felt that there is merit in the Mayor's position with respect to an across the board wage increase this one time only.

Mr. Bondi stated that since the Mayor gave reasons why appraisals were unavailable, he was only opposing a portion of the increased titles. He stated that an evaluation should be done properly to help improve performance or reward performance.

Ms. Bain expressed that she was frustrated being new in office and not having history or knowledge of the performance of the people on the list and in looking at the evaluations did not find the information very helpful. She feels the Committee has a lot of work to do. Raises should be given to keep people in the range and levels of performance. There should be ways to review how to reward individuals through bonuses, etc. She thought about giving the raise for only six months. This would help the Committee to evaluate and create goals by which people might be measured. She said she agreed with giving a raise in line with the NASA contract this one time only. She felt that there was not enough information presented to make a judgement on people. She said she might support the issue of not increasing those who have only been in their position a couple of months.

Mr. Wein commented that he agreed with Ms. Bain. He said he does not have the facts for himself. He would like to sit with the Committee and get up to speed on issues and get to the bottom of what has been heard. He found it difficult to increase individuals who have just come on board.

Ms. Hudgins inquired about the list she said did not reflect the most recent employees. Mr. Miklave stated that the Mayor did not intend to leave the individuals off the list. In light of that information the staff revised the list with the total cost of the increases. Ms. LeTourneau gave her an updated list.

Ms. Hudgins commented she felt very strongly that it should be said that this is a cost of living increase not a pay for performance. She also said that it has nothing to do with length of service as would be noted in a union contract. She said she would have thought that the new people would not be getting a raise in a few months. The balance of the list is OK

Mr. Miklave stated that he agreed with Ms. Hudgins to a cost of living increase that is not connected to performance. He felt that all should get it. He also stated that the salaries were set when the

Ordinance List was reviewed under the old administration. He commented that the current employee in the Corporation Counsel position has less buying power because of inflation. He felt that to live in Fairfield County a cost of living increase is needed. He felt that there is a lot of work to be put into the issue of these salaries. He suggested to Mr. Bondi to break his motion into two parts.

Ms. Bain said she felt very strongly that the Committee members need to identify what they will do in the future, obtain a comfort level, and determine the steps and ranges for these positions. She said as a Committee they must undertake the exercise to determine what is needed and not just accept what is recommended.

Mr. Wein agreed to being a cost of living increase and that the Committee must come to a decision how things will be handled going forward. He also agreed that those coming into a position that was pre-existing should not be penalized. He felt the Mayor's Assistant should be excluded from the increase because it is a newly created position.

Mr. Bondi stated that variable rates of increase were given. He said that subordinates making more money than supervisors is not a good barometer to make decisions of increase on. Some of the individuals have been in the City for many years and have higher salaries. He restated that new people coming into a position and getting a raise in less than six months did not seem reasonable. He said they should not be guaranteed a raise because the cost of living has increased. If they did not perform well, they should not receive a raise. The Committee was elected to look out for the citizens of Norwalk. He said they should not receive an increase if they are not performing up to par.

Ms. Hudgins inquired whether the pay for the positions were that of the person who last held the position. Ms. LeTourneau stated there are no ranges for the Ordinance List. With that information Mr. Miklave stated that there is a need to investigate this and make changes.

Ms. Bain stated she could not make judgement now due to lack of personal experience and knowledge or documentation that was not available previously.

Mr. Wein agreed and said it is very confusing as to who should get an increase and who should not.

Mr. Romano said that as President of the Assistants and Supervisors Association, the reason for the Supervisors Union is because of discussions like this one tonight. The Ordinance List has typically followed NASA and given cost of living raises. The Mayor is the evaluating authority of Ordinance employees who report directly to him. He stated it is not fair for the Committee to have to pass based on a lack of an evaluation when it is just a cost of living increase. He said the long-term employees will get a slap in the face if they do not get a cost of living increase.

Ms. Hudgins asked how the Assistant to Mayor salary was set. Ms. LeTourneau stated this Committee set the salary based on a recommendation from the Mayor.

**** MOTION FAILED BY VOICE VOTE WITH FIVE VOTES IN
OPPOSITION AND ONE IN FAVOR.**

**** MR. MIKLAVE MOVED TO APPROVE THE ORDINANCE LIST
AS PUBLISHED WITH A THREE (3) PERCENT COST OF
LIVING INCREASE EXCLUDING THE MAYOR, TOWN
CLERK, AND THE TWO REGISTRAR OF VOTERS.**

Mr. Bondi commented that the individuals only get a raise every two years. Ms. LeTourneau explained the criteria surrounding the increases for these individuals.

Ms. Hudgins asked about the Assistant to the Mayor position being eliminated from the list. Mr. Miklave restated that he just came on board in February of 2002 at a salary of \$79,000.

**** MR. WEIN MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION TO EXCLUDE
THE ASSISTANT TO THE MAYOR POSITION.**

**** AMENDMENT PASSED WITH FIVE VOTES IN FAVOR, ONE VOTE
IN OPPOSITION (MR. MIKLAVE)..**

Ms. Bain again inquired whether the City Clerk has had a pay increase due to increased responsibility of handling the Grant Coordinator work. Ms. LeTourneau stated she had no knowledge of any increase or change in work responsibility through her office.

**** MOTION PASSED AS AMENDED WITH FIVE VOTES IN FAVOR, ONE IN OPPOSITION (MR. BONDI).**

The Chairman summarized the work that needs to be done by this Committee.

Ms. Hudgins stated that the Mayor wants to have a new system to evaluate employees. The Committee needs to find out where that system is coming from as it does not exist now. She further stated the reorganization of the City Hall departments will be another challenge for this Committee. She further commented that it was a surprise that there are no ranges for the Ordinance List . She noted that other employees under the Step System after five years only receive a cost of living increase, not a raise.

Ms. Bain suggested that the Chairman and Ms. LeTourneau prepare information and set up meetings for handling the issues that the Committee needs to address.

RECLASSIFICATION-ENGINEER POSITION - PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Mr. Peter Romano stated that he met with the Department of Public Works who was in favor of the change and sent a letter to the Chairman of this Committee for this recommendation.

Ms. LeTourneau stated that there is a new job description.

**** MS. BAIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE RECLASSIFICATION OF THE ASSISTANT ENGINEER POSITION, GRADE 5 TO A STRUCTURAL ENGINEER POSITION, GRADE 8.**

Mr. Miklave inquired about the figures that were submitted and how they affect the City budget. Mr. Roman said this structural engineer will be used for bridge analysis, not design bridges. Mr.

Miklave inquired whether a special appropriation would be requested if a bridge effort was needed. Mr. Romano stated it would be a whole new issue. There is a savings with this change for regular City business.

Mr. Romano stated that he lost his current employee to the private sector. To replace him he is requesting a structural engineer who has more ability than the one that has left.

Mr. Miklave stated that he does not anticipate that he will see \$27,000 spent on the outside to a contracted engineering company. His vote is based on a wash or minimal outlay of dollars for consultants.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PERSONNEL HANDBOOK & PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

**** MR. MIKLAVE MOVED TO TABLE PERSONNEL HANDBOOK AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. LeTourneau stated that the Committee must be specific on what formats they wish to follow. They also must determine what they want to have done about ranges for the Ordinance List that does not exist. She stated she will set up a timetable of meetings to discuss evaluation formats.

Mr. Bondi suggested a special meeting just for evaluations to have plenty of time to go through the format. Mr. Bondi said that if any member have an evaluation from the private sector that might be of benefit to bring it with them. Mr. Miklave stated that July is a vacation month and possibly the Committee should meet again this month for a special meeting.

The Committee will hold a special meeting on Monday, June 17, 2002, at 7:00 p.m. - Room 123.

Any Other Business

There was no other business.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. BONDI MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alvina L. Richardson Decker

Telesco Secretarial Services

