

Meeting Minutes
Finance & Personnel Committee
Wednesday – December 3, 2008 4:30 p.m. Council Chambers

Members present: Romberg, Barrington, Morack, O'Connell, Tate,

Also present: Dean, Herminath, Henke, Luaders, Hager, Radke, Villiesse, Hunt, Lori Shaw, Bill Schmidt, Kari Ort-Bunting, Lee Rousseau

1. Chairman Romberg called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. Morack/Barrington to adopt agenda. Carried 5-0.

1. Tourism Commission Chair Bill Schmidt and Lori Shaw, Chamber of Commerce Director, presented to the Committee the Commission's activities over the past year. They are developing revenue goals and specific targets for use of funds, as these will measure the Commission's mission of placing more "heads in beds" and increasing visits to New London, which benefit area businesses.

There was discussion on the follow up from work the branding consultant had done, how to make New London's draw as a fishing or hunting destination distinct from our neighbors, and the overall effort on differentiating New London and creating a focus which will attract visitors.

Billboards were discussed. Herminath suggested use of the Sturgeon Trail as an attraction, perhaps with Sturgeon art throughout the City like Sturgeon Bay has, or similar to the lions throughout Appleton which advertised the Lion King musical. He suggested that a Sturgeon viewing week be established with school projects and area tours setup.

2. Earl Luaders, City Attorney, presented a draft of his reply to the Downtown Waterfront property owners regarding the riverwall and alley easement. The Committee discussed his recommendations.

Morack/Barrington to recommend to Council that it authorize the Attorney's response, require an answer in 60 days and notify the property owners that the City will no longer reimburse them for any attorney fees incurred. Carried 5-0.

3. The Canadian National Railroad has abandoned right of way from the area of River Road east to the City limits. This includes track serving Wolf River Lumber. The City and Wolf River Lumber are interested in preserving the track still on this land; however, the Railroad has demanded \$350,000 in return for not salvaging the track. The Committee discussed the City's option with Kari Ort-Bunting, representing Wolf River Lumber.

It became clear that it would be best if they could be advised by an attorney specializing in similar rail abandonment matters. The Committee instructed the Administrator to work with Wolf River Lumber in finding an attorney and determining the cost of performing the services needed. A list of questions which need to be answered is to be drawn up helping to determine the attorney's cost.

Of related interest is whether the rail line from New London to Appleton has actually been abandoned as well. Staff will research this.

4. The Committee discussed the Public Works Committee's request to have an Administrative Assistant to serve as secretary for Public Works and assist the Parks & Recreation Director. The Committee accepted the recommendation and set the position at Grade 5 in the new Compensation Schedule. The City Administrator was authorized to advertise and fill the position.

The Compensation Ordinance, which is up for a second reading, will be amended to reflect this new position. At a future meeting a budget amendment will be made to reflect the changes caused by this new position and other projects like the Waterfront Initiative and the new sewer main on Mill Street.

Tate/Morack to set the Administrative Assistant pay range at Grade 5 in the new Ordinance. Carried 5-0.

5. With the retirement of Carol Radtke, the Director of Public Works position is now vacant.

Tate/Morack to recommend to Council that it appoint Jeff Bodoh as Acting Director of Public Works effective December 1st. Carried 5-0.

Tate/Morack to set the Acting Director's wages at Grade 17, Step B (\$56,894). Carried 5-0.

6. Finance Director Villiesse explained the affect on property tax collections and other revenues if services are transferred to other governments. He then explained the way Fund 80 worked and showed the affect of transferring services of varying costs upon the City Budget and the affect upon individual taxpayers. Use of Fund 80 would be invaluable in the future should the State decrease shared revenue payments.

7. Villiesse then explained how the Utility charges us for street lighting, including construction and maintenance of new poles.

8. City Administrator Hager announced that New London was one of 15 communities awarded a Wisconsin Waterfront Revitalization Initiative Grant of \$13,000. To receive that grant the City needs to approve the grant contract.

Morack/Barrington to recommend to Council signing the Grant Contract. Carried 5-0.

9. The Committee discussed issues resulting from the November bill list; regarding mileage, use of City vehicles, and office supply purchases.

10. The Committee reviewed a proposed realignment of Committee responsibilities. They asked the Clerk to put these in ordinance form and will review them again at the next meeting.

As a part of the Committee realignment it was suggested that the Cable Commission be abolished, as cable franchising authority has now been restricted to the State. The oversight of our Government Access Channel will be assigned to the Parks & Recreation Committee. An ordinance has been drafted to accomplish this.

Morack/Tate to recommend adoption of the ordinance to Council. Carried 5-0.

11. Budget Reports and the Economic Development Report were discussed. It was determined that not lighting the overhead street lights downtown caused the area to be too dark, especially after most store were closed.

12. There being no further business O'Connell/Morack to adjourn. Committee adjourned at 7:05 p.m.