

MINUTES OF RAVENNA CITY PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
May 14, 2012

The May 14, 2012, meeting of the Ravenna City Personnel Committee was called to Order at 5:00 P.M., by Chairperson, Amy Michael. In attendance were Sharon Spencer, Fred Berry, Frank Seman, Bruce Ribelin and Fran Ricciardi. Also attending were Mayor Bica, Kelly Engelhart, Bob Finney, Kim Cecora and Clayton Morris of

Ms. Michael said the first item on the agenda is the Human Resource audit presentation by Mr. Clayton Morris.

Mr. Morris said he has met with Ms. Engelhart, Mr. Cecora and the mayor who expressed need for some direction in Human Resources. They were not exactly sure what direction they were looking for or where they were going but felt there were gaps in performance; gaps in compliance; gaps in contract negotiations. They just felt a need existed. He met with them and discussed a Human Resource audit, specifically, the first step in coming into an organization, identifying processes, gathering information, evaluating that information, analyzing the strengths and weaknesses and then creating an action plan. The action plan is based on need over cost and then what the return on investment is for that. In a very simple sense, have you had sexual harassment workplace violence training in the last year. Have you had incidents of sexual harassment or workplace violence. Those are very common charges with diversity that have gone through the roof with the EEOC. Employers are liable, to a certain extent, to provide a healthy and safe working environment. By having that training; by having policies and procedures in place, they eliminate the liability, which is huge because they can go from the average settlement last year was just over \$1.5 million. It will take your liability down to zero by simply having a policy, a procedure and training. That's all they have to do. Not stop, necessarily, the harassment or discrimination but to have processes in place and documents in place followed by training. What he would do is come in, review all of the HR processes, all of the policies; the compliance; compare that to best practices; industry standards; legal compliance; trends and cost effectiveness. He would then present a proposal for where he thinks they need to spend their time, energy and resources to improve the employee situation. Government probably spends 87% of their money on people. They are a large expenditure; a lot of liability and a lot of problems. He can come in, do an audit, identify what the needs are; where the city's strengths and weaknesses are and then move forward from there. It's not necessarily about selling his services moving forward as much as it is just establishing where they are today and drawing their benchmark line in the sand. At that point, they can take it to anybody else and say, here are our goals; here is what we need to do; here is what we don't need to do; here is what this Clay Morris said we should do and move forward from there. This particular proposal is just about conducting an audit.

Ms. Michael noted that Mr. Morris works at other local municipalities.

Mr. Morris responded that he has an HR contract with the city of Twinsburg; city of Streetsboro and the village of Walton Hills. He has recently come off of a contract with the village of Woodmere. He has done training at Bedford Heights, Shaker Heights, the Civil Service Chairman in Stow. It's what he does.

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Ms. Michael asked if Mr. Morris would be coming to the location of if he has other employees who would be here.

Mr. Morris said he has a network of individuals he uses, depending on the situation. He has an attorney who reviews documents and makes sure those are compliant. If they are looking to move forward and place somebody on the ground in the location, he could put somebody on the ground here but for purposes of this audit, he would do it. He would touch this, interview people; ask the questions and he has staff that can compile the information. He wants to be the one who asks the questions and gets the response and hear that maybe something else is going on that he delve into a little bit more.

Mr. Berry asked if there aren't policies in place to address these issues.

Mr. Engelhart responded that is not necessarily so.

Mr. Cecora said they are fragmented at best. They had this conversation earlier today and talked about the cycles of hiring, particularly in public entities. In the last 18 months, they have done more hiring than since he started with the city and more transitions in and out than he has ever seen. While they do have policies, many of them are stale. So many of them touch on legal issues that they need to be aware of when it comes to separation or hiring. That was the impetus behind this.

Mr. Morris said that it could be something as simple as Workers' Comp., their ADA accommodations, they want to make sure if an individual is eligible for return to work or light duty assignment, their position description identifies what their minimum requirements are or what they can and cannot do if they in a light duty situation. The goal with the Workers' Comp. injury is always to return individuals back to work as quickly as possible. If you have a position description that is outdated that says you have to be able to lift 100 lbs. and they can't lift 100 lbs. yet, if you have an assignment that is less than that, it would be nice to have the documentation to support them.

Mr. Berry said he would assume that an employer as large as the city would have something in place.

Ms. Engelhart said that it's not standardized across the city. For example, there are a lot of hiring practices that are based on each department or by union contracts but not necessarily, what is the procedure and how do they follow each one of those steps with a checklist to make sure they aren't missing anything along the way. How do they make sure the interview processes are appropriate and that they are documenting that appropriately.

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Mayor Bica said how disciplinary procedures for each bargaining unit is a little bit different and he thinks it is important to have some consistency with the non-union employees.

Mr. Berry said he would think the non-union would be where they would have the most exposure.

Mayor Bica concurred stating he thinks the union contracts cover 90% of what they deal with in regards to disciplinary procedures and standard protocol. Also, the unions have job descriptions within the contract.

Mr. Ricciardi asked how many non-union people are working for the city.

Mayor Bica said that it's about 50% that are non-union.

Ms. Michael said that Mr. Cecora told her money has already been budgeted.

Mr. Cecora said that one of the thoughts was that they do have, obviously, monies budgeted in legal fees and in collective bargaining. It's obviously there for a purpose. If it were the desire of this committee to sponsor it as such, they could use a portion of those appropriations to cover the cost of the initial study without an independent appropriation for it.

Ms. Michael asked what would happen after the study. How would they proceed?

Mr. Cecora said that as Mr. Morris described, how the study comes out will basically be how they wish to proceed with it.

Mayor Bica said he envisioned bringing it back to committee and showing the results of that and then trying to prioritize what they think are probably the most critical things they need to address immediately and then start working toward a long objective from an HR goal. They may not be able to get everything done within a 12 month period but why can't they forecast out a couple of years, that these are the things they want to do; this is critical items and these are things that are more background tasks they would like to work on and budget for as they go down the future.

Mr. Morris said that he will report back at the conclusion of this that will identify all of the strengths, the weaknesses, the areas for improvement and the ballpark costs as well as the liability costs of each individual. He will not go over the cost of \$2,250.00. If the hours do go over, it's on him.

Mr. Berry said that he thinks that is a small amount to get them headed in the right direction.

Ms. Michael said she thinks there is a definite need for policies and procedures within the city.

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Mr. Seman asked if some of these things addressed already in the employee handbook.

Mr. Cecora said that many of them are covered. He thinks, right now, they need an objective set of eyes to bring it up to date.

Mr. Seman said he doesn't want Mr. Berry to have the impression that there is nothing. He's sure the city's liability insurer wants them to have all this in place, too. He doesn't think they are starting at zero.

Mr. Cecora responded that they are not but the days of freshening up every five to seven years are long gone. This is something that needs a fresh set of eyes at least every year.

Mr. Morris said that every couple of years they like to look at position descriptions.

Mr. Seman said he doesn't have a problem with the study. He just wanted to make it clear they are not starting from zero.

Mr. Morris said that from what he has heard, he doesn't think they are situated any worse than any other community that he's been to. Something happened the last couple of years that everybody is looking at this.

Ms. Michael asked when the last time the policies and procedures were updated.

Mr. Cecora responded 2010 and then it's been continuously updated internally. In terms of a legal overview, it was done in 2010.

Mr. Berry asked when the last time was that there had been a claim against the city or action taken against the city on any of these issues that would have been addressed.

Mayor Bica said he can think of a very nasty HIPA violation that they encountered six months ago. He thinks that was a true eye opening experience as to how there was a need to have that buttoned up and handled a little bit differently.

Ms. Spencer said she thinks the study would be worthwhile.

There being no questions or comments, it was decided by those present that the appropriate tracking sheets would be submitted for Finance Committee approval.

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Ms. Michael said the next item on the agenda is the Street Department Service Worker.

Ms. Engelhart said this is a discussion item to let them know there has been quite a bit of turnover at the Street Department in that the assistant superintendent has been hired, Denny Dillon was promoted to that position in January. Since then an employee holding the position of the Service Worker II was upgraded to a Utility Operator position, that is Kevin Bevilacqua. He was promoted about mid-April. Now they have some Service Worker I positions open in the Street Department. Donna Heiney had a fall at home in November, had a substantial injury and had been off for quite awhile. She is now able to return to full duty. She was started back about six weeks ago on light duty. They were down six service workers that are in the payroll ordinance in the Street Department. They are now able to fill two Service Worker I positions. Those positions have both been posted and they are in the process of interviewing. She just wanted to bring the committee up to speed with the changes that have been going on there and trying to get the crew back up and operational. They are just going to bring it back up to where there is one more employee than they had last summer. What has happened, through attrition, is they are finding they don't have individuals with the skill set to do asphalt or pave streets. They are trying to look for those individuals who have some of those skills. Those individuals who used to do that are no longer there.

Ms. Michael said the next item is an appropriation for retiring individuals.

Mr. Cecora said that this was discussed in detail last month. He failed to do the paperwork to get it moving and it's now being circulated.

Ms. Michael said there next item for discussion is the appropriation for unemployment compensation.

Mr. Cecora said this is an unfunded liability for a former Recreation employee.

Mayor Bica said this dovetails into the discussion they had at the last committee meetings with regard to taking some of the seasonal and part-time employees and then sourcing them through an agency. For instance, this individual was a part-time employee. This person applied for unemployment even though they were a part-time seasonal employee and they were granted the unemployment. The city bears the cost of that.

Ms. Michael asked if there was no work for this individual to hire them back.

Mr. Cecora said that it was simply part-time in the Recreation Department. There is an experience period that unemployment looks at and if you're an employer within that one year look back, you are charged a certain amount of that unemployment compensation.

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Mayor Bica said that it really goes back to the discussion of hiring some type of agency to hire at a fixed cost with no liability, employees that are seasonal or temporary. It would make a lot more sense because even then, paying the fixed cost with the additional adder for that company's unemployment liability is still less to do it that way and then they don't get hit with situations like this. It makes no difference if an employee is considered seasonal or not. You cannot tag an employee seasonal.

There being no questions or comments, it was decided by those present that the appropriate tracking sheets would be submitted for Finance Committee approval.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 5:23 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

Amy Michael, Chairperson
Personnel Committee