

REVISED
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE
December 6, 2022 at 6:15 PM

Chairman Cavanaugh called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Cavanaugh, George-Kelly, Barry, Gamache, Burkush

Messrs.: L. Drabik, J. O'Connell

1. HR Reports submitted by Lisa Drabik, Human Resources Director:
 - Position Summary Report
 - Vacancy Requisition Requests and Approvals
 - Summary of Arbitrations/Grievances
 - Sapphire SmartShopper Report*(Note: Provided for informational purposes only; no action is required.)*
2. Communication from the HR Director regarding a request from the Public Works Director for the following complement changes to the Parks, Recreation & Cemetery Division:
 - Eliminate one (1) vacant Equipment Operator IV, grade 15
 - Add one (1) Recreation Maintenance Worker, grade 13
 - Eliminate one (1) vacant Horticultural Supervisor, grade 16
 - Add one (1) new Vegetation Specialist, grade 15

*On motion of **Alderman Gamache**, duly seconded by **Alderman Burkush**, it was voted to approve.*

3. Communication from the HR Director regarding a request from the Fire Chief to add a Fire Telecommunications Manager, grade 21, to his complement and to change the job title for the EMS Training Officer to an EMS Coordinator.

***Alderman Burkush** moved to approve. **Alderman George-Kelly** duly seconded the motion.*

Alderman Burkush stated I had a discussion with the Chief and he is not going to back fill that other position. It is just redefining the complement to meet the workload. It won't really be an additional person. He is going to look into the budget and wait for approval to back fill.

***Chairman Cavanaugh** called for a vote. *There being none opposed, the motion carried.**

4. Communication from the HR Director regarding a request from the Planning & Community Development Director for the following complement changes:
 - Add one (1) Zoning Review Officer II, grade 20
 - Amend the class specification and job title for Zoning Review Officer to Zoning Review Officer I, grade 18

*On motion of **Alderman George-Kelly**, duly seconded by **Alderman Gamache**, it was voted to approve.*

5. Communication from the HR Director regarding a request from the Welfare Director for the following complement changes:
 - Add one (1) Welfare Specialist II, grade 18
 - Unfund two (2) vacant part-time Security Officer positions

*On motion of **Alderman Barry**, duly seconded by **Alderman George-Kelly**, it was voted to approve.*

6. Communication from the HR Director regarding an ordinance amendment to Section 33.079 Vacations, which would change flex vacation for new employees in their first six months of employment.

Lisa Drabik, HR Director, stated I wanted to speak specifically with regard to this item as there is some late breaking news since I submitted my material. Just to set the stage, right now we offer employees the ability to purchase what we call flex vacation. That is vacation in addition to their accrued vacation. It is part of our cafeteria plan and that is governed by IRS regulations. Basically that means it allows employees to purchase that flex vacation using pre-tax dollars to purchase one or two weeks at their current rate so that they are only taxed on that benefit when they then use that time. The current rule is that you must use all of your accrued vacation or your regular vacation before you are able to use any purchased flex vacation. The committee had asked me to look into whether we could or should flip flop that order meaning you could purchase vacation time and use that vacation time and then use your accrued time. Your packet contains materials in which I recommend that if we were to change the ordering it would only be for new employees, meaning those from 0-6 months because they would not have had the opportunity to accrue much in the way of vacation time. However, since the time of submission and after digging through the IRS codes, regulations and the federal register, I have now learned and determined that the reason we have that ordering rule is because it is required under those regulations for Section 125 Cafeteria Plans. So, in practical reality it will likely work the same for 0-6 month employees meaning if they purchase flex vacation they will end up using it first because they will not have accrued any time or very little time. However, I am actually asking to withdraw my request given the Section 125 IRS rules. I know that the committee was interested in how we provide greater benefits to our employees when it comes to the vacation time and to the extent that the committee wants to continue the conversation, I would suggest the best way to get at that is instead to tweak the accrual rates again. I know we just did them for new employees and raised them from two weeks to three weeks but we didn't do anything at that time for those in the more senior categories if you will like 6-9 years, 10-15, etc. I would be happy to look into that and come back to you with another proposal but I just wanted to let you know where we stand.

Alderman George-Kelly asked can you tell us if when we do the salary assessment work that we are doing accrual of vacation time and those kind of benefits are also going to be part of that assessment.

Ms. Drabik answered yes. We are looking at it as a total compensation study. It will roll in all of the other benefits that we provide employees, however, I don't believe we are going to drill down to the specifics of what other municipalities provide in terms of vacation. We are just looking at it as a total compensation package.

Alderman George-Kelly asked if we wanted to make changes in vacation accrual, it kind of makes sense to wait until the assessment is complete and there are recommendations made before we are thinking about furthering that discussion.

Ms. Drabik replied you certainly could.

Chairman Cavanaugh stated to be clear, this won't affect what we already passed for new employees coming in and getting the three weeks correct.

Ms. Drabik responded correct.

Chairman Cavanaugh stated I want to thank you, too. I know that you put a lot of work into this. It is important to me and I know to you as well as the rest of the committee to help attract people and also retain them. That was the purpose of this. I just want to thank you because I think it is very important that we keep our current employees happy and try to match what is out there. I know that we are losing people because of this and it is just something we have to watch. If we want to keep people, we have to be able to be flexible and look at these things to be a better employer.

Ms. Drabik replied absolutely and I appreciate the opportunity and apologize that I just discovered this after I submitted the materials. I just kept digging to find out why it was that way.

*On motion of **Alderman Barry**, duly seconded by **Alderman George-Kelly**, it was voted to receive and file.*

TABLED ITEMS

7. Communication from Allen Aldenberg, Police Chief, requesting authorization to enter into "side bar" negotiations with MPPA and MAPS regarding availability pay.
(Note: Tabled on 11/1 pending further information from the Police Chief; see attached.)

This item remained on the table.

8. Report of the HR Committee recommending that the request from the Board of School Committee to increase the yearly stipend of elected school board members from \$2,000 to \$4,000 a year effective January 2, 2024 be approved. *(Note: This item was referred back to the HR Committee by the BMA at their October 4 meeting.)*

*On motion of **Alderman Barry**, duly seconded by **Alderman George-Kelly**, it was voted to remove Item 8 from the table.*

Jim O'Connell, Chair, Board of School Committee, stated back in June, the Board of School Committee voted to eliminate its health care insurance coverage. That represents a significant savings for the city and for the Board of School Committee so at that time the committee felt that since we eliminated the health coverage for the members we would ask the BMA to approve...as you know currently the BOSC gets a stipend of \$2,000 per year and the BMA gets \$5,000 per year plus the insurance. Our board passed a resolution asking that the BMA pass a resolution to affect the change for future BOSC committees so that they would have a stipend equal to the BMA.

Alderman Barry asked does he have to resubmit the request because it is being changed.

Matthew Normand, City Clerk, answered it is up to the committee on how you want to proceed. You could make them resubmit or you could amend the request.

Mr. O'Connell stated the resolution that was passed by the BOSC reads as follows "on motion of Committee Member Leapley, duly seconded by Committee Member O'Connell, it was moved to stop health and dental coverage for the Board of School Committee members beginning on July 1, 2022 and to graciously and kindly ask the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to increase the stipend for the Board of School Committee Members to the same amount that is given to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen effective January 2024." All were in favor of the motion. So the motion that was passed doesn't mention an amount. It says that it should be equivalent.

***Alderman Barry** moved to approve the yearly stipend of \$5,000 for the Board of School Committee Members effective in January 2024. **Alderman Gamache** duly seconded the motion. Chairman Cavanaugh called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.*

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Barry**, duly seconded by **Alderman Gamache**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.



City Clerk