

MINUTES OF GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING  
EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM  
January 28, 2016, 8:30 a.m.

Committee Members present:      Councilor Jennifer Soldati, Chair  
   Councilor Martin Dumont, Vice Chair  
   Councilor Nancie Cameron  
   Councilor Jessica Paradis

Administration/Staff present:      City Manager, Bob Belmore  
   Human Resource Manager, Linda Corriveau  
   Planning Secretary, Tracy Gora

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Councilor Soldati called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Motion made by Councilor Soldati, seconded by Councilor Cameron, to accept the minutes of the meeting of November 4, 2015 as presented. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 4-0.

OVERVIEW OF CITY PERSONNEL POSITIONS BY DEPARTMENT

City Manager Belmore passed out the Employee Breakdown by Department form and stated that a new vacancy is the Director of Planning and Community Development. Stated that this list was compiled a few months ago and it is a breakdown of City employees. Stated that there are 94 full time, 9 part time and around 30 seasonal employees.

Councilor Soldati confirmed that there are only two people running Channel 22.

City Manager Belmore stated that Director of Finance Smith is the IT guy and works with Backbay Networks on the City's computer needs and networking. Stated that he recruits through the school department to use high school students to operate Channel 22 meetings. Stated that the students move on so there are often new students working but there are always quality students coming through. Stated that there is a part time employee, Colby Clark that works with Director Smith to assist with the operation of the government channel 22. Councilor Paradis asked if the costs for Channel 22 are split with the school department.

City Manager Belmore stated that the City pays the costs through the cable franchisee fees collected. Stated that Human Resource Manager Corriveau prepared the handout and stated that she keeps everything organized. Stated that recently a police officer left the City and went to a federal job with the ATF Bureau.

Councilor Soldati asked if the Facilities Manager, Andy Lucier, is shared between the City and the school.

City Manager Belmore stated that he is full time with the school department and that there is a contract agreement with the City for his services. Stated that the City only has a part time custodian that does City Hall, the Library and the Public Works Department and a part time custodian that does the Police Department.

Councilor Paradis stated that there will be long term cost saving.

Councilor Paradis stated that Lucier has been great at the school level.

City Manager Belmore offered a summary of other needs at various departments to include fire, police, city hall and highway.

Councilor Paradise asked how the employee numbers compare to last year.

City Manager Belmore stated that it has been very static because there is already a very thin staffing level. Stated that some changes include changing the part time Property Maintenance Officer position to full time and adding a Human Resources position. Stated that they have a new police officer position through a grant.

Councilor Soldati stated that the City has to pay for that officer after five years.

### PERSONNEL VACANCIES

Councilor Soldati stated that one vacancy coming up is the Police Chief and asked what the process will be to hire a new one.

City Manager Belmore stated that the specifics are not finalized and he is still working on the process.

Councilor Soldati stated that it is difficult to fill a position that has been held by one person for 40 years and that it is going to be a challenge for anyone taking the position. Stated that there is a consideration to bring in an outside company to oversee the process.

City Manager Belmore stated that it is a company that he has used in the past and feels comfortable with.

Councilor Paradis stated that she feels that hiring internally is imperative because it needs to be someone who knows the City very well.

Councilor Soldati asked when the City wants to have a new Chief hired. Stated that Chief Crombie is done at the end of May.

Councilor Dumont stated that using an outside consultant is a good idea.

## PROPOSED CHANGES TO ADMINISTRATIVE CODE & PERSONNEL PLAN

Councilor Soldati stated that this topic came up at the last meeting and that these are issues that Belmore would like us to take a look at.

City Manager Belmore stated that a few items have come up in the Administrative Code such as the heads of Police and Fire and Public Works Director needing to live within the community within 180 days of appointment unless excused by the City Council upon recommendation of the City Manager. Stated that the Public Works Director presently was allowed to live within 30 miles of the City. The suggested change was to eliminate the requirement for the Public Works Director to reside within the City.

Human Resource Manager Corriveau stated that she checked with other local communities such as Dover, Durham, Rochester and Portsmouth and that they only require the City Manager to live within the community, not their department heads.

City Manager Belmore stated that the Director of Finance and the Director of Planning & Community Development don't have residency requirements.

Councilor Soldati stated that this is 2016 and everyone is mobile and can communicate quickly. Stated that she feels that this is a constraint from hiring the most qualified candidate and that she feels that way for all department heads. There was discussion by the Committee to also eliminate the requirement for the police and fire chiefs to live in the City.

City Manager Belmore stated that there are response time restrictions for some positions and Human Resource Manager Corriveau explained those requirements for certain public works and utility employees.

Councilor Dumont stated that this residency requirement seems archaic in nature and that Somersworth should be more like other communities.

Motion made by Councilor Dumont, seconded by Councilor Cameron, to amend the Administrative Code regarding residency requirements & to eliminate this residency restriction for the heads of Police, Fire and Public Works.

City Manager Belmore asked if the amendment is that they all live within 30 miles?.

Councilor Dumont stated that it is to just use discretion and not have a specific radius.

Councilor Cameron stated that applicants will consider distance when applying for a job.

Motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

City Manager Belmore stated that this will be a proposed ordinance change at the second City Council meeting in February. Stated that the next item is to take out the reference to the

Personnel Plan in Section 1.b so that it covers all department heads as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Motion made by Councilor Dumont, seconded by Councilor Cameron to accept the changes as suggested. Motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

City Manager Belmore stated that the next change is regarding funding for national training conferences and seminars not more than once every five years and that it has to be approved by the City Manager. Discussion to eliminate “once in every five years” and to insert “without approval of the City Manager”.

Motion made by Councilor Cameron, seconded by Councilor Paradis to accept the change as suggested. Motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

City Manager Belmore stated that the next proposed changes are to the Personnel Rules & Regulations. Stated that the first one is regarding vacations and exempt employees. Stated that the regulations indicate that everyone starts with one week vacation but that it can sometimes be difficult to get qualified candidates with only one week. Stated that he would like to add a section to the regulations allowing him to approve additional vacation time for recruitment purposes.

Councilor Soldati stated that she is totally in support of this and also the next section to allow people to carry over vacation time.

City Manager Belmore stated that there have been employees who have lost their time off because they are unable to use it all. Stated that he is suggesting that they can carry over time that cannot be used or be allowed to cash out up to five days.

Councilor Soldati stated that she doesn't want people carrying over a lot of time and that there should be a limit.

City Manager Belmore stated that another amendment is that the extra days that employees with over ten years employment can earn is limited to 30.

Motion made by Councilor Paradis, seconded by Councilor Cameron, to accept the suggested changes to Section 7.6 of the Personnel Rules & Regulations regarding vacation carryover and limiting extra earned vacation days to 30 as written below. Motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

For recruitment purposes of exempt employees the City Manager may approve additional days of vacation taking into consideration years of service or previous experience.

Exempt employees may carryover or cashout up to 5 days (40 hours) vacation time with prior City Manager approval.

City Manager Belmore stated that the final proposed amendment has to do with employee suspension. Stated that this is a joint opinion with Director of Finance Smith and Human

Resource Manager Corriveau that only the City Manager should have the authority to suspend employees, not department heads.

Human Resource Manager Corriveau stated that City staff is small and that there can be legal problems if the City Manager and the Human Resource Manager are not involved with suspensions and firing.

Motion made by Councilor Dumont, seconded by Council Paradis, to accept the suggested change giving sole authority to suspend employees to the City Manager. Motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

None.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Councilor Dumont, seconded by Councilor Paradis, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried with a 4-0 vote and the meeting adjourned at 9:31 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Tracy Gora, Planning Secretary