

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Syracuse City Council held on March 2, 2010, at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Conference Room, 1979 West 1900 South, Syracuse City, Davis County, Utah.

Present: Councilmembers: Alan Clark
Douglas Hammond
D. Matthew Kimmel
Larry D. Shingleton

Councilmember Peterson was excused from the meeting.

Mayor Jamie Nagle
City Administrator Rodger Worthen
City Recorder Cassie Z. Brown

1. Meeting Called to Order/Adopt Agenda

Mayor Jamie Nagle called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. as special meeting, with notice of time, place, and agenda provided 24 hours in advance to the newspaper and each Councilmember.

2. Proposed Resolution R10-07 establishing the position of Finance Manager and amending the Fiscal Year (FY) 2009-2010 wage scale accordingly.

Mayor Nagle explained that she has sought the advice of the City Attorney to determine whether the position being established by the proposed Resolution can be entitled Finance Manager or if it must be entitled Finance Director.

Councilmember Shingleton stated that he had another issue he wished to discuss. He stated that he has reviewed various sections of State Code and he feels the City may have violated Section 10-6-157, which states that "the Director of Finance shall be a qualified person appointed and removed with the advice and consent of the Governing Body. . .". Councilmember Shingleton stated that the Governing Body did not formally vote to remove the previous Finance Director in a public meeting. Mayor Nagle stated that City Attorney Godfrey was consulted on that issue and he advised the Governing Body that they should simply reach a consensus rather than take a formal vote. She stated that the Governing Body can seek a second opinion from Mr. Godfrey. Councilmember Kimmel stated he would like to have Mr. Godfrey's opinion regarding the issue in writing. Mayor Nagle stated she will make that request of Mr. Godfrey.

Mayor Nagle then reviewed the wage scale being proposed for the position of Finance Manager. She stated that the starting wage could have possibly been slightly lower than is being proposed, but the reason she selected the existing pay range that she did is because the Finance Manager will be interacting with all other Department Heads and she wants the Finance Manager to feel like a peer of the Department Heads rather than a subordinate. She stated she does not want to set up a bad dynamic in the City. She stated the Finance Manager will be responsible for advising Department Heads and for making tough financial decisions; therefore, it makes sense that they be assigned to the same wage range as other Department Heads. She asked if there are any concerns regarding the wage range she selected. Councilmember Kimmel stated that he feels that the wage is too high. He stated that he understood Mayor Nagle's point and her reasoning for choosing the wage range that she did, and he agreed with that logic, but stated that he felt that the City's pay scale could 'use some work'. He stated he has spent a long time comparing Syracuse City's wage scale with other cities' wage scales and it seems as though the wages being paid to employees in Syracuse City are higher than the wages being paid to employees in other cities. Councilmember Clark inquired as to what pay scales Councilmember Kimmel had compared the City's pay scale to. Councilmember Kimmel stated he has reviewed the pay scales used in Clearfield, Clinton, and Kaysville cities. Mayor Nagle stated that the employees working for those cities earn more money than the employees working for Syracuse City. Councilmember Kimmel stated that at one point in recent history there was a very large pay increase for Syracuse City employees and some new positions were developed at the same time. He stated that situation reminds him of situations that occurred in booming mine towns; some mine towns went from boom to bust in a hurry and it seems as though the thought of the City Council at the time was that the City was only going to continue to grow and therefore employees were paid salaries based on the City someday having a population of 40,000 residents. He stated that the City is now tied to the pay scale and he feels that it needs to be examined. Mayor Nagle explained that the entry level wage for the Finance Manager position would be \$57,000. She stated that she used legitimate benchmarks from the State to determine the wage range and of the benchmarks she used, only one had a lower wage than is being proposed tonight. She stated that the State creates their benchmark data by conducting a nationwide search and then breaking down the results by regions and like duties. She stated the data is very robust and current. She stated that the benchmark that had a lower wage was for a position that did not have supervisory responsibility and was not responsible for creating the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), which the Syracuse City Finance Manager will be responsible to create. Councilmember Kimmel asked if the successful candidate will be paid a wage at the higher end of the wage scale. Councilmember Clark stated that the City can not hire a new employee and pay them a wage higher than the mid-point range in the wage scale. Mayor Nagle stated that her goal is to have a bell curve in the wages paid to City employees. She stated that it is best to have some employees earning the wages in

steps one or two of their range, most employees earning the wages in the middle of their range, and some employees earning the wages at the higher end of their range. Councilmember Clark added that the entry level wage for the Finance Manager is approximately 25 percent less than the entry level wage for the Finance Director position. He stated that the pay is being reduced significantly, but the successful candidate will be asked to do more than was being done by the previous Finance Director. He stated that he has compared this proposed wage range with wages paid for similar skills in the private sector and the City's wages are less than would be paid in the private sector. He stated that if the City's wage was higher than private sector wages, he may be concerned. He added that the City is requiring a minimum of five years experience in this type of position and he felt the wage scale is reasonable, if not low. Mayor Nagle added that the wage scale provides the City with a lot of room to negotiate. She stated she believed that the City will receive applications from many quality candidates and they should be paid a competitive wage to avoid engagement issues. She stated there is a lot of room for increasing the wage paid to the successful candidate as the health of the City's budget improves.

Councilmember Hammond pointed out that there are three Department Heads assigned the same wage range as is being proposed for the Finance Manager position.

Councilmember Shingleton inquired as to what makes an employee eligible for a step increase within the wage scale. City Administrator Worthen explained that years of service or experience are considered as are certificates or additional training and education that an employee has received. He stated that performance is also evaluated before a step increase is given. Mayor Nagle added that step increases are dependant on the criteria that is set. She stated that step increases are usually performance based. She stated that if the Council decides to implement a cost of living adjustment (COLA) all wages within the scale are increased by a certain percentage. She stated that she feels that the current pay scale is very collapsed and compressed and she would prefer if there were more steps within the scale. She stated that if the City's policy is that employees, if given a wage increase, must move an entire step at a time that means that some people would be eligible for a \$4,000 per year wage increase. She stated that smaller gaps between steps make it easier to give employees increases, especially in tight budget years. She stated that the Council's hands are tied by the current wage scale.

Councilmember Kimmel inquired as to the average increase an employee would be eligible for if given a step increase. He stated he believed the difference in each step is approximately five or six percent. Councilmember Clark stated he believed the average step increase would equal a five percent increase. Mayor Nagle stated that not many people experience five percent increases. She stated the pay scale is a detriment to the employees because it is harder for the City to justify five percent increases so employees receive fewer raises.

City Recorder Brown asked for the opportunity to offer an employees perspective on the discussion at hand. She stated that when the Council adopted the current wage scale the majority of City employees received wage increases, but since that time few increases have been given, meaning that the majority of employees have gone up to three years without a pay increase. She stated that the difference in steps may be five percent, but employees are certainly not given five percent increases each year. Councilmember Shingleton stated that is due to the economy and that is not always the way the City would normally function. Ms. Brown stated that before the current wage scale was adopted the City had not conducted a wage analysis for nearly 10 years and the City was operating under an old, outdated wage scale. She stated that the reason some employees received large increases in one year was that no wage analysis had been done for some time and when a wage analysis was finally conducted there were several employees that were grossly underpaid compared to their counterparts in other cities. She explained that employees were leaving their employment with Syracuse City to take jobs in other cities where they could earn a much higher wage for doing the same job. Councilmember Kimmel stated that he is an employee as well and he has a boss and he tries to make money as well when he goes to work so he can relate. He stated that on the flip side there are people in the City that may feel that there are employees in the City that are grossly overpaid. Ms. Brown stated that the employees of the City hear those comments constantly. Councilmember Kimmel stated that his job is to safeguard the taxpayer and to make every dollar stretch as far as it can. Ms. Brown stated that all that she would ask is that before Councilmember Kimmel discusses wage issues with citizens that he do the research and find out the reasons behind the changes to the City's wage scale. She stated that a lot of people compare Syracuse City to other cities that are not similar in population or operations. Councilmember Kimmel stated that he would not mind seeing a comprehensive analysis of the trend in wages in Syracuse City since 1980 to 2010. Ms. Brown stated that she would hope that people would simply 'compare apples to apples' when discussing wages of the City employees. Councilmember Kimmel stated that in the beginning of 2009 the company that he works for implemented a 10 percent cut in pay and gave no increases to its employees for a total of a 13 percent cut in pay. Ms. Brown stated the employees of the City have experienced similar cuts. Mayor Nagle agreed that the City employees have made sacrifices; they have lost the 401K match that the City previously provided and all increases in benefit costs have been passed on to them. She stated, however, that is not what this conversation is about; the purpose of tonight's meeting is to seek approval from the Council to create the position of Finance Manager and assign a pay scale to the position. She stated that the reason she digressed to a discussion about the pay scale is that she simply wanted the Council to know the reasons that she chose the wage range that she chose. She stated that she would be happy to share the benchmarks that she used with the Council and she asked if anyone has any issues with the current proposal. Councilmember Shingleton stated that he is comfortable with the proposed wage scale. Councilmember Clark added that he feels the wage scale is reasonable.

Mayor Nagle then asked if anyone has any questions or concerns regarding the job description for the position. Councilmember Clark stated that he had one recommended change to the job description. He stated that he would like to add a task that the Finance Manager is responsible to communicate financial information to the City Administrator and Governing Body in a timely manner. He stated that he wants the successful candidate to understand that they need to be proactive rather than reactive with their communication. Mayor Nagle stated that she could add some language about proactive communication to the distinguishing characteristics paragraph of the job description. She asked Councilmember Clark if he felt that the communication portion of the job announcement is clearly stated, to which Councilmember Clark answered yes. Mayor Nagle explained that she and Mr. Worthen worked on the job description and job announcement together and they wanted to make sure to communicate that the successful candidate must be very proactive and involved and assume the role of a leader.

Councilmember Hammond inquired as to the significant differences between the duties previously assigned to the Finance Director and the duties that will be assigned to this position. Mayor Nagle stated that she is looking for someone that can be firm in explaining to departments what they need to do with their budget and help them figure out how to accomplish what they need to accomplish. She stated she would also like this person to be able to, for example, explain to the Council that there will be a 14 percent shortfall in the City's revenues and then offer some options for bridging the gap between revenues and expenditures. She stated the employee will be expected to know the policies and ordinances of the City and proactively work with management teams to guide the financial situation of the City. Mr. Worthen added that he wants an employee that is fiscally responsible and accountable as well as someone that can evaluate and develop budget policies. Mayor Nagle stated that evaluating and developing budget policies is a big thing and it is the essential 'piece of the puzzle' that the City has been missing.

Councilmember Kimmel stated that the Council has talked about finding someone that can 'think out side of the box' and he asked how that is communicated in the job description or the job announcement. Councilmember Clark stated that characteristic of someone's personality will be discussed during the interview process. Councilmember Shingleton added that he feels that the ability to 'think outside of the box' is communicated throughout the job announcement. Councilmember Kimmel stated his purpose for asking the question is that if the ability to 'think outside of the box' is a bullet point on the job description the City can then evaluate the employee on that aspect of their job. Mayor Nagle stated that the employee will be evaluated based upon their performance plan, which is different than a job description; performance plans should be negotiated between the City Administrator and the employees. She stated, however, that she will be looking for someone that has the ability to actively engage and come up with new ideas to better the City. Councilmember Kimmel stated he is comfortable with verbalizing the desire to find someone that can 'think outside of the box' during an interview.

Councilmember Clark asked if there is any part of the job announcement or description that communicates the City's desire for the Finance Manager to seek continuing education opportunities or become involved in finance groups outside the City. Mayor Nagle stated that desire could also be included in the employee's performance plan rather than the job description. Councilmember Clark stated that he wants to communicate to the successful candidate that they will be expected to network with finance employees from other cities. He stated he would like for that to be part of the job description. Councilmember Kimmel asked if continuing education will be mandated or simply suggested to the employee. Councilmember Clark stated that the employee's interest in seeking continuing education opportunities should be something that the employee is evaluated on. Mayor Nagle reiterated that continuing education is typically not part of a job description, but it could be part of the individual employee's performance plan. She stated, however, that she could add a bullet point regarding continuing education to the job announcement.

Councilmember Hammond inquired as to the timeline for filling the Finance Manager position. Mayor Nagle stated that she will have the job announcement posted tomorrow and the opening will close on Wednesday, March 17. Councilmember Kimmel asked Mayor Nagle how many applications she expected to receive. Mayor Nagle stated that she would not be surprised to see over 100 applications submitted by applicants from across the country.

Councilmember Clark stated that the job announcement communicates that the successful candidate will maintain all official accounting records in conformance with generally accepted government accounting principles. He stated that the City may receive more applications from the private sector if that sentence is removed. Mayor Nagle stated that she wants to develop an evaluation form to be used during the interviews to assign point values to the qualifications possessed by those being interviewed. She stated it will be easy to tabulate points at the conclusion of an interview to determine the ranking of the applicants.

Councilmember Clark inquired as to where the job opening will be advertised. Mayor Nagle explained that it will be advertised in the Standard-Examiner, the Deseret News, the Salt Lake Tribune, Work Force Services, and on the City's website. She added that she will include LeAnn Fowler's contact information on the job posting; as the Human Resources Specialist it will be her responsibility to receive the applications and answer any questions about the position.

Councilmember Hammond asked if there is an advantage to finding someone that lives in Syracuse City. Mayor Nagle stated that will not be a requirement.

Councilmember Kimmel stated that the job announcement states that preference may be given to applicants with experience in Caselle and he asked if that is the correct way of communicating that desire. Mayor Nagle stated that she felt

the wording was appropriate, but it does not bind the City to automatically hire someone simply because they have Caselle experience. Councilmember Clark recommended adding the word 'software' to the end of the sentence.

Mayor Nagle stated that she is going to ask the State Governmental Accounting Organization (GAO) to provide her with some questions that they typically ask during interviews for finance positions in the government sector. She stated those types of questions would be helpful to the City throughout the interview process. She asked the Council if they felt it would be beneficial to ask those interviewing to submit to a practical test. Councilmember Clark stated that he did not see a downside to asking the interviewees to take a test where they are asked to provide a description of what they have done when faced with certain situations. Mayor Nagle stated that she will also ask the GAO for a copy of a test.

COUNCILMEMBER CLARK MOVED TO ADOPT PROPOSED RESOLUTION R10-07 ESTABLISHING THE POSITION OF FINANCE MANAGER AND AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2009-2010 WAGE SCALE ACCORDINGLY. COUNCILMEMBER SHINGLETON SECONDED THE MOTION. Councilmember Peterson was not present when this vote was taken.

Councilmember Hammond asked Mayor Nagle how soon she believed the City could hire someone in the Finance Manager position. Mayor Nagle stated that the position closes on March 17 and she would like to hire someone as soon thereafter as possible.

At 6:53 p.m. COUNCILMEMBER CLARK MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN. COUNCILMEMBER SHINGLETON SECONDED THE MOTION; ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

Jamie Nagle
Mayor

Cassie Z. Brown, CMC
City Recorder

Date approved: April 13, 2010