

RELEASED
2/20/24

CLOSED SESSION MINUTES
MONDAY, MAY 2, 2022

The City Council met in a closed session at 7:20 p.m. on Monday, May 2, 2022, during a recess of a regular meeting. The Deputy Clerk reported that the following Council members were:

PRESENT: Leroy Duncan
Sonya Hagaman
Jeremy Plank
Scott Tweedy
Tom Stalcup

Interim City Manager, Fire Chief Stahlhut asked the Finance Director to join the session and asked the Deputy Clerk to step in and take in the Clerk's place

LITIGATION:

Interim City Manager updated council on the current litigation with Bill Dettmers regarding the 1% Non-Home Rule Sales Tax. Jim Schrimpf from IML has requested the 30-day extension and that he will be filing for dismissal. This will be processed through IML our insurance carrier.

PERSONNEL:

City Clerk, Stacy Ehrman has resigned and her last day with the City will be May 13th. Initially there was no one interested in the internal posting of the position. At this time the City now has two interested internal candidates and the Interim City Manager is seeking direction from Council.

Question 1 from the Interim City Manager was whether to limit the posting internally or to seek outside candidates. Question 2 was that one of the internal candidates requested a pay increase to a Department Head salary of an additional \$27,000 increase. The additional salary would impact the previous discussion of hiring another full-time position for City Hall and the replacement of said candidate.

Councilman Plank made the point that at some point we will have to go external whether that is for the City Clerk or to fill the gap from outside the City.

Councilman Duncan asked if the candidates are qualified for the City Clerk position.

City Attorney Rene Bassett-Butler asked that if we talk about personnel to please utilize their names.

Interim City Manager stated that Danielle Sneed is the first candidate and Karen Weber is the second candidate. Karen Weber is the candidate who has requested to be paid Department Head Salary. Councilwoman Hagaman asked where the additional \$27,000 is being calculated. Interim City Manager explained it would be an additional \$27,000 on top of what the current City Clerk Stacy Ehrman makes for her base salary. Interim City Manager is concerned that we would have a hard time replacing Karen's position at the salary she makes as the city accountant.

Councilwoman Hagaman asked if Interim City Manager thinks Karen Weber is underpaid in her current position. Finance Director Chris Sobrino stated that Karen Weber is our city accountant, but she does much more than just that for the city. Chris stated his hunch is that if the city were to replace Karen Weber as the city accountant with any sort of experience could potentially be paid more than what Karen's base wages are now.

Councilwoman Hagaman asked if we took external resumes could someone external step into the Clerk's position and it work for the current situations. Deputy City Clerk Kara Hill spoke and stated that if the external candidate has the proper experience with municipal government or something similar, they could easily step into the Clerk's position. Interim City Manager agreed with her. Mayor Stalcup stated his concern would be that someone with experience could inflate the wages as well.

Councilman Tweedy asked Interim City Manager if he had a preference of either accepting one of the internal candidates or looking externally. Interim City Manager stated he would not mind looking externally and that he is fearful of accepting the internal candidate and how it will change the processes down at City Hall.

Councilwoman Hagaman asked what the qualifications would be if the city were to look externally. Deputy City Clerk stated she feels a background in municipal government along with years of experience would be the qualifications more than education background. Attorney Rene Butler stated she was not aware of any education that would cover this job opening.

Councilman Plank asked if this was an appointed roll by the mayor. Interim City Manager stated the city code states the City Manager appoints the City Clerk.

Councilman Tweedy asked if the job opening would be posted for two weeks. Interim City Manager stated that Deputy Clerk Kara Hill and City Accountant Karen Weber are learning as much as possible before current City Clerk Stacy Ehrman's last day. Interim City Manager stated that Kara is currently holding several job titles including Payroll and Human Resources. He feels Kara has not really been allowed the opportunity to fulfill her actual job responsibilities of updating the personnel manual as well as other Human Resource responsibilities.

Councilman Plank asked why Deputy City Clerk Kara Hill does not want the role of City Clerk. Interim City Manager asked Kara if he could answer on her behalf, and she agreed. Interim City Manager stated that the last few years of pressure and negativity that surround the City Clerk position has caused Kara not to want to be in the Clerk position. Interim City Manager stated our current city clerk's name is now mentioned in a FOIA lawsuit. Interim City Manager stated he has seen the impact that FOIA requests have taken on the current City Clerk, Stacy Ehrman. Councilwoman Hagaman added in that the City Clerk position is not a 40 hour a week job. Deputy City Clerk Kara Hill stated that she spoke with Interim City Manager and made the point that her background and experience is not municipal government. Her experience consists of Human Resources and Payroll and she feels she has not completed her responsibilities for her current position and doesn't feel its her time to step into the Clerk position.

Interim City Manager stated that when Danielle Sneed was interviewed as a new hire for the City the initial goal was for Danielle to move into the Deputy Clerk position, however, there was restructuring on procedural issues at City Hall. Danielle has done a phenomenal job with the Building and Zoning department.

Councilman Plank said that if the job is posted externally and one of the internal candidates stack well against the other candidates than the city will know that they have made the right decision to go with an internal candidate. Interim City Manager stated his concern is the additional time that it's going to take to fulfill the job opening. He is asking for patience from council due to the potential chaos that we may have coming at City Hall.

Councilman Plank asked Finance Director Chris Sobrino if he wanted to keep Karen in her current position in the Finance Department. Director Sobrino stated that Karen is a tremendous asset to the city because of all that she does including accounts payable, utility billing, accounting and building and

zoning. He feels losing her in the finance department would be tough and either way that council goes it's going to be tough for that department. He feels Karen would be a great city clerk but that it would be a giant issue in the finance department to lose her.

Mayor Stalcup voiced his concern that if Karen is the most senior person at City Hall and she feels that she deserves the position will she be upset if not given the opportunity for the job. Interim City Manager Stahlhut stated that Karen understands the impact it would cause. He personally feels that she is looking more at a department head position and salary for the future.

Interim City Manager Stahlhut stated that utility billing and building and zoning have changed drastically and has impacted the overall operations of City Hall.

Councilwoman Hagaman stated that if we accept an internal candidate, it may give a better idea of what the new position would entail. Councilwoman questioned if there was a counteroffer to Karen's salary request. Interim City Manager stated Karen's end goal was to be at Department Head salary whether that was half of the increase now and then the rest of the increase next budget year.

Councilman Plank asked if the city could offer Karen a salary increase in her current position as city accountant and now hire her for the city clerk position. Director Sobrino stated when he started with the city, he felt Karen was underpaid at that time and informed the council. At that time the council made the decision to give her a salary increase.

Councilwoman Hagaman asked if Danielle was an option for the city clerk position. Interim City Manager stated that Danielle is an option, however, she is heavily involved in building and zoning and has asked to remain involved and have the building and zoning office manager pay that Stacy Ehrman currently has. Mayor Stalcup questioned whether this would even be a possibility due to the amount of work in building and zoning.

Councilwoman Hagaman clarified that if the two candidates were interviewed and a decision was made to hire one, they would have one week of training with Stacy and if we looked externally there would be no training time with Stacy. Interim City Manager stated that Karen and Kara are working diligently to learn as much as they can from Stacy before her last day. Councilman Plank stated that Kara seemed competent enough to cover the position for a few weeks if needed.

Mayor Stalcup stated that the additional help is needed at City Hall. Deputy Clerk stated she was working with Chris and Wade and had to stop to be able to assist citizens just simply because one person was on their lunch hour. Attorney Rene Butler stated the city will not keep employees if they feel like they can't even take a lunch hour. Councilwoman Hagaman stated that if the additional help is needed the city can not pay Karen the additional \$27,000 for department head salary.

Mayor Stalcup commented on the potential to give Karen a salary increase now, with the possibility for more of an increase down the road.