

APPROVED

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

DATE/TIME: July 8, 2024, 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
MEMBERS ABSENT: Vicki Tierney
Also Present: Kaitlyn Bernarde, Captain Nathan Cihlar, Tegan Troutner

The meeting of the Human Resources Committee was called to order by McElhaney.

Approval of the June 10, 2024 Minutes.

Motion by Kilian to approve the June 10th minutes. Second by Martens. All ayes. Motion passed 4-0.

Human Resources Report for June 2024.

No questions were posed regarding the report.

Discussion and Possible Action to Restructure the City of Wausau Animal Control Program.

McElhaney said that this item was tabled last month to bring back information on the qualification requirements included in the original job description for the Human Officer position. McElhaney asked if there were any questions regarding the qualifications or any questions regarding the proposed restructuring of the animal control program.

Motion by Martens to approve the proposed restructure of the animal control program. Second by McElhaney.

Kilian said that the proposal was well thought out. She reached out to several professionals from area veterinarian clinics for their views on what is needed to handle animals, and all felt that it is necessary to have more than a 40-hour certification to be able to adequately handle animals.

Gisselman had questions about the training and appointing of a Humane Officer according to the Wisconsin Department of Consumer Trade and Protection. Troutner clarified that, though the City has a position called a Humane Officer, it does not have the same requirements as Gisselman outlined and is not an appointed position. The proposed program would replace the full-time Humane Officer position with part-time positions. Cihlar provided more information about the 40-hour training, training provided by and partnership with the Humane Society of Marathon County for staff, and current animal handling by the department. Cihlar said that they have had discussions with the Humane Society, the Sheriff's Department, and neighboring law enforcement about the proposed program and working together in the future to provide a more beneficial program.

Gisselman asked about the length of employment for the CSO's and how the department plans to handle training if the CSO's do not stay on long. Cihlar said that they have several CSO's who have been with the department for several years and if the CSO's become Police Officers, they would be a resource for others down the road.

Kilian asked how the department could handle animals without someone who has training and experience. Cihlar said the Police Officers and CSO's respond to anywhere from 500 to 800 animal calls per year and average 1 injury per year (minor scratches or bites requiring a band aid and no lost time).

Gisselman asked if this item needed to go to the Finance Committee. McElhaney said it is budget neutral, so it does not need to go to Finance, only to Council.

Troutner clarified that the current budget for this program will end in October of this year, and the program would restart in January of 2025. McElhaney asked what will happen between October and January. Chief Barnes said that the department would suspend the program but continue to respond to calls as they have all year long. Barnes said they would like to onboard three individuals to start in early 2025. Gisselman said he feels the City is losing the professional aspect of the program. Barnes said that the department would never send anyone out to calls who they aren't confident can handle the duties and believes that the proposed program is going to provide a better service to the community at a lesser cost. The level of training needed to be successful will be provided along with training and partnerships from others such as the Humane Society and Sheriff's Department. Barnes said the program does not currently work because it was built around a single employee. Barnes said the City can continue as-is and ask the Finance Committee for additional funding, or it can approve the new model. Kilian said she thinks the City could come up with additional money to keep the Human Officer position.

Martens said that he agrees with hiring multiple part-time people to allow for more coverage and flexible scheduling. McElhaney shared her experience as a citizen member when the City first began to look at an animal control program and her experience as an alder taking calls from citizens related to animal matters. McElhaney said she is looking at this as an animal control program and after talking with the department and reviewing all the data presented, she will support the proposed program because she believes the community will receive a better service. Kilian proposed using CSO's during the time the Human Officer is not working.

The committee voted on a motion to approve the proposed restructuring of the animal control program. Vote 2-2 (*Kilian and Gisselman were the dissenting votes*). Item will go to Council.

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Vacation Accruals Above Employee Handbook Maximum.

McElhaney explained that some employees have vacation accrued above the maximum allotted amount due to various projects, most recently the implementation of Workday. Exceptions to

the maximum in the past were waived by the mayor. Mayor Diny asked the committee to review this item and determine how to handle it moving forward so that there is a formal policy in place. Henderson said that he would like direction from the committee on drafting policy. Henderson said that he would like to see the City remain flexible on granting exceptions, but something needs to be put in place regarding timelines for use and payout at the end of employment.

Kilian recommended that Henderson provide suggestions as to what the best policy would be.

Martens said that he would hate to see anyone lose their accrued vacation as the exceptions were granted as a sort of reward for doing work above and beyond their normal duties but understands how it could affect the budget if the City had to pay out all accrued vacation over the maximum outlined in the handbook.

McElhaney said that a vote is not needed on this item. The committee has directed Henderson to draft a policy based on the committee's discussion and any input from stakeholders for review and approval by the committee.

Adjournment.

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

Rebecca McElhaney
Human Resources Committee, Chair

Video available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozdK8096u4U>