

CITY OF MERRILL

PERSONNEL & FINANCE COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2022 - MINUTES

Regular Meeting

City Hall Council Chambers

5:15 p.m.

Members Present: Chairperson Paul Russell, Alderperson Michael Caylor, Alderperson LaDonna Fermanich

Others Present: Alderpersons Mark Weix, Dick Lupton and Rick Blake, Mayor Hass, City Administrator Dave Johnson, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, City Clerk Anderson-Malm, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Street Superintendent Dustin Bonack, City Engineer Rod Akey, Shari Wicke, Jill Bostrom and Merrill Productions video operator

- 1. Chair Russell called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.**
- 2. Vouchers – March & April - Motion (Caylor/Fermanich) to approve. Carried.**

Discussion took place regarding questions on some items in the vouchers. All questions were answered. Alderperson Caylor asked for a table of accounts which would make it easier for verification of the vouchers. Finance Director Unertl said she will get a list sent to the Alderperson's.

Chairperson Russell commended the new committee members and city staff for asking questions in advance and receiving answers. He mentioned there may be a number of questions since there are new Alderperson's and again thanked the city staff for their ability to answer all the concerns and questions.

- 3. Agenda items for consideration:**

- 1. Consider change from May 15 to May 22 for Temporary Classification pay for Clerk/Treasurer's staff.**

A motion was made to change the temporary classification pay from May 15 to May 22 by Alderperson Fermanich. Alderperson Caylor seconded. Motion carried.

- 2. Consider increasing wages for the employees that were maxed out on their step increases and did not receive the 2.5% increase the rest of the Street Dept., Park Dept. and Transit Department employees received for having their CDL.**

Alderson Caylor made a motion to consider increasing wages for the employees that were maxed out on their step increases and did not receive the 2.5% increase the rest of the Street Dept., Park Dept. and Transit Department employees received for having their CDL for discussion. Alderson Fermanich seconded.

There was discussion regarding additional background information. Finance Director Unertl does not believe there is enough background information and understands this is a challenge that needs to be fixed.

City Administrator Johnson explained this is an initiative that was started last year to retain and attract employees.

City Engineer Akey explained a bit more about the background regarding this request. This is a way to retain employees.

There was discussion regarding how to accomplish this by a lump sum amount for the employees. This amount would be based on 2,080 hours. There were concerns regarding the taxes taken if a lump sum would be given; such as a CDL certification sum.

After further discussion, the original motion was removed and decided this would be referred to the June agenda, including the Utility employees, for further clarification and discussion.

3. Consider creating two Public Works I positions for the operators of the new automated garbage and recycling trucks.

Alderson Fermanich made a motion to approve for discussion. Alderson Caylor seconded.

City Engineer Akey explained the need for creating two positions. After lengthy discussion the original motion was withdrawn. The new motion was to create two Public Works I positions for the operators of the new automated garbage and recycling trucks and repost. Alderson Caylor seconded. Motion carried.

4. Consider clarification of voting and non-voting committee members and compensation for said committee members.

Mayor Hass was given the opportunity to explain the need for clarification of voting and non-voting committee members. This was discovered while going through communications regarding the Marketing & Communications Committee.

Marketing & Communications Chair Blake said he was not sure if people were appointed and voted in.

It was decided members need to be appointed by the Mayor and with term dates and serve two year terms.

Other committees that need to be looked at are Festival Grounds and the Library Board.

Further clarification and discussion is needed. This will be referred back to the June Personnel & Finance agenda after the Mayor and City Attorney have a chance to meet and clarify.

5. Discuss the status of return to normal city hall hours.

Finance Director Unertl explained why the need to have the Clerk/Treasurer office closed on Tuesday's and Thursday's. She anticipated the counter would be able to return to normal business hours after the first week in July.

Aldersperson Caylor discussed the amount of people in the Clerk/Treasurer office and was told closing the counter was a temporary solution until the new clerk took office. In his opinion, we are a public entity and thinks the counter should be open.

There was further discussion regarding changing the times the counter was closed to make it easier for the public to come pay bills and other tasks required at the counter. Aldersperson Caylor said that was not the issue he has been hearing, it is because the counter is not open to the public during regular business hours.

Aldersperson Fermanich said she has not received complaints about the hours but agrees that since we are a public entity, the counter should be open regular hours.

Mayor Hass was asked for his opinion regarding this issue. He stated the counter should be open regular business hours. He said private business deals with issues every day and work load is adjusted to compensate.

After continued discussion it was established the Clerk/Treasurer counter would be open regular business hours starting, Tuesday, May 31. Finance Director Unertl stated there will be possible overtime until they get caught up. Possible help can be brought to help with the elections if needed.

6. Discuss the status of remote working employee(s).

Alderman Caylor wanted to know the status of employees working remotely.

City Administrator Johnson said there are two employees working remotely on a part time basis. There is one at the Library and one at City Hall working remotely.

7. Discuss the security in the City Clerk's office.

Alderman Caylor mentioned his concern with the lack of security in the City Clerk's office. City Administrator Johnson signed the agreement with Per Mar, who will be installing the security in the City Clerk's office. There will be one panic button at the counter and one at the desk.

8. Discuss the timeline of the 2023 budget.

Alderman Caylor asked for this to be put on the agenda. He would like to see an earlier budget timeline. Possibly start on the budget in July. What he would like to avoid is having an all-day budget session which results in hard feelings and hostility between the council and department heads.

City Engineer Akey said it makes sense for an earlier budget timeline for the Street Department and Water Utility. This would help with future projects.

Financial Director Unertl said the county requests information for the ambulance and library in July. One big challenge is health insurance increases which will not be known until mid-September. She said the capital part of the budget could be started earlier. She is concentrating on getting the 2021 audit completed and would like to start the borrowing process earlier due to increasing interest rates. She could see having initial talks in July and August and having a COW scheduled in September to make decisions.

This will remain on the Personnel and Finance agenda for the following months for further discussion and updates.

9. Consider placing monthly reports on file:

1. Finance Director Unertl – March and April reports
2. City Attorney Hayden - April report
3. City Administrator Johnson – March and April reports
4. Municipal Court Reports – March and April

5. Fire Department Callback Report
6. Consider placing monthly reports on file - Motion (Caylor/Fermanich) to put on file. Carried.

10. Establish date, time and location of next regular meeting

Next regular scheduled meeting will be Tuesday, June 28, 5:15pm in the Common Council Chambers

11. Public Comment Period – None

12. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn by Alderperson Fermanich and seconded by Alderperson Caylor to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:20 PM.

Minutes prepared by: Lori Anderson-Malm – City Clerk