

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
October 22, 2012
City Hall – 1st Floor Conference Room #111 - West

Finance Chairperson Scott McMeans called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM

Present: Alderpersons Scott McMeans, Christopher Able, Eric Sitkiewitz, James Brey & Collin Braunel (7:13)

Absent: None

Also Present: Mayor Justin Nickels, Alderpersons Jill Hennessey (7:08) and Jason Sladky, Assistant Finance Director/Treasurer Tony Scherer, Fire Chief Bill Manis, Deputy Fire Chief Gregg Kadow, Deputy Fire Chief Todd Blaser, Director of Public Works & City Engineer Val Mellon, City Planner Dave Less, Building Inspector Rick Schwarz, Plumbing Inspector Bill Jindra, Emergency Government Coordinator Tim Herzog and one public employee.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Alderperson Sitkiewitz, second by Alderperson Able to approve the minutes of the October 15th, 2012 Finance Committee meeting, the October 15th, 2012 Joint Finance & Public Property & Safety Committee meeting and the October 17th, 2012 Finance Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

Public Input

No public input was presented.

DPW (Streets)/Park/Rec & Cemetery Compensation Levels for 2013

Alderman McMeans invited Mayor Nickels to the table to explain his rationale for proposing a single, uniform base pay rate for laborers in the Public Works, Parks, Recreation and Cemetery divisions. The Committee and Mayor then had a lengthy discussion on positions, job descriptions, longevity pay, position qualifications and the degree to which different duties and skill sets constitute a different position. The conversation continued with the topic of job descriptions and how to structure them so that they are not too general or too narrow, defining at what point special skills or education establish a separate position.

Motion by Alderperson Able, second by Alderperson Brey to restore the pay rates to 2012 levels for all but one employee to the 2013 Proposed City Budget by a total of \$15,815.

Further discussion regarding the motion continued. Director of Public Works & City Engineer Val Mellon was recognized by the Chair. Director Mellon proposed a solution to offset the reinstatement of the wages by using the funding for a budgeted position that the Streets Committee had voted not to replace. The remainder of budgeted wages could be used to hire temporary employees during demanding work periods. The Committee then took up the discussion of her proposal.

Alderman Brey proposed amending the motion to include Director Mellon's proposal. After some further discussion and deliberation Alderperson Brey rescinded his

amendment. The Committee discussed the Director's proposal a bit further. Alderman Brey put his amendment on hold and it was established that Director Mellon's suggestion could be taken up later as a separate issue.

Chairman McMeans then called for the vote on the original motion. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

The Committee then discussed the issue surrounding the assistant operations manager-laborer position. The Committee discussed the position and the previous, current and future duties of the position. Alderperson Brey requested a breakdown of hours spent performing laborer duties as compared to other managerial duties. The discussion continued whether the employee was classified properly and doing the work required of the position.

Motion by Alderman Able to reinstate the assistant operations manager/general laborer at their previous rate of pay and make the position status exempt. Motion died for lack of a second.

The Committee concluded that the employee should continue as a general laborer and no longer be assigned other tasks by the department that are not included in the job description for this position. The Committee members further deliberated the issue and decided to reconsider the issue at a later date with additional information from the Department of Public Works.

Planning/Inspection Department Staffing and 2013 Budget Funding Levels

Chairman McMeans called City Planner Dave Less to present his request to the Committee. Less passed out a document illustrating an increase in 2012 revenue collections, that combined with the reduction in expenses in the Building Inspection division would pay for the position being requested. Discussion followed in reference to the duties and responsibilities of the requested position, the possibility of lost revenues due to short staffing, a hiring lag in the first year of the position and the time inspectors spend each day where their professional skill set isn't required.

Some members of the Committee expressed a reluctance to move forward with this request until they have had a chance to see and review all the departmental requests. One suggestion was that the sustainability of the position would be subject to the additional revenue stream that could be generated.

City of Manitowoc 2013 Proposed Budget Discussions

Fire Chief Bill Manis was invited to complete his presentation for alternative solutions to the cuts proposed by the Mayor in the 2013 Fire Department Budget. Chief Manis displayed a video illustrating the speed at which a home fire, from its inception, can totally consume a room. The Chief went on to provide the Committee with a spreadsheet illustrating his recommendations for reaching the reductions being asked for within the 2013 Budget. The Committee questioned and discussed a number of the Chiefs suggestions. The Chief went on to provide his rational for the reinstatement of a number of other capital and operational items to the Fire Department Budget including overtime, pager pay, equipment repair, firefighter stress tests, breathing air, a portable repeater, and fire hose.

Alderman McMeans then invited Mayor Nickels to the table to provide his suggestions for possible solutions to the Fire Department reductions in the 2013 Proposed Budget. Passing out a PowerPoint presentation, the Mayor then proceeded to point out some aspects of the chief's proposal that he felt were not advisable. These included carrying

expense balances forward to 2013 leaving a structural imbalance in 2014 and decreasing the 2012 fund balance, overtime in the Chief's proposal had already been cut in the Mayor's budget and therefore not available for further reduction, the contribution to health insurance is only 2.5% as firefighters were already paying 10%, and the firefighters support of their retirement (2%) was offset by an equal increase in pay.

The Mayor then proposed some of his ideas. One suggestion was to use the \$50,000 placed in the general fund for the replacement of the ambulance and add the full cost of the ambulance to the note/bond issue. He also suggested the selling or eliminating under-utilized ambulances and not hire anyone for the 2012 resigned position. The savings could then be carried forward and combined with the 2013 savings for that position. Not filling two other positions in 2013 would save additional dollars and eliminate three positions through attrition. The Mayor concluded with the suggestion that the Deputy Fire Chief be trained and used for code enforcement in Building Inspection.

The Mayor then provided two alternatives to his proposals. One idea provided would be to eliminate only lower level firefighters which would require further reductions in staff and cause safe staffing issues. The second alternative would be to close or partially close a fire station. The Mayor explained some of the attributes and drawbacks to each option. The Committee then asked questions and discussed the options proposed by the Mayor. The discussion included changes to response times, personnel reductions through attrition and home owner insurance savings. The Committee requested the Mayor and Chief return to a later meeting and present further information on the issues discussed.

The Committee then set the next meeting for October 29th, 2012 at 5:00 PM.

Motion by Alderperson Sitkiewitz, second by Alderperson Able to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. Chairman McMeans declared the meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alderman Scott McMeans
By: Anthony Scherer
Assistant Finance Director

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