



CITY OF MERRILL
PERSONNEL AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES • TUESDAY JANUARY 8, 2019

Special Meeting

City Hall Council Chambers

5:30 PM

I. Call to Order

Alderman Russell called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Tim Meehean	Aldersperson - Eighth District	Present	
Paul Russell	Aldersperson - First District	Present	
Steve Osness	Aldersperson - Fourth District	Present	

Other attendees included: Mayor Derek Woellner, City Administrator Dave Johnson, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Alderman John Van Lieshout, Alderman Steve Hass, Alderman Dave Sukow, Alderman Rick Blake, Alderman Rob Norton, Police Chief Corey Bennett, Laura Schulte (Wausau Daily Herald), Dean Dietrich (Special Counsel for the City), Jeremy Ratliff, Diane Wais and City Clerk Bill Heideman.

II. Agenda Items:

1. Review processing and routing of Citizen Feedback Forms.

This has been an ongoing issue.

Alderman Meehean suggested that, in cases when a Citizen Feedback Form relates to both the City Administrator and the City Attorney, the form should be submitted to the Personnel and Finance Committee Chairperson.

Discussion then shifted to the routing of Citizen Feedback Forms in general. Alderman Meehean stated his opinion that all forms should be submitted to the Personnel and Finance Committee Chairperson.

Alderman Osness stated his option that form should be able to be submitted to any Common Council member. Alderman Hass agreed with Alderman Osness.

Alderman Norton agreed with Alderman Meehean.

Mayor Woellner stated that, in his opinion, forms should be able to be submitted to any aldersperson.

Motion (Meehean/Russell) to establish a policy that all Citizen Feedback Forms are to be submitted to the Personnel and Finance Committee Chairperson.

Motion (Russell/Meehean) to amend the motion to establish a policy that Citizen Feedback Forms can be submitted to any voting member of the Personnel and Finance Committee. Motion to amend carried.

Original motion, as amended, carried.

2. Acknowledge receipt of Citizen Feedback Forms.

To date, approximately 130 Citizen Feedback Forms have been completed and submitted. They will not be released to the public at this time.

Alderman Russell explained that he had decided to omit the public comment period on this agenda. In his opinion, the time normally reserved for public comment should be used for discussion with the employees referenced in the Citizen Feedback Forms.

Laura Schulte stated that, in her opinion, the closed session listed on the agenda should be conducted in open session. Dean Dietrich responded that, in his opinion, it is both appropriate and proper to convene in closed session for the purposes indicated on the agenda.

III. Closed session(s):

1. The Committee may convene in closed session pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes Section 19.85(1)(f) to consider financial, medical, social or personal histories or disciplinary data of specific persons, preliminary consideration of specific personnel problems or the investigation of charges against specific persons which, if discussed in public, would be likely to have a substantial adverse effect upon any person referred to in such histories or data, or involved in such problems or investigations, and to review submitted Citizen Feedback Forms related to City employees.

Motion (Meehean/Osness) to convene in closed session. Motion carried 3-0 on roll call vote.

Note: The closed session portion of the meeting was held in the City Hall Basement Conference Room.

Alderspersons present were: Paul Russell, Tim Meehean, Steve Osness, Rob Norton, John Van Lieshout, Rick Blake, Dave Sukow, Steve Hass.

Also present: Mayor Derek Woellner, City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, Attorney Dean Dietrich and Legal Assistant Diane Wais

It was requested that Attorney Dietrich with the assistance of Diane Wais prepare the minutes.

Chairman Russell introduced Attorney Dietrich and explained the reason for his presence at this meeting.

Attorney Dietrich spoke on the information received and distributed to the P&F Committee, and what steps, if any, might be taken regarding the release of the information via Public Records Requests from the media.

Chairman Russell indicated they would start with the information received regarding Finance Director Unertl. Discussion was held on various issues regarding the information received including discussion of the budget preparation and explanation, how questions were answered and the perceived failure to distribute requested information. It was noted by City Administrator Johnson that Finance Director Unertl had received, at her latest evaluation, a written reprimand for her performance. Finance Director Unertl indicated she was sincerely sorry for what happened with the miscommunication, and indicated it will not happen again. There was further discussion about communication of information by Finance Director Unertl.

Alderman Meehean indicated, after reviewing the Citizen Feedback Forms, he had no questions for City Administrator Johnson or City Attorney Hayden and could see nothing that was done illegally or inappropriately. There were no other comments from the room. No further action was taken on City Administrator Johnson and City Attorney Hayden.

7:05 p.m. City Administrator Johnson, Finance Director Unertl and City Attorney Hayden were asked to leave for further deliberation.

A discussion relating primarily to Finance Director Unertl ensued. No further action taken at this time. An additional meeting is anticipated.

IV. Reconvene in Open Session:

1. The Committee may reconvene in open session for potential action(s) on closed session issue(s).

(Note: Although the agenda stated that the Committee may reconvene in open session, it did not.)

V. Adjournment

Motion (Meehean/Osness) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 7:04 P.M.