

DRAFT

**CITY OF WAUSAU HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF OPEN SESSION**

DATE/TIME: April 9, 2025, at 4:45 p.m.
LOCATION: City Hall (407 Grant Street) – Council Chambers
MEMBERS PRESENT: Becky McElhaney (C), Terry Kilian (VC), Gary Gisselman, Michael Martens, Vicki Tierney
MEMBERS ABSENT:
Also Present: Mayor Diny, Rick Rubow, Matthew Barnes, Kaitlyn Bernarde, Maryanne Groat

The meeting of the Human Resources Committee was called to order by McElhaney. McElhaney said that the mayor wanted to speak to agenda item #3 and moved it to the end of the agenda.

Approval of February 10, 2025 Minutes.

Motion by Kilian to approve the February 10, 2025 Human Resources Committee meeting minutes. Second by Martens. All ayes. Motion passed 5-0.

Human Resources Report for March 2025.

No questions were brought forward.

Discussion and Possible Action to Approve Revised Policy on the Use of Wireless Telecommunication Devices and Services.

Rubow said that the policy has been updated since moving service to FirstNet and the changes are shown in the revised policy.

Motion by Kilian to approve. Second by Tierney. All ayes. Motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the Water Treatment Supervisor Job Description and Pay Grade.

Rubow said that this position was approved in the budgetary process but did not include a job description or pay grade.

Motion by Kilian to approve the Water Treatment Supervisor job description and pay grade. Second by Martens. All ayes. Motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and Possible Decision Regarding Exceeding Authorized Staffing to Cover Extended Military Leave.

Chief Barnes said that the Police department has numerous employees who also serve in the military through the Reserve and National Guard, and they are legally obligated to allow them to serve when called to duty. Barnes shared that one employee is being deployed for one year

beginning in May which will leave a gap. Barnes explained that it can take 6-8 months to have a new employee ready to work if they need to go to the academy. Allowing the department to exceed its authorized staffing level by back-filling would help the department shorten this gap and not increase the budget as the military will be paying wages while deployed. Barnes expects retirements in 2026 and the ability to hire someone now would provide continuity in staffing.

Kilian said that she is in full support of this plan but would like to see the position sunset when the officer returns from duty. Kilian brought up Act 12 requiring municipalities to maintain a level of law enforcement and state funding; Barnes said that they refer it as Maintenance of Effort dealing with shared revenue for services and explained it in more detail and how the department handles it. Barnes said that he believes this will be budget neutral for the department as he expects retirements or someone to leave the department between now and May of 2026, and the person hired will fill that vacancy.

Gisselman asked if it was part of the employee handbook or union contract regarding military service. Barnes explained that there is a federal law that we have to preserve their position and bring them back and no loss. The union contract outlines that the City will make up any difference in pay if the employee is making less serving the military than in their position, however Barnes believes in this case the employee will be paid more by the military and there will be no cost to the City. Barnes reiterated that this item is not to approve the employee's deployment, but rather to allow the department to hire someone during this time that will be fully trained and able to assist for part of the time that the employee is gone and move into a future vacant position. Gisselman asked if they were voting on the funding or position; McElhaney said the position only.

Motion by Gisselman to approve exceeding authorized staffing to cover extended military leave. Second by Martens. All ayes. Motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and Possible Decision Regarding Authorizing a Part Time Officer Program.

Barnes said that the department spends a lot of money training its employees, and sometimes an officer would still be interested in working for the department part-time after retirement or leaving for other employment. Two officers recently left to become instructors at NTC but would be interested in serving the department part-time. Barnes feels that this would be a good opportunity to start a part-time officer program so that they could employ former officers who are fully trained, while saving money because they would not be eligible for health insurance or retirement benefits. The part-time officers would only work if money is available in the budget and would help with patrol, partnering with an officer for a few hours to do targeted work in the community or to help with staffing for events. The officers could also help with training and mentoring the CSO's. Barnes envisions having up to 4 part-time officers that would only be used if money is available, making this request budget neutral.

Gisselman asked if this would be included in the 2026 budget proposal. Barnes said it would not be included, as he will not ask for additional money to fund the positions. If it results in a

valuable program that needs funding in the future, Barnes said the committee would then have a different decision to make.

Tierney said that seeing this presented as a program makes her believe that this not a temporary ask, and she does not want to see money specifically budgeted for it in the future; she is fine with using extra money in the department's budget but does not want additional funding added for this. Barnes said that his intent is for this to be an on-going program for the department but does not expect to add to his budget for it.

Martens asked if this would help save money with overtime. Barnes said the department would not be able to use a part-time officer in place of a full-time officer to avoid overtime per the union contract, but if all the full-time officers declined picking up the overtime, the part-time officer(s) could then be asked to come in. The program could result in less overtime for the department but is not its purpose, which is to enhance service to the citizens.

Kilian asked why this program is needed if the CSO's are fully trained. Barnes explained that the CSO's have not been through the law enforcement academy or the department's field training program, and officer's are able to provide training and mentorship to the CSO's on how to handle situations by learning from example. Kilian asked for clarification on if Barnes expects to bring this back annually. Barnes said no, that once the program is approved it is assumed that it will be ongoing, however, whether the department has funds available each year or officers interested will determine if the department has part-time officers working.

Motion by Martens to authorize the part-time officer program. Second by Gisselman. Motion passed 3-2. Tierny and Kilian were the dissenting votes.

Discussion and Possible Action to Approve Summer Hours Schedule.

McElhaney called on Mayor Diny, who asked to speak to this item. Diny explained that he recently met with key staff to discuss this item and believes that it would be a better idea to do another pilot program between the summer holidays and gather more data and citizen input on the idea of permanent summer hours. Tierny asked if this was to be year-round; Diny said no, the schedule would be just for summer. Diny said he is asking that the committee allow the City to do another short pilot program, collect more information from the public, and then determine if they would like to proceed with making this a permanent summer schedule.

Kilian said that she heard from about 5 people last year about the summer hours who had bills to pay and were not aware that City Hall was closed Friday afternoon. Kilian said she thinks that City Hall should be open regular hours for the citizens and would like to hear from the other committee members. Diny said more customer input could help with this and that some communities hired a third party to conduct a survey. Kilian asked how many responses would be needed to make a decision?

Gisselman said that he was not aware that this was brought to a committee last year and asked who made the decision to close Friday afternoons. Diny said that several emails went out staff

and council about the summer hours last year; no responses were received, and a decision was made to move forward with the pilot. Gisselman said that the Marathon County Courthouse is open Friday afternoons; he asked how the City is supposed to gather responses from people who come to City Hall on Friday afternoon if it is closed?

Tierny asked if any other options were being considered and said that she believes customer service to the public should be the most important factor, and asked if anyone had thought about rotating Friday's off so that everyone has the same opportunity? Tierny also asked if anyone asked the staff that isn't eligible for summer hours what their feeling is of this? Diny said that every department could potentially have people that would be eligible to participate, and mentioned that some departments already have different work schedules.

Kaitlyn Bernarde explained that the options proposed provide the same number of customer service hours to the public and said that Water, Police, Fire, and Public Works administrative staff are also interested in participating in summer hours. Tierny said that she does not believe having a 4-day workweek for government staff is a good thing for the City. Bernarde said that the City also offers alternative ways to pay bills online and utilization of the drop box. Tierny said that those options are great, but not all citizens may have the ability to pay online.

Martens said he sees value in summer hours for employees as a lot of people "checkout" on Friday afternoons, and that the number of transactions on Friday afternoons in the summer is much lower than at other times. Martens proposed that the item be brought back by the new HR Director with more data and then the committee could decide if they would like to do another pilot.

Kilian said that she understands employees wanting Friday afternoons off during the summer, and asked if employees are able to request vacation if they wish to have Friday afternoon off? Bernarde said that employees can request vacation but that her department needs to have enough staff available to adequately serve the public; if two people are scheduled and one person calls in sick, it can result in poor customer service and longer wait time for customers. Kilian said if everyone is gone, there would be no service for the customers and we owe it to the public to be open during the normal scheduled hours. Kilian shared Tierney's belief that not everyone is willing or able to use alternative methods of payment and someone should be available at City Hall to service the public.

McElhaney questioned what was being asked for and the process, saying that last year's pilot did not go through committee or council, and doing another pilot seems like a way around the correct process of approval. McElhaney also questioned why employees can't use vacation if they want off instead of changing business hours, but said that she will support the committee with whatever direction they want to take.

Tierny said that she expects professional services like banks, internet/phone providers, etc. to be available on Friday afternoon if she needs to call them and thinks that municipal service should be available also, and doesn't understand why departments can't rotate staff off. Tierny

said she would love to have Friday's off but the only way she gets them is by using PTO; and City employees have a lot of benefits that aren't available elsewhere.

McElhaney asked the committee how they would like to proceed. Kilian said she doesn't feel that tabling the item will change anything and is not supportive of summer hours. Tierny asked that the item be tabled until a survey can be mailed out to the citizens to gather feedback before moving forward. Martens asked if the item could be brought back in June and an online survey be done to gather feedback, or give it back to staff to work on? Tierny said she doesn't believe in online surveys and doesn't believe it would capture a broad response, as many citizens do not routinely use the City's website.

Motion by Gisselman to table item until the May HR Committee meeting for feedback from the new HR Director, as well as staff. McElhaney asked if they would like a survey? Tierny said yes, she would like a citizen survey. Gisselman would like information about other municipalities and government offices within the City as well. Kilian supported getting a broad public opinion on this item. Second by Kilian to table the item until the May HR Committee meeting for feedback from the new HR Director and staff, options for a survey, and information about hours for other municipalities/government offices in the area.

Maryanne Groat said that information about hours for other municipalities was included in the packet that Bernarde put together and was disappointed how this item was handled. Groat read the information in the packet provided about the smaller municipalities in the area who have summer hours, and said that Bernarde and the Employee Resource Committee worked on this item for over a year but the former HR Director did not bring it forward. Groat said another pilot would be a happy medium at this point until something permanent can be put into place.

McElhaney explained why the item was not brought forward in March. Kilian reiterated that even if one citizen is inconvenienced by this change that it is one too many. Diny gave his opinion that a survey could be done in conjunction with the pilot. Martens said that since what the pilot would look like was unclear, he would like to amend the motion to include this information. Kilian asked when the survey would be done? Gisselman said he thought the surveying could be done within the month by asking those who come into City Hall and at neighborhood groups. Tierney disagreed with Gisselman on this. Martens thought the survey could be done at any time to collect public input. Groat said the proposed summer hours provided by Bernarde in the packet were 7:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 7:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. on Friday. Kilian said that she appreciates staff willing to come in early, but doesn't think that residents will come in early to do business as an alternative to Friday afternoons. McElhaney said that she would like everyone to agree on one option instead of bringing several options to the table. Groat shared her opinion that the handling of this item and the process was not collaborative with Bernarde.

McElhaney said the motion is to table this item until May, get information from other municipalities on their summer hours, get new HR Director input, thoughts from staff on how to

survey residents, and solidify a pilot program to bring back that has one option. All ayes.
Motion passed 5-0.

Adjournment.

Motion to adjourn by Martens. Second by Kilian. The meeting adjourned.

Rebecca McElhaney
Human Resources Committee, Chair

Video available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Q1TI0oh-KQ>