MINUTES

COUNCIL FINANCE, HUMAN RESOURCES and CITIZEN APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE

Monday, March 25, 2024 – 11:00 AM
City Hall Council Chambers

Members Present:	Lauren Wise, Chair, Council Member Gary Daniel, Vice-Chair, Council Member (Arrived at 11:05 AM) Susan Miller, Citizen Member
Staff Present:	Kelley Craig, Human Resources Director Becky McCann, Communications Coordinator Dean Luebbe, Finance Director

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Committee Chair Lauren Wise welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 11:03 AM.

B. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by Communications Coordinator Becky McCann.

C. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Ms. Miller, seconded by Mr. Wise to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval of Minutes of February 26, 2024 Meeting

Motion by Ms. Miller, seconded by Mr. Wise to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2024 meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Purchasing Policy

Mr. Luebbe stated that Mr. Shepherd has made a couple of changes, which should be highlighted in yellow.

Ms. Miller asked if Mr. Luebbe could discuss section 3.2 in more detail.

Mr. Luebbe explained that the thresholds he initially proposed were stricter than what the state requires because we are a smaller form of government. He clarified that for a

government like Mecklenburg County, they would adhere to the state's limits due to their larger size.

Ms. Miller inquired if Mr. Shepherd recommends that we go with a strict or less strict approach concerning the purchasing thresholds.

Mr. Luebbe responded that it is up to the committee to decide.

Mr. Wise mentioned that in terms of the thresholds, he is not opposed to the stricter options due to our size.

Mr. Luebbe continued, stating that when the committee approves the operating budget and if it's over the threshold and we follow the formal bidding process, his question to Mr. Shepherd was if we need to bring this before the council. He explained that Mr. Shepherd's recommendation would be that since the council approves the budget, we do not need to come back to the committee to approve the purchase order. Mr. Luebbe added that based on Mr. Shepherd's experience, he used to go back to council to seek approval of the purchase order if it was over the threshold, even if council approved it in the operating budget.

Mr. Daniel stated that if we approve it in the operating budget, then he's fine with it not coming back as long as staff follow the procedures.

Mr. Wise suggested that if we don't pass it in the operating budget, then it should come to council, so we should probably add a line that states that.

Mr. Luebbe mentioned that on page 5, it discusses quarterly financial reports on capital projects. He elaborated that this report will include revenues, such as grants, and expenses for items such as improvements made at our roundabouts. Mr. Luebbe presented an example of what the quarterly capital update would look like.

The committee approved the concept of the Finance Director presenting a quarterly update of capital projects.

Mr. Wise asked about the next steps.

Mr. Luebbe explained that if this committee approves the policy, then it would go before council to be approved. He acknowledged that Ms. Miller brought up a lot of things from the last meeting, including purchasing cards. Mr. Luebbe agreed that we should have a policy but envisioned it as a separate policy.

Ms. Miller suggested that the policy should move forward, as it's just one policy in their work program and will be part of many different policies that they will develop and bring before the city council.

At 11:30 AM, Ms. Miller motioned, seconded by Mr. Daniel, to approve the purchasing policy with minor revisions to make the purchasing thresholds stricter. Additionally, if council has approved the operating budget, then a purchase does not need to come back to the city council. The motion carried unanimously.

F. Non-Profit Funding Application Criteria

Mr. Wise stated that we took a look at this last meeting but needed more time to review the information. He asked if these non-profits need to be city-related.

Mr. Daniel clarified that he was referring to Kids in Camp and suggested that if the city were to donate money, it should be applied to kids who live within the city limits.

Mr. Luebbe informed the committee that it would be a good practice for our contributions to solely fund citizens in the city.

Ms. Miller mentioned that the ad hoc process leaves the non-profits in an awkward position if the city doesn't have enough funds to fund non-profits at their current levels. She explained that sometimes non-profits plan to receive the donation as part of their program, even though the funds haven't been allocated. Ms. Miller added that she would like to establish criteria directly related to the city's comprehensive plan or the mission or vision of the city.

Mr. Luebbe suggested that we should establish a date to send out funding requests and a deadline to submit them. He acknowledged that this year he was late in sending them out, resulting in a quick turnaround. Mr. Luebbe also proposed establishing a policy stating that funding to non-profits will be 1% of the city's budget per year.

Ms. Miller suggested that the city could mention in the announcement the strategies that the city wants to fund so non-profits can properly set expectations.

Mr. Luebbe proposed that next year, all the non-profit funding applications come before this committee, and if they did not have a defined business plan, they would not be considered.

Mr. Daniel mentioned that we are contractually committed to giving money to Heart of Brevard and suggested that they should probably be removed from the non-profit funding list.

G. Personnel Policy Updates

Ms. Craig informed the committee that Mr. Hooper has suggested that along with the budget process, we do a review of the personnel policy and identify any changes that we might want to propose. She mentioned that she is still working on the general language in the policy. The first major change is regarding our on-call pay for individuals in the police department, water and wastewater treatment, and public

works, who are currently paid $0.90 per hour. If they are called in, they are required to respond within thirty minutes and are paid a minimum of two hours per call. We are proposing to increase this to $2 per hour. Ms. Craig informed the committee that this change will increase this line item by almost $20,000. Additionally, we will reduce the number of people on-call from three to two employees.

Mr. Daniel asked why we are reducing the number of employees on call.

Ms. Craig responded that in the wastewater department, we have two employees who serve on-call, rotating two weeks on and two weeks off all year long. We are having trouble filling the vacancy for a maintenance technician because no one wants to be on call.

Mr. Daniel said that shouldn't reduce our need.

Ms. Craig explained that we are shifting that position to public works, and they will rotate the on-call duty among other employees. All the employees will be trained to handle maintenance for the lift stations.

Mr. Daniel informed the committee that under the leadership of our previous public works director, when an employee retired or quit, their positions were not refilled. He expressed concern about having someone who is not working at the wastewater treatment plant and is given some training responding to an emergency.

Ms. Craig assured the committee that about 90% of the calls concern the lift stations. She mentioned that we have also had conversations with the public works director and the wastewater ORC about what happens if we get a call for a water line break and a lift station issue and ensure there are enough employees to handle the issue.

Ms. Craig continued, stating that the second personnel policy change came up at the last council meeting, where a council member suggested adding President's Day as a holiday. She said that will cost us $6,500 because we have individuals who work on holidays and will receive additional pay. Across the state, several local governments observe it, several do not, and some give their employees a floating holiday.

Mr. Luebbe asked if several local governments give both MLK Day and President's Day.

Ms. Craig confirmed that some do.

Mr. Luebbe mentioned that when MLK Day came around, most local governments gave employees MLK Day but took away President's Day.

Mr. Daniel expressed his preference for a floating holiday but voiced concerns about increasing the budget.

Mr. Wise asked if staff would prefer a floating holiday over being locked into a holiday like President's Day.

Ms. Craig stated that employees would prefer a floating holiday because they could use it when they like.

Mr. Luebbe added that productivity shouldn't be interrupted under the floating holiday model because the entire city wouldn't be off at the same time.

Ms. Craig informed the committee that last year council approved a parental leave policy that gives six weeks of paid leave to someone with the birth of a child, adoption, foster care, or placement of a child. She said that according to the policy, the person must be employed for a year before they are eligible for that leave, similar to FMLA. We have had a couple of employees who have been here for less than a year who have given birth to a child and have not been eligible for that leave. Ms. Craig recommended that we do an incremental implementation of this policy. If they have been employed for 30 days and less than six months, they are eligible for two weeks of paid parental leave. If they have been employed for more than six months and less than a year, they would get four weeks, and if they have been employed for over a year, they would be eligible for six weeks of paid parental leave. This approach would allow newer employees to have some benefit.

Mr. Wise agreed, stating that we shouldn't penalize employees for having children early in their careers. He mentioned that this would also help us retain employees, and anything we can do to help keep employees would be a huge benefit.

Ms. Miller expressed her support for the policy.

H. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Finance & Human Resources Committee will be on Monday, April 22, 2024, at 11:00 AM.

I. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:27 PM.

X _____

Lauren Wise
Chair, Council Member

Minutes Approved: April 22, 2024

X _____

Alex Shepherd
Assistant to the City Manager