

APPROVED

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

DATE/TIME: August 12, 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,
Vicki Tierney

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Also Present:

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

Approval of the July 8, 2024 Minutes.

Motion by Kilian to approve the July 8th minutes. Second by Martens. All ayes. Motion passed 4-0.

Human Resources Report for July 2024.

No questions were posed regarding the report.

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Discretionary Performance Incentive (DPI) Program.

Henderson explained that he brought this to the committee to determine if they would like to budget for it or not, as it is currently not in the budget. Henderson said that prior to his arrival at the City, departments used savings from their budgets to give DPI's, including vacancy savings, but the Finance Director has since said that vacancy savings cannot be used for this purpose. Henderson said faults in the program include performance evaluations not being done honestly, resulting in 95% receiving a rating of Exceeds to be eligible for a DPI, employees receiving up to 4.5% for a DPI on top of an annual increase, COLA, and any certification pay, and the majority of the requests come from one department. Henderson said that if council would like to put DPI's back in the budget that is fine, but he wanted to point out the issues with the program.

Tierney asked if salary employees are eligible for DPI's as well as hourly. Henderson said he isn't sure since he's told everyone that there isn't a budget for it since he's been here, but that he thinks they are eligible also. Tierney said from what she read it sounds like only hourly employees are eligible. Henderson said that there have been instances where someone has an issue with their pay and was given a DPI instead of going through the process. Tierney asked if there has been a conversation with the department that has a lot of requests. Henderson said that conversations have happened, but it is evident that the department does not like the City's compensation system and this is what they use to settle the score. Tierney asked how this get fixed; Henderson said that why he brought it forward.

Kilian said that it sounds like the way the program is set up that it is not viable for the City and that there are no guidelines for scoring performance evaluations or asking for a DPI. Kilian asked if requiring a supervisor to document specific criteria on the performance evaluations would make it viable. Henderson said that it may, but his main concern is equity with employees. Kilian said that if the HR Director feels that the program should not be budgeted and should be removed, she would respect that decision. Henderson said that he is looking for direction from the committee. Kilian said that maybe something else should be set up from Human Resources other than how it is set up now.

Tierney agreed that maybe the program need to be revamped so that a DPI can't be requested without more documentation, precise reasons, or process and isn't rubber stamped.

Gisselman said that he believes they want the program to be able to acknowledge great performance from the employees and a budget should be built for it. Gisselman said the program should not be thrown away and the City needs a way to reward employees who deserve it.

McElhaney said it may be a good idea to have an arbiter who reviews with the same standards for everyone so that all employees are treated the same. Tierney agreed and said that if one department is submitting a large number of requests, it should be reviewed and questioned, as DPI's should be for employees who are going above and beyond. Tierney said that she is not against a budget for DPI's because she feels that there are employees who deserve it, but the program should be looked at and changed so that it cannot be abused.

Martens said he sees the importance of the DPI program for employees that exceed expectations but believes that it should be reshaped. Martens suggested only allowing one step for a DPI as an option, or making the performance evaluations more rigorous so that employees are not easily classified as exceeding expectations.

McElhaney said that they should also look beyond base-building increases for rewarding employees and said that the HR Director could provide more options for this.

Kilian asked Henderson if Directors could be asked to provide more documentation with their requests and for Henderson to determine if the DPI is approved. Henderson said that since he is not in the departments, he would need to take the Director's word for it. Kilian asked if each department could have a budget for DPI's instead of it coming out of the general budget. Henderson said there would be an issue determining how much each department should get since sizes vary. Gisselman suggested creating department budgets for DPI's based on a percentage of their compensation budget or some other method. Henderson said a department could then divide out the DPI budget money equally at the end of the year, which would be counterproductive.

Henderson again expressed his concerns with the current program with base-building. Martens suggested proving each department with a DPI budget to be used for bonuses. Henderson said

that some people feel they are entitled to DPI's and some departments use it as a way to get around the City's compensation system, and doesn't feel that this is being a good steward of tax-payer money. Gisselman said that the DPI program should be a way to reward employees who have done something to deserve it during a specific instance or project, and feels that the policy should be looked at for ways to improve it. Henderson read an excerpt of a DPI request and said that every department director has a different definition of what going above and beyond means, and that it's the execution of the policy that is difficult.

McElhaney said that there needs to be a clear definition of what is considered meeting performance standards and what it means to exceed performance standards. Henderson said that when he started with the City he asked CVMIC to provide training to supervisors for how to complete performance evaluations to help with this issue but not a lot of supervisors attended.

Further discussion took place. Martens asked that suggestions to consider be brought back to the committee for revisions to the DPI program.

McElhaney asked if the committee would like the HR Director to bring back suggestions to the committee for ways to revise the DPI program. All agreed.

No vote was taken on this item.

Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the Senior Collection System Technician Job Description.

Henderson said that the addition of the position has already been approved and that this is just to approve the new job description since it did not exist before.

Motion by Gisselman to approve the Senior Collection System Technician job description. Second by Kilian. All ayes. Motion approved 5-0.

Discussion and Possible Action to Ratify the July 8, 2024 HR Committee Meeting Item 3 (Discussion and Possible Action to Restructure the City of Wausau Animal Control Program) in Open Meeting Format Due to Inadvertent Locked Door at City Hall.

Mayor Diny explained that this item was put on the agenda due to the front doors automatically locking during the last meeting and learning that people were locked out who tried to attend. Diny has asked for the door lock system to be reviewed and for possible updates to be integrated that could allow for some sort of notification to be provided that a person is outside.

McElhaney asked Tierney if she would like to speak to the issue since she was the committee member that was locked out during the last meeting. Tierney said that she was a little late due to unforeseen circumstances and did not have any way to notify the committee that she was outside. She emailed the committee chair, council chair, and the mayor about the violation to the open meetings law. Diny agreed to put this item back on the agenda so that Tierney could participate in the vote.

McElhaney asked Tierney if she had any comments that she would like to share about the agenda item and reminded everyone that the item still needs to go to Council for the final vote. Tierney said that she will vote for the CSO plan at this time.

McElhaney asked if anyone else had additional comments. Kilian thanked McElhaney and Diny for bringing the item back to the committee to ratify the vote.

Motion by Martens to approve the proposed restructure of the animal control program. Second by McElhaney. Motion passed 3-2.

Adjournment.

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

Rebecca McElhaney
Human Resources Committee, Chair

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