



Watertown City Council
Work Session

Mayor Steve Washburn
Lindsay Guetzkow
Adam Pawelk
Michael Walters
Dan Schuette

8/10/2021 - Minutes

1. Call To Order And Roll Call

Mayor Steve Washburn called the Watertown City Council workshop to order at 5:01 p.m. on Tuesday August 10, 2021 in the council chambers of City Hall.

Council Members Present: Washburn, Michael Walters, Lindsay Guetzkow and Adam Pawelk.

Staff Present: Interim City Administrator Jeff O'Neill and Administrative Services Director Lynn Tschudi.

Guest: Tessia Melvin with David Drown & Associates.

2. New Business

2.1. Pay Equity And Market Analysis

Tessia Melvin with DDA explained the project scope for council. The benchmark cities were approved by council and were chosen for their similar tax capacity, population, and locations. Melvin defined important vocabulary used during the presentation. She shared the current pay grid used by the city and explained that there are only seven grades used. There are four city employees who are maxed out on the current scale.

Council discussed the state match system and how it relates to pay equity. Melvin explained the current points are somewhat accurate, but she does suggest some changes for the future. Melvin showed the current employees pay and what percent they are paid in relation to the market.

Council discussed the current pay scale and how it operates from step one to step 10. Mayor Washburn asked how the cost-of-living plays into the pay scale on an annual basis. Melvin explained that each year the scale is adjusted by the market adjustment, or cost of living, on January 1. Washburn pointed out that each employee is really receiving a 2% market adjustment as well as a

2.5% step increase so a total of 4.5% each year. Melvin agreed, but clarified that the step adjustment is not received until their anniversary date. O'Neill stated that a step increase is not a guaranteed longevity pay. It is a carrot that each employee should be granted based on how well they are performing.

Melvin said it is very important to be looking at job descriptions and market adjustments on an annual basis. Walters asked if it would make sense to have a personnel committee. O'Neill said the evaluation form should reflect any changes in each employee's job and or duties. Guetzkow added that city employees are different from private sector because they will never be eligible for bonuses or additional pay. She said it is important that the pay is competitive.

Council Member Guetzkow asked why some benchmark max percentages are still below the 100% mark. Melvin said that to be within 5% of the 100% mark is acceptable. Guetzkow would like to see the baseline max at 100% for the supervisory roles.

Melvin showed council the three proposed options for the market study. Option 1 is to keep the current pay system with a 2% COLA adjustment on January 1, 2022. Option 2 is to move all employees to 100% of market with a 2% COLA on January 1, 2022 and each employee receiving their step on their anniversary.

Council agreed that option 2 makes the most sense to move forward with.

2.II. 2022 Budget Work Session #1

Administrative Services Director Tschudi walked through the preliminary general fund budget for council. Mayor Washburn asked if Tschudi could model the general fund budget with a public works employee starting half-way through the year rather than on January 1. He would also like to see the budget modeled with an in house building official/zoning official and eliminating the additional budgeted amounts for Bolton & Menk and the City Planner. Tschudi clarified if council would be interested in seeing a model showing a third-party vendor for the building services and eliminating the JPA with Delano. Council said they are interested in any solution.

2.II.1. Fire Department Budget Discussion

Fire Chief Schroeder explained to council that Watertown is struggling with staffing fire fighters on the weekends and evenings. He said this issue is nationwide and gave council examples occurring in the area where departments are short staffed.

Schroeder introduced the paid on call model for staffing the fire station. He said with the paid on call model they would be able to recruit members from outside the fire district to work strictly shifts. Council Member Guetzkow asked what blend of fire fighters would be on each shift. Schroeder said there would need to be an officer on each shift and this model would allow for some team building efforts while they are "on shift". Guetzkow asked if some administrative tasks could be tackled at this time. Schroeder said there is a long list of duties that these individuals would work on.

Schroeder said he is requesting one shift per weekend for now with four members on shift. This would equate to about \$18,500 per year. Guetzkow asked what hours would be covered on the shifts. Schroeder gave examples of different times. Mayor Washburn asked why four fire fighters

is needed. Schroeder explained the situations where these members would handle most calls before any first call is sent. Washburn asked what the call volume is on a Saturday night.

Schroeder said it is about a call a day. Council Member Walters asked if the paid on call model could work with a team of two. Schroeder said many calls are not able to be responded to with four members.

Walters asked if this model has been discussed with the fire fighters. Schroeder said there have been informal conversations for a few years and some members are more receptive than others.

Guetzkow would like to see reports on call volume, time of day and which fire fighters are responding currently.

3. Adjournment

Washburn adjourned the work session at 6:28 pm

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Washburn, Mayor

ATTEST: _____

Lynn Tschudi, Admin. Services Director

Steve