

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

March 1, 2022 at 5:45 PM

Chairman Cavanaugh called the meeting to order.

The Clerk calls the roll.

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

Messrs.: K. Ferguson, A. Thomas, Ald. Long, Ald. T. Sapienza

1. HR Reports submitted by Kathleen Ferguson, 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 Kevin Sheppard, Public Works Director, requesting a new job classification, Recreation Coordinator, grade 16.

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

3. Communication from the Public Works Director requesting the reclassification of the Recreation Maintenance Supervisor II position from a grade 17 to a grade 18.

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

Alderman Sharonov asked how much money is that going to cost.

Kathleen Ferguson, HR Director, answered I am not sure if this is a union position or not. I would have to double-check that but just to give you an idea, from a grade 17 to an 18, step 1 is \$44,008 to \$48,000. I believe there is 7% between grades so there would be a 7% difference in the grades.

Alderman Sharonov asked so if I heard you correctly, the difference is about \$4,000.

Ms. Ferguson replied yes but that is a step one. If someone is currently in the job, because they got reclassified they would get a 3% increase in their pay. I don't have the name of the person that is currently in the position but it would be a one-step increase so it would be 3%. Director Sheppard has the funds in his budget to cover it.

Alderman Sharonov stated okay but I would like to know how much.

Ms. Ferguson responded I would have to look up the person but I can get you that information tomorrow.

***Alderman Sharonov** moved to table. There was no second.*

Chairman Cavanaugh called for a vote on the motion to approve. The motion carried with Alderman Sharonov being duly recorded in opposition.

4. Communication from Anna Thomas, Public Health Director, requesting to reorganize and reclassify numerous positions in the Health Department.

Alderman Cavanaugh moved to approve. **Alderman Sharonov** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Sharonov asked how much money is this going to cost.

Anna Thomas, Public Health Director, answered for the remainder of this year it is going to be \$21,483.12. For next year it will be \$64,314.35.

Alderman Sharonov asked that is for the entire reorganization.

Ms. Thomas replied yes.

Chairman Cavanaugh asked how many vacancies do you have.

Ms. Thomas responded it depends. I would have to literally go division by division. Our nurses, in particular, are the hardest hit right now. We have four vacancies in the school nurse position. We are floating nurses between schools. We are in the process of hiring some of the staff that we had in positions that were vacated for one reason or another. One is a mental health provider position and the other one is one of our branch supervisors who just gave her notice for the end of March. We will be posting that. We do have a building and facilities coordinator position open as well that we would like to fill.

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

5. Communication from Emily Rice, Solicitor, requesting the reclassification of two Legal Assistant I positions (grade 12) to Legal Assistant II's (grade 14).

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

6. Communication from Philip Croasdale, Water Works Director, requesting to replace four vacant Public Service Worker II positions (grade 13) with Public Service Worker III's (grade 14).

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

7. Proposed Resolution from Alderman Long supporting a minimum wage of \$15.00 per hour for City employees.
(Note: Referred to committee by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on 2/15/2022; information from the HR Director attached.)

Alderman Cavanaugh moved to refer this to the budget process. **Alderman Gamache** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Long stated I am not on this committee but appreciate the opportunity to speak. I think that Alderman T. Sapienza brought up a good point for us to review. Also, in looking through HR's communication regarding having department heads weigh-in, personally I wanted to have this sent to committee for consideration during the budget process because it will affect the budget. That would give us time to go over some of the scenario's that Kathy laid out. If you just got hired and are at \$15/hour and after a year you are at \$15.91 and somebody who has been here for three years is only at \$15.45...we have to work out those glitches.

Chairman Cavanaugh asked do you want to table it and go through the process.

Alderman Long stated well I don't know if you want to table it.

Matthew Normand, City Clerk, stated you could take a motion to refer it to the budget process.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated one of the key questions I have about this proposal is if some is in a step that is less than \$15 will we just pay them the \$15 or will we eliminate the steps for the grades below \$15/hour. I think that is a key question that I had.

Chairman Cavanaugh stated I think that is a great point. I think we have to do this right and we have to get our employees up to a livable wage anyway. We have to do it in the right way so that we are not overstepping other employees in the same position.

Alderman George-Kelly asked Alderman Long are you suggesting that during the budgeting process we review the Yarger Decker scale in order to determine those because if we say we are going to hold off in increasing this lower level to make sure we are running through all the scenarios, the only way to solve all of those scenarios is to truly review the entire Yarger Decker scale and determine everybody's salaries. If we have the opportunity to bring people to at least \$15/hour now I feel like we need to do it.

Alderman Long stated my intent was to bring everybody to \$15/hour now. That was my intent. However, Alderman T. Sapienza has a good point that I didn't consider and I think we should consider it. I am not looking to go through every aspect of the Yarger Decker scale to do this. It is up to the Board whether they want to do it now or do another scenario.

Chairman Cavanaugh stated I do think this may need some more work and after speaking to the Clerk there might even be some ordinances that we have to look at. The best thing to do would be to table this right now and we can have staff do the work that is needed. I agree with you 100% that we have to get these employees to

\$15/hour. We have to do everything we can. We are behind the eight-ball already as an employer and thanks for bringing the resolution forward.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I was in no way trying to hold this up. I was trying to offer a simple solution to move it forward and that is if we don't change anything in Yarger Decker and just approve that if somebody's pay grade is less than \$15/hour we bump them up to \$15 until their pay grade and step is above \$15. I was offering that as a solution to move it forward so we wouldn't get tangled up in the weeds.

Chairman Cavanaugh stated I am not trying to say you were at all. We all want to advance this from what I hear but we have to do it the right way and I think the best way is to table this for now. Kathy, can you come up please?

Ms. Ferguson stated in the past, if someone was in a higher grade and made more and then for some reason the positions were changed, instead of giving them the lower pay they redlined them. They allowed them to keep the higher pay and as the steps went up they didn't get increases and when they reached that minimum then the next year they would get an increase. My thought process was to redline people. I don't know what you want to do with seasonal and temps because they are different. They are not employed for the full year to get that performance evaluation and a merit increase. I gave you the numbers and there are a few people in there. If they are making \$13 or \$14/hour and you pay them \$15 and next year if they get a performance evaluation you add 3% to the step that they would have been on and it might be \$14.58 and they are going to stay at \$15. The year after that, they go to the next step and it might be 3% and they could be at \$15.22 and now their pay changes. It is just a thought but they call it redlining. Someone in a step 3, it is going to take them quite some time to go past \$15 but they are starting at \$8.37. That is just a thought. We don't want someone coming in at \$15 to start and you have someone who has been here for three years who is making \$15.50 and are only one step ahead of them. The grades are based on responsibility and knowledge and experience. It is complicated. It is very complicated. That is just a thought. Like you said, we have to think this through because we don't want to offend people that are a grade 12 making \$16/hour and we put someone in a grade 3 or 4 and say okay you can make \$15/hour. That is just a thought. I hope that wasn't confusing.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated if somebody is making more than \$15 an hour and we bring the people that aren't making \$15 up to \$15, it shouldn't offend anybody making more than \$15. Yes, they were here for three years but they are already making more than \$15. If you use that logic, that logic will go through the whole...and this is one of the problems with the city. That logic goes through the whole pay scale all the way up to the guy that is making \$165,000. He says well the guy making \$15 got a 10% raise so I should get a 10% raise. We are getting away from that. That is what redlining does. If you are above the redline, so be it but you don't get to turn around and begrudge the guy below you.

Ms. Ferguson stated it is a 3% difference between steps so if someone is making \$15 and someone else is \$15.25 you are right. It is a new ordinance and it is \$15/hour minimum but it is complicated. That is all I am trying to say.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I am trying to simplify it.

Ms. Ferguson stated we have had people that have been redlined. They make a lot of money and they changed positions...well not make a lot of money but they have an hourly rate and they wait until their years of service brings them up to that hourly rate and have no increase until they reach that step. Once they reach that step, and it is more than what they currently earn and their performance is good and they get their merit, that is when they will get an increase. That is redlining.

Alderman Barry asked didn't we just bring the Public Works Laborers up to \$15 prior to this.

Ms. Ferguson answered the Laborers became Public Service Worker II's and they earn over \$15 and that is why they are no on your list.

Alderman Barry stated I am talking about the Public Works Department. Didn't we bring those people that were lower than \$15/hour up to \$15 because Kevin Sheppard requested it because he was losing so many people or not getting people to even apply?

Ms. Ferguson responded what happened was he had Laborers that made less than \$15/hour and once they got their CDL-B he would hire them permanently. He realized that Public Service Worker I's have their CDL-B and do the same work. So in order to retain Laborers, and many of them were refuse collectors and things like that, once they got their CDL-B they became a Public Service Worker and that brought them over \$15/hour. They already had their CDL-B so that is what he did. He eliminated Laborers and added Public Service Workers.

Alderman Barry asked and there was no squawk from anyone like the collective bargaining unit correct.

Ms. Ferguson answered not to my knowledge.

Alderman Barry stated one of my concerns is we have quite a few collective bargaining units and are they going to be on board with this and should we check with them to make sure. I know it is part of negotiations. I agree with Alderman T. Sapienza. Let's keep it simple. We want to make sure that we are covered as a city and we can do it and we are not going to get any backlash.

Alderman Sharonov stated half of the emails that were in support of this resolution that I got were from the school side walking about paraprofessionals. I have a report here with the total estimated cost for the city side being \$173,000 for roughly 132 employees to be brought up to \$15/hour. Where can I get information for how much that is going to cost if we include the school side employees as well?

Ms. Ferguson answered you can contact their HR Department.

Alderman Sharonov asked can I get the contact information after the meeting.

Ms. Ferguson replied sure.

Alderman Long stated I will work with HR to come up with the redline scenario. The school district doesn't have an HR Department right now. There is nobody working there. I have been trying to get that information.

Ms. Ferguson stated I know they are short-staffed and looking for an HR Director now.

Alderman Long stated I am not even sure that the BMA can require the school district to pay this minimum wage. I know we give them an appropriation and they break it up as they wish. I have been trying to get that answer.

Alderman Sharonov stated I would assume the resolution would include all employees within the city including the school district. I think it is important to get the numbers. There are about 310 paraprofessionals so that is probably a significant price tag that we should know in advance before the vote.

Ms. Ferguson stated correct me if I am wrong, Matt, but the ordinances only affect the City of Manchester and not the school district.

City Clerk Normand stated they have their own personnel policies. They don't have separate ordinances that I am aware of and I am not sure what they do regarding following guidelines or if they have their own policy over there. They were separated from the city and that isn't typically something that comes before this Board.

Ms. Ferguson asked but this wouldn't come forward with the school district in partnership with the city correct. It would be two separate meetings because this Board...

City Clerk Normand interjected I am not sure that this Board has the authority to deal with the school district employees.

Alderman Sharonov stated this is not an ordinance but just a resolution right now.

Chairman Cavanaugh stated I think there are a lot of questions.

Alderman Barry asked if we table this will there be research done.

Chairman Cavanaugh answered that is my understanding. Alderman Long will work with HR and bring something back to us.

Alderman George-Kelly stated I am going to second Alderman Sharonov's request because I, too, received the majority of emails and phone calls from school staff so we have to, as part of our research, really determine whether this affects school staff and if so, what are the positions that we are talking about on the school end and if not what do we have to do differently with the BOSC to make some sort of ordinance to affect them or resolution to affect them as well.

*On motion of **Alderman Cavanaugh**, duly seconded by **Alderman Barry**, it was voted to table.*

***Alderman Barry** moved to enter into non-public session under the provisions of RSA 91-A:3(II)(e): Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened or claimed against the public body or any subdivision thereof. **Alderman Sharonov** duly seconded the motion. Aldermen Cavanaugh, George-Kelly, Sharonov, Barry and Gamache voted yea. The motion carried.*

Chairman Cavanaugh called the meeting back to order.

*On motion of **Alderman Cavanaugh**, duly seconded by **Alderman Barry**, it was voted to seal the minutes.*

*On motion of **Alderman Cavanaugh**, duly seconded by **Alderman Sharonov**, it was voted to accept the recommendation of the Risk Manager.*

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

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Normand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Clerk of Committee