



# PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING

February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Via Zoom

4 PM

Meeting Minutes

## ITEM 1 Call to Order

Chair Councilor William Emhiser called the meeting to order at 4:07PM with Councilors Norman Belanger and Scott Whiting present via zoom. Also present via zoom were Diana DePaolo (Director of Human Resources), Brian Phinney (Chief Operating Officer), and Daniel Hammond (Safety & Training Coordinator). Councilor Doris Ortiz was absent from this meeting.

## ITEM 2 Approval of Minutes

Councilor Whiting made a motion to approve the minutes from January 21st, 2025. Councilor Belanger seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

## ITEM 3 Discussion

### 3.a Remote Work

Diana stated that the current remote work policy has been in place for a couple of years and has worked well. There are a few employees who benefit from working from home one day per week and short-term arrangements, such as a child being sick, can be accommodated. As a result, the City is getting more from people as they can contribute from home rather than taking an entire day off.

There is a current hiring team considering an applicant that has a significant need to work from home more than one day a week, so it was worth re-visiting the existing policy to see if it's prohibiting the City from hiring qualified candidates. Changes would allow for a variety of accommodations and circumstances, so that the City may be able to retain and better support other highly skilled employees in the future. Some clean-up work was also performed on the policy to better define where requests should be sent regarding short-term accommodations.

Brian Phinney clarified that there is an approval process for short term arrangement requests so that employees must consult with, and receive approval from, their supervisor (they cannot just decide to work from home without this discussion). He also stated that there needs to be criteria within the policy that determines who may be eligible to work from home *and* which demonstrates that the City has a legitimate need for that employee to work from home. By having such criteria in place, leadership can ensure that the ability to work from home is offered fairly to those requesting to do so.

Scott Whiting questioned a specific section of the policy which referred to employees working from the office 'as often as is practicable.' Scott asked if it was intentionally written this way to allow for flexibility or if it should be more definitive (i.e. a minimum of 3 days each week). Diana explained that the wording is meant to allow for flexibility. The policy also states that if you can be in the office, you should be in the office. The City understands, however, that there may be things going on outside of an individual's control.

Councilor Belanger expressed concern about employees complaining that others are getting privileges they are not; this may come up as a result and HR should be prepared for such requests. Councilor Emhiser agreed. Councilor Belanger suggested amending the verbiage to include 'legitimate

substantiated need' and that best practice would be to confirm and document that the need to work from home is real and legitimate. Additional updates should be made to the verbiage as appropriate.

Councilor Emheiser recommended adding language that says, 'City Manager or Director of Human Resources, if so directed by the City Manager.'

Brian Phinney asked for clarification on implementation: are all five of the requirements for working from home required for a request to be granted or will a smaller subset of the criteria be acceptable?

Councilor Belanger suggested that leadership review each criteria balance them to make sure the decision makes sense for the situation (not necessarily require them all). Councilor Emhiser agreed and added that each of the criteria should be considered to ensure the right decision is made.

Brian Phinney stated that more clarification is required in paragraph 3 regarding the public and conducting business at home. He also suggested adding clarity in paragraph 4, particularly deleting each occurrence of 'the employee and manager will.'

Norman Belanger motioned to approve the policy with the above discussed amendments. Councilor Whiting seconded the motion. The policy was unanimously approved with the amendments discussed.

As follow up, Councilor Emhiser asked how a change like this would be communicated to employees. Diana stated that all non-union staff are emailed to receive the information and updates like this are communicated city-wide through the employe newsletter.

### **3.b Staff Appreciation**

Diana gave a summary of information gathered from other municipalities (this work is on-going). Ultimately recognizing employees is a good thing; currently this only happens across the City at the employee banquet, which may not necessarily need an overhaul. The City also offers swag through new hire orientation which is something that HR manages.

Councilor Emhiser said that seeing the Fire Department being recognized in Council Chambers is great and other departments could also benefit from such praise. Diana suggested the announcement of promotions at City Council meetings. Councilors Belanger and Emheiser, as well as Brian, agreed this might be a good place to start. Staff are the backbone of the City and appreciation should be shown.

## **ITEM 4 Other Business**

City Manager Search (update): Diana Depaolo stated that the advertisement should be by Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup>; everyone is encouraged to share it widely. The next steps will include the review of applications to determine interviews.

## **ITEM 5 Adjourn**

Councilor Belanger made a motion to adjourn at 4:46 PM, Councilor Whiting seconded the motion; the motion was approved unanimously.

### **Personnel Committee Members:**

Councilor William Emhiser, Chair  
Councilor Norman Belanger  
Councilor Doris Ortiz  
Councilor Scott Whiting