

MINUTES

**1. CONVENE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING**

Mayor Labadie called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

**A. Roll Call**

Present. Mayor Labadie; Councilmembers Johnson, Labadie, Siakel, Gorham, and Callies; City Attorney Shepherd; Interim City Administrator Shukle; City Clerk/HR Director Thone; Finance Director Rigdon; Planning Director Darling; Director of Public Works Brown; and, City Engineer Budde

Absent: None

**B. Review Agenda**

**Callies moved, Siakel seconded, approving the agenda as presented. All in favor, motion passed 5/0.**

**2. ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT REORGANIZATION**

Interim City Administrator Shukle noted that another Council packet had been left on the dais prior to the meeting because some of the copies that were sent out in the original packet had not copied correctly. He gave an overview of past discussions regarding a proposed reorganization plan for the Administration Department which came about as a result of the resignation of former Communications/Recycling Coordinator Julie Moore. He noted that when this was brought up to the Council the direction was to hold more detailed discussion at a Work Session which is why it was on tonight's agenda. He reviewed the various options and possible reorganization that he and City Clerk/HR Director Thone had considered for filling this vacancy and explained that their proposal would allow for advancement for some existing employees. He explained that the intent was not for the proposed changes to seem rushed and apologized if that was the impression the Council had received. He stated that they were trying to address the workload of the Administration Department and explained that staff was stretched thin right now. He noted that if the City does not opt to move forward with this reorganization plan, the City Council will have to consider posting the Communications/Recycling Coordinator position. He stated that staff feels the proposed reorganization is a good plan and noted that the overall budget impact is just a bit over \$11,000.

Mayor Labadie thanked Interim City Administrator Shukle and City Clerk/HR Director Thone for the time that they have put into this proposal. She asked that Council focus their discussion on giving staff direction on this proposal. She stated that at the last Council meeting, the Council had given additional direction to staff to allow an existing staff member to pick up more hours but noted that they did not specify the rate of pay/compensation and those actions ended up causing stress amongst the office staff. She stated that what has been presented appears to be an all or nothing kind of reorganization and affects four members of the current staff and one vacancy

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which is essentially one-fifth of the City's staff. She expressed her concern with the possible restructure and shift in the job duties and noted that she was not sure that the existing employees wanted this change or not. She reviewed some of the duties and actions for the vacant position that need to be addressed in a timely manner such as grant processing, newsletter, City website and social media commentary. She asked that the Council be delicate with their comments since this includes current and former staff members.

Councilmember Callies stated that her initial concerns about this proposal are that she does not think the Council has much more information than they were presented with at the Council meeting when it was first brought up and was surprised to see it back on the agenda so soon because she thought the Council had given direction for this to come back to the table when the new City Administrator is on board. She stated that this is a major reorganization that involves a lot of staff members and while she thinks it is a good idea to give opportunities for people to be able to move up through the City's system, she remains concerned about the process. She noted that the information shared by Mayor Labadie regarding the duties and actions that need to be addressed for the vacant position, have not been shared prior to this evening.

Mayor Labadie noted that another thing to keep in mind is that there was one front desk member out on medical leave followed by the election and staff has stepped up and filled in the gaps. She stated that she is worried about staff feeling burnt out.

Councilmember Gorham stated that with the City so close to having a new City Administrator, he feels that both he and Councilmember Callies feel that it made sense to wait to consider this change until that individual could be involved. He stated that there is the possible thought process that it may be better for the Council to take a look at this in order not to place the new City Administrator in the position of being the 'bad guy' without knowing the employees and the full situation yet.

Councilmember Callies stated that also brings to mind the point that the Council had discussed having the new City Administrator start sooner and explained that she was not sure why there is a delay.

Mayor Labadie asked that the Council keep their comments related to this issue.

Councilmember Callies explained that she feels the two are related because of the timing. She noted that if the new City Administrator was able to start a few weeks earlier, then some of this could be dealt with then.

Councilmember Siakel stated that one thing she feels has not changed is the population of the City. She stated that she is not sure what things staff has been working on that has them so overwhelmed, but acknowledged that there have been a lot of data requests that have come in. She stated that she believes the issue of burn out can be found across the board in just about every industry and noted that, to her, this proposal seems very complicated for something that should be pretty simple. She stated that the people that are at the front desk are the face of Shorewood and all residents really want is a smile and someone who is helpful. She does not think having two people up there that are really entrenched should ever change. She noted that she was concerned that this proposed reorganization dilutes the responsibilities of the Communications person. She noted that if Miechelle wanted to become full-time she did not understand why she would not just apply for this vacant position. She stated that when the City made the change to have more of an HR function with the City Clerk position was because of

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past problems with records and was not intended to have an HR Administrator function. She stated that she needs a more convincing explanation of 'why' the City should make these changes and noted that she does think the compensation issue needs to be a separate issue from the overall organization. She explained that she appreciated the thought and work that has gone into this proposal, but does not understand why the City needs it. She stated that the one thing she knows that has changed is the amount of data requests that have come into the City, so she would understand if that is where the workload issue has come into play. She noted that she also did not want to diminish the role of the Communications person because she thinks it is important and is very resident facing.

Councilmember Johnson stated that he agreed and noted that one thing he feels has shifted is where people get their information which is often times from social media. He stated that, to him, puts even more importance on this role moving forward.

Mayor Labadie stated that she agreed and feels the voice of the City needs to come from the City and not all of them just chiming in, which means there needs to be someone central to the City that is maintaining the social media presence.

Councilmember Callies stated that the Council is discussing this at a Work Session, but are essentially spinning their wheels because they have not heard from the various department heads to really hear the facts, the needs, and what people are actually doing. She stated that she would agree with the sentiment that has been shared that communications is a very important issue and reiterated that she felt the new City Administrator should weigh in on this proposed reorganization.

Councilmember Gorham stated that this is the same information that was presented last time. He noted that the Council was struggling to understand how the pieces come together and the question of whether this was the best way to organize the office.

Councilmember Siakel stated that she thinks one question that can be answered tonight is whether the Council feels the communications role is one that should stay in tact and if so, they should give direction to re-hire for that position.

Councilmember Gorham noted that it just seems like there are a lot of 'pans on the stove' with the proposed reorganization and noted that the pay changes have not yet been studied.

Councilmember Siakel noted that she did not have a problem with the proposed compensation increase, but was not sure how they got to that amount. She noted that in the past the compensation increases have somewhat mirrored what had been given to Public Works because they are unionized and asked if this proposal meant that they would deviate from that practice.

Councilmember Gorham stated that he would be fine with a compensation study but this is one that is just being proposed for this department and questioned the fairness of that approach.

Mayor Labadie noted that she thinks the Council had already requested a compensation study to be presented at the annual retreat.

Councilmember Callies asked about the logic of combining the communications and recycling duties.

City Clerk/HR Director Thone stated that she believes that the position just transformed over time and those things just happened to be strengths of Julie Moore so she took them on. She agreed that these two things were not something typically seen together, but unless it is a very large city, they do see a lot of other positions taking on the recycling duties because it is not typically a full-time job. She noted that Julie Moore was present tonight and could probably answer in greater detail.

Julie Moore explained that back in the day, there was a lot of communications people who also took on the role of recycling coordinator. She stated that since she had knowledge in both areas, combining of those duties just sort of came about.

Councilmember Callies stated that she agreed with Councilmember Siakel's statements on the need for a communications position and asked how that would affect the ability to promote employees internally. She asked if the issue for employees was the pay or if it was the job duties.

City Clerk/HR Director Thone stated that they just really felt this was an opportunity to recognize the hard working staff members. She noted that they felt it was a time to advance these individuals at a time when the City was losing people. She explained that she was open to the Council's direction and agreed that the communications role is very important for the City. She stated that the proposed changes are not due to self-interest and explained that she would be fine if her position and pay were left exactly the same but could not find a way to advance these other individuals without bumping herself up as well. She stated that due to the vacancies with the City Administrator, Communications/Recycling Coordinator, the Parks and Recreation Director, and someone on a six week medical leave, staff has taken on additional work and are pretty over taxed.

Councilmember Callies stated that with the new Parks and Recreation Director coming on board that should offer some relief.

Councilmember Gorham stated that it is hard to tell from the information that has been given to the Council if this proposal is actually what would be best for the City or if going outside to fill the Communications/Recycling Coordinator position would be best.

Councilmember Callies stated that her understanding was that even though the Council had given direction to offer Michelle additional hours, she was not interested in doing that at her existing rate of pay.

City Clerk/HR Director Thone stated that she had not spoken directly with Michelle about this, but when this plan was proposed, she was interested, if it was a promotional opportunity for her.

Mayor Labadie noted that she had raised the idea of filling some of these gaps with a temporary employee, however, City Clerk/HR Director Thone had expressed concern about the amount of training it would take to get that person up to speed and would still need to address the gap in the day to day issues.

Councilmember Callies asked if the day to day gap was primarily in the recycling and communications duties.

Mayor Labadie stated that she was not sure, but it did raise red flags for her when she found out that there were grants that had deadlines.

Councilmember Siakel asked if Bolton and Menk had individuals that work with grants so if the City needed any extra help if this may be available from them.

City Engineer Budde stated that Bolton and Menk works with a variety of grants and could assist the City, if necessary.

Councilmember Siakel stated that there are a lot of changes in this proposal that add a lot of extra layers and explained that she did not think the City needs to add the extra positions and extra layers. She stated that if they truly want to change the organization structure of the City, she feels that needs to be a much longer conversation. She noted that if she were a new City Administrator coming on board, she would want to be able to have her finger on how City Hall is run. She stated that the questions she thinks the Council needs to consider are: whether they want to wait for the new City Administrator to have input; do they want to change and add these layers; and whether they want to rehire for this existing position and if so, that it be posted.

Councilmember Johnson stated that he is in favor of posting the Communications/Recycling Coordinator position in order to see what kind of applicants the City may get and noted that he would put particular emphasis on the communications and social media aspect of the job.

***There was consensus of the Council to post the existing Communications/Recycling Coordinator position, with the current job description, as written.***

Mayor Labadie asked City Clerk/HR Director Thone whether, now that the elections are over and the medical leave individual has returned, whether the duties can be fulfilled along with the front desk duties if this position can be filled in a standard time frame.

City Clerk/HR Director Thone explained that staff would continue to do pretty much what they have been doing. She stated that they would be doing a bit of 'triage' and handling the most important communications and keeping up with plugging the holes on the website the best they can. She stated that she has handled recycling grants in the past with other cities and thinks that she should be able to step in and handle those for the City. She stated that there are things that will just need to be reprioritized, but some things may not get done, for example, they were not planning on doing the next newsletter because there is not enough staff.

Councilmember Siakel stated that if there are things that cannot get done, staff needs to communicate with the Council so they can give direction to address them, for example, getting help with the grants.

Julie Moore explained that there is a water efficiency grant will be due at the end of January and gave an overview of the process staff has used in the past. She noted that the grant for the recycling will be due in February.

Mayor Labadie asked if she could think of anything else from her former duties that has a deadline.

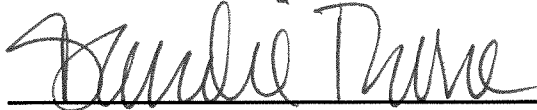
Ms. Moore explained that those two are the big 'money' things and the other things would only be things like the ten day notices for ordinances that need to go out via e-mail.


Mayor Labadie applauded staff for their outside of the box thinking and thanked the Council for their professional discussion of the issue.

3. ADJOURN

Johnson moved, Siakel seconded, Adjourning the City Council Work Session Meeting of November 14, 2022, at 6:48 P.M. Motion passed 5/0.

ATTEST:

  
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Sandie Thone, City Clerk

  
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Jennifer Labadie, Mayor