

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, A STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL

Time & Place: Tuesday, July 21, 2015 at 6:00 pm., Council Chambers
Members Present: Wagner, Nutting, Neal, Gisselman, Rasmussen, Kellbach, Oberbeck, Mielke, Abitz
Members Excused: Nagle, Winters
Others Present: Tipple, Jacobson, Giese, Hite, Rayala, Lindman, Desantis

Council President Mielke noted a quorum and called the meeting to order. Roll call indicated 9 members present.

- 1) Discussion of and possible action regarding the results of the advisory referendum and the establishment of the position of city administrator.

Rasmussen stated there are many things involved with establishing a new position: we have to budget for who we pay, dozens of changes to the Wausau Municipal Code, recruitment process, interview process, is there enough time until the end of the year. We are down to the budget process.

Neal agrees in the importance of a fulltime mayor; not interested in a part-time mayor. We can look within City Hall for someone that can assume the role as city administrator.

Gisselman felt this referendum was to listen to the people and the referendum spoke. The people voted against the referendum and I'm supporting the people's choice.

Abitz agreed to send this back to the Human Resources Committee. She felt that there was a lot of confusion of the residents. Based on the residents that she spoke with they weren't concerned with if we had a mayor or an administrator, but more concerned about the dollar amount and if it could fit into the budget. Most of the people that she spoke with said they wanted an administrator, a public affairs person. They all think that we need to have a mayor as well.

Tipple felt that the referendum was the best democratic process to allow the people to vote how they wanted to. In a perfect world for a city of this size, the best would be a fulltime administrator and a fulltime mayor, if the city can afford it. He mentioned the idea made by Neal about looking to internal staff. The city has staff doing multiple jobs to save money right now, example: Utilities director used to be two jobs and is now one job. Staff is stretched pretty thin. If you are looking to add to staff, he suggested a chief of staff. He also agreed with Rasmussen that there many things that would have to be done and to have it all done by November would be a great challenge.

Motion by Wagner, second by Abitz to send the results of the advisory referendum and the establishment of the position of city administrator back to the Human Resources Committee at the next meeting, and review how voters voted and why and bring it back to Committee of the Whole by August 31, 2015. Motion passed 8-1. *Gisselman was the dissenting vote.*

Presentation: Hite did a brief overview of the City's Policies: 1) Violence in the Workplace 2) Core Values/Behaviors 3) Code of Ethics for Public Officials/Employees

The purpose of this presentation, is requesting that council members lead by example; the purpose of these policies is to create a positive and vibrant workforce; and to affirm your support and intent to comply [with these policies].

2) Discussion of and possible action of Standing committee structure and frequency of meetings.

Mielke spoke briefly about the quantity of meetings and that council and staff alike are missing out on events of their family members due to excessive meetings. He mentioned that it has merit that some of these committees could be combined, i.e. Parking & Traffic and CISM, Finance and Economic Development. Neal has brought forth some ideas for discussion regarding combining some committees.

Neal recognized that there have been frequent reports about 'burn out' of council and staff members. Skills and perspective have been lost due to resignations of those who have 'burned out.' With these resignations viewpoints and experienced opinions are lost. His proposal is to change from seven, 5-seated standing committees to three, 7-seated committee and one, 5-seat committee (this would be Human Resources staying as it is). Results would be that the agendas would still be crowded, but there would 43% fewer standing committee meetings. By making the committees larger we would get more expertise, more fallback and better chance of quorums when someone does have a family obligation. This also would streamline processes for petitioners. We would have more time to address issues of our constituents.

Wagner thought addressing committee meeting content is also important to streamline committee meetings.

Rasmussen shared a concern of merging some committees that have citizens on them. Once they become merged, it would remove the public input. She spoke strongly against Public Health & Safety being merged with any committee, because of the issues and hearings (as a quasi-judicial entity) this committee addresses.

Oberbeck felt that due to the seriousness of issues before the Finance Committee, this restructuring should not occur until the next council is in office.

Rasmussen brought up the point that as chair persons, they have agenda control and can put items on a consent agenda or put it on hold until another meeting.

Abitz and Kellbach left the meeting at 6:45 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Toni Rayala, City Clerk