



MINUTES OF AN OFFICIAL MEETING:

Regular / Special Meeting: Human Resources and Public Safety Committee

Date and Time: Wednesday, September 29, 2021 at 7:00 P.M.

Location: City Hall, North Conference Room, 2000 North Calhoun Road

Members Present: Alderman and Chairman Bob Reddin, Alderman Gary Mahkorn, Alderman Scott Berg, Alderman Rick Owen, and Alderman Kathryn Wilson.

Members Excused: None.

Others Present: Human Resources Director James Zwerlein, Finance and Administration Director Robert Scott, Fire Chief Dave Mason, and Assistant Fire Chief Brian Gerner.

1. Roll Call

After noting a quorum was present, Chairman Reddin called the Human Resources and Public Safety Committee to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Announcements

Chairman Reddin stated the next meeting of the Human Resources and Public Safety Committee will be held on October 13, 2021 at 7:00p.m., if needed.

3. Minutes of the September 7, 2021 Meeting

Alderman Berg pointed out an apparent discrepancy in the minutes which listed a 7:00 p.m. start time. The correct start time was 6:15 p.m. Director Zwerlein stated a correction will be made in the published minutes, and with that understanding:

Alderman Wilson moved to approve the Minutes of the September 7, 2021 meeting, as amended. Seconded by Alderman Mahkorn. Motion carried 5-0.

4. Human Resources and Public Safety Committee Item

2021 Year-to-Date Review of Health Insurance Experience.

Director Zwerlein presented the Executive Summary contained in the Data Dashboard report provided by the City's Insurance consultant, Willis, Inc. Through August 2021, the health plan ran at 112.2% of budgeted accrual, which is a reduction of 4.2% from July's report. The number of claimants above 50% of the \$100k specific stop-loss deductible for the current calendar year has remained at fifteen (15) as well. He stated the Committee will have an extensive discussion and evaluation of the health plan at its next meeting.

No action taken.

5. Common Council Items

- a. Resolution approving the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency (SAFER) grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

After distributing the Fire Chief's memo regarding how the grant developed, Director Zwerlein initiated the discussion by outlining the human resources aspects associated with accepting the award. He stated the City is well positioned from a staffing process standpoint to fill the nine (9) firefighter positions throughout the performance period of the grant. He also stated that acceptance of the grant award will require the City to negotiate its impact on wages, hours, and working conditions of employees represented by the firefighters' union.

Fire Chief Mason presented an overview and historical summary of the rationale surrounding application for these federal funds. He stated that former Chief Myers identified that the City's staffing model does not meet the 2020 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for fire incidents. While ambulance services have become the Department's core business, there is a current elevated firefighting risk, because to achieve adequate personnel for major fire incidents mutual aid is required. The SAFER grant was viewed as an opportunity to address this risk, with the understanding that the Department has not increased staffing since 1995, despite a rise in calls for service. Chairman Reddin asked, if in the absence of the grant is the City facing an unacceptable risk? Fire Chief Mason responded that the Department receives an average of 4,500 calls per year of which the vast majority are EMS, due to the current trend of the elderly-disabled remaining at home rather than transitioning to nursing homes. The amount of fire incidents, however, has not risen.

Finance and Administration Director distributed the activity report that was provided in the grant application. He stated that, given that we're looking at a total of nine (9) positions, it would mean an additional employee on each of the three (3) crews on each of the three (3) shifts. Accordingly, this will not speed up response times, however, there is substantial opportunity to reduce outlays for overtime compensation, because the additional staff member would cut against dipping below minimum shift staffing levels due to sick calls and other unanticipated absences.

Alderman Berg wondered why Brookfield was awarded such largess and Milwaukee, presumably in greater need, didn't receive anything. Alderman Mahkorn expressed shock that Brookfield received this but also mentioned that Milwaukee receives a lot of federal funds, as well. Alderman Berg asked rhetorically, "Do we really need this?" Director Scott replied the stated purpose of the grant is to rehire laid-off firefighters and to promote safety of firefighters. Additional firefighters will enhance safety.

Alderman Reddin asked about the size of the current overtime budget in the Fire Department. Director Scott stated that for next year we're looking at approximately \$359k.

Alderman Mahkorn asked, "Chief, where is your gut on this?" Fire Chief Mason responded that he sees both sides of the issue. Ultimately, it always comes down to dollars vs. risks. This will enhance our ability to maintain well-qualified staff and ensure retirees are replaced immediately by fully qualified individuals. We have a somewhat older department, with a median age in the mid-forties. An added benefit, however, is that during the three (3) year performance period, this will facilitate exploring different service modalities or perhaps intergovernmental collaboration. Even a fourth (4th) ambulance could be considered during peak timeframes.

Alderman Berg stated he is ready to support accepting the grant. Chairman Reddin stated he's not there yet. He further stated this focuses on the fire side of things, when our growth has been in EMS. Three (3) years from now when the grant funds are depleted we may have nine (9) extra employees we cannot afford. Alderman Owen added that since 2002, there has been an increase in EMS calls.

The City's population is aging. Given that we may have a hole to fill in three (3) years, - "Do we really need this?"

Assistant Fire Chief Gerner stated that, from his perspective, the potential for layoffs three (3) years from now shouldn't be controlling. There will be a fair amount of retirements, and those laid-off, if necessary, will have recall rights under the labor agreement for future vacancies the City decides to fill; therefore, the nine (9) jobs created by the grant will be attractive development opportunities to candidates.

Alderman Wilson stated that she doesn't have any trouble with this. In the worst case scenario, we have three (3) good years. We need to trust the leaders we've charged with these responsibilities. I have no interest in micromanaging the Department, and if moving in this direction forces difficult decisions down the road, so what? That's what we're here for.

Alderman Berg moved to approve the resolution approving the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency (SAFER) grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Seconded by Alderman Mahkorn. Motion carried 3-2 with Alderman Reddin and Alderman Owen voting against.

Finance and Administration Director Robert Scott, Fire Chief Dave Mason, and Assistant Fire Chief Brian Gerner left the meeting at 8:36 P.M.

- b. Resolution approving the 2022 Dental Insurance Program.

Director Zwerlein presented the renewal quote from Delta Dental, Inc., representing a zero increase in costs for 2022. The staff recommendation is to renew with Delta for 2022, as it is the preferred provider for dental insurance amongst City of Brookfield employees, with an expansive network of providers at a cost that will remain reasonable and competitive, given our claims experience. Further discussion ensued regarding the prevalence of Delta Dental, Inc., in the market and that, despite its dominance, it does not appear to have had an effect on renewal rates.

Alderman Mahkorn moved to approve the resolution approving the 2022 Dental Insurance Program. Seconded by Alderman Berg. Motion carried 5-0.

6. Adjournment

Alderman Mahkorn moved to adjourn. Seconded by Alderman Owen. Motion carried 5-0. 8:42 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:

James Zwerlein

Human Resources Department/Human Resources Director