



CITY OF MERRILL
PERSONNEL AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES • TUESDAY JANUARY 26, 2021

Virtual Meeting

Virtual Meeting

5:15 PM

I. Call to Order

Alderman Hass called the meeting to order at 5:15 P.M.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Rick Blake	Aldersperson - Third District	Remote	
Steve Osness	Aldersperson - Fourth District	Remote	
Steve Hass	Aldersperson - Second District	Remote	

The following also attended remotely: Mayor Derek Woellner, Alderman Mark Weix, Alderman Steve Sabatke, Alderman Paul Russell, City Administrator Dave Johnson, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Public Works Director/City Engineer Rod Akey, Fire Chief Josh Klug, Information Technology Manager Dustin Brown, Facilities Maintenance Manager Nick Wszalek, Library Director Stacy Stevens and City Clerk Bill Heideman.

II. Vouchers:

1. Vouchers

The vouchers were in the meeting packet.

Discussion was held on whether adequate time is provided to review the vouchers before meetings. Finance Director Unertl answered questions on the vouchers.

Alderman Osness verbally requested that a city-wide audit be conducted. This will be discussed and considered at the next meeting.

Motion (Blake/Osness) to approve the vouchers.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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III. Agenda Items:

1. Discussion and potential recommendation(s) on hiring of Limited Term Employees. On December 29th, 2020, this agenda item was referred to the next regular Personnel and Finance Committee meeting.

City Attorney Hayden's office has sent an e-mail to committee members on this topic. The e-mail provided details on the current City policies related to Limited Term Employees.

Alderman Blake stated that he was satisfied with the current policies. Alderman Osness stated that he had nothing to add.

Motion (Blake/Osness) to approve the policies as presented.

RESULT: APPROVED

2. Review vehicle policy for Facilities Maintenance Manager. At the January 12th, 2021 Common Council meeting, Alderman Osness requested that this item be considered by the Personnel and Finance Committee.

Alderman Osness had requested that this item be placed on the agenda. He would like an “audit” of city vehicles conducted, to determine if the use of certain vehicles could be redefined. He stated that a list of city vehicles could be a valuable tool when doing this research.

Discussion on this will continue at the next meeting. A list of city vehicles will be included in the packet for that meeting.

No action was taken at this time.

3. Review Preliminary 2020 Fiscal Reports

Finance Director Unertl reported the positive news of approximately \$270,000 in savings in the 2020 budget. There may also be an additional \$50,000 (approximate) in revenue which can be used to cover COVID-19 related expenses.

No action was taken.

4. Review City Fund Chart and Cash & Investment Report

Information was in the meeting packet. Finance Director Unertl reviewed the information and chart.

No action was taken.

5. Discuss of succession plan for Merrill's leadership

This was previously discussed by the Committee of the Whole at a meeting on January 8th.

City Administrator Johnson provided verbal details on employee succession and replacement systems.

Mayor Woellner explained that he is in favor of changing the mayoral position to full-time and reducing the city clerk position to part-time. A Committee of the Whole meeting will be scheduled to discuss the future of the mayoral position.

No action was taken at this time.

6. Discussion on establishing new committee for marketing and communication functions

Mayor Woellner had sent an e-mail regarding this agenda item. He provided a verbal overview of his proposal to create this committee.

At the next meeting, more information on the potential merging of the Board of Public Works and Water Sewage Disposal Committee should be available.

No action was taken at this time .

7. Discussion and recommendation(s) on seniority in non-union departments

Alderman Hass had placed this item on the agenda.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Akey provided verbal details on policies and procedures in the Street Department and Water Utility, as they relate to seniority.

Alderman Osness stated he would like to see clear written policies so that the employees know what is expected of them.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Akey stated that promotion decisions should be based on what is best of the City, not what is best for the employee.

Alderman Blake remarked that he would not be in favor of policies bases solely on seniority.

City Administrator Johnson stated that skills are important. Alderman Blake agreed with City Administrator Johnson.

Alderman Sabatke stated his opinion that seniority must be respected.

Alderman Russell suggested that on-going training of replacements is critical.

City Administrator Johnson was directed to prepare a document related to this, for consideration at a future meeting.

No action was taken at this time.

8. Discussion and recommendation(s) on procedures when employee is terminated

Alderman Hass speculated that there are policies in place that are followed when employees are terminated.

City Administrator Johnson suggested that there is no city-wide policy to be followed, because the procedures followed are different for every department.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Akey suggested that a policy be developed for each department.

Alderman Osness suggested that, if and when written policies are developed and approved, the employee should sign off indicated that they understand the policy. Alderman Hass agreed with this suggestion.

No action was taken.

9. Discussion and recommendation(s) on ambulance transfers outside the service area

Alderman Hass noted that this issue was initially discussed by the Health and Safety Committee at their meeting on January 25th.

Fire Chief gave verbal details on the Fire Department policy for accepting ambulance transfers.

Alderman Russell led discussion on the responsibilities of the Health and Safety Committee on this issue. In his opinion, this topic should not be discussed by the Personnel and Finance Committee. City Attorney Hayden added his opinion that this is a complicated issue that overlaps committees.

Alderman Russell asked if there have historically been any incidents of under-staffing as a result of accepting transfers.

City Attorney Hayden was directed to research this issue and then submit his research results for consideration at a future meeting.

No action was taken at this time.

IV. Monthly Reports:

1. Municipal Court

The monthly report was in the meeting packet.

2. Finance Director Unertl

The monthly report was in the meeting packet.

3. City Attorney Hayden

The monthly report was in the meeting packet.

4. City Clerk Heideman

The monthly report was in the meeting packet.

5. City Administrator Johnson

The monthly report was in the meeting packet.

6. Consider placing monthly reports on file

Motion (Blake/Osness) to place on file.

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

V. Establish date, time and location of next meeting

Tuesday, February 23rd, 2021 at 5:15 P.M. The format of the meeting has not yet been determined.

VI. Public Comment Period

Alderman Hass reminded all Common Council members to return their completed Administrator Evaluation forms to him (Alderman Hass) by the end of January.

VII. Adjournment

Motion (Osness/Blake) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:47 P.M.