

**Finance & Personnel Committee
of the City of Onalaska**

Wednesday, November 6, 2019

1

1 The Meeting of the Finance & Personnel Committee of the City of Onalaska was called to order
2 at 7:15 p.m. on Wednesday, November 6, 2019. It was noted that the meeting had been
3 announced and a notice posted at City Hall.

4
5 Roll call was taken, with the following members present: Ald. Jim Olson, Ald. Dan Stevens,
6 Ald. Kim Smith

7
8 Also Present: City Administrator Eric Rindfleisch, City Clerk Cari Burmaster, City Attorney
9 Amanda Jackson, Financial Services Director/Treasurer Fred Buehler, Human Resource Director
10 Hope Burchell, City Engineer Jarrod Holter, Police Chief Charles Ashbeck, Fire Chief Billy
11 Hayes, Ald. Diane Wulf, Ald. Tom Smith, Ald. Boondi Iyer

12
13 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

14
15 Motion by Ald. Stevens, second by Ald. Olson, to approve the minutes from the previous
16 meeting as printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

17
18 On voice vote, motion carried.

19
20 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes/individual)**

21
22 Ald. K. Smith called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that
23 portion of the meeting.

24
25 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

26
27 **FINANCE**

28
29 **Item 4 – 2020 Proposed Executive Budget, including Budgets for General Fund, Special**
30 **Revenue Funds, Debt Service Funds, Enterprise Funds, Capital Project Funds, Community**
31 **Development Authority, and the Gundersen Lutheran Parking Ramp Fund**

32
33 Ald. K. Smith said this item has been placed on tonight’s agenda to give the committee one more
34 opportunity to make adjustments entering the November 11 public hearing.

35
36 Fred referred to a five-page document that recaps what occurred at the October 21 Finance and
37 Personnel II Committee meeting and noted \$68,985 had been transferred from Account No. 640-
38 55450-127 (“Overtime”) to Account No. 640-55450-126 (“Wages – Temporary/Seasonal”).
39 Also, \$3,325 was placed in Account No. 640-55450-126 due to a budget submittal error, and
40 \$254 was placed in Account No. 640-55450-150. The latter is an increase in FICA due to a
41 budget submittal error. Fred next addressed the Omni Center, which is budget-neutral, and said
42 Parks and Recreation Director Dan Wick had told him he wants Account No. 640-46768 to show
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2

43 an increase in revenue of \$3,579 (\$3,325 plus \$254). This will offset the modification in the
44 expenditure that totals \$3,579.

45

46 Motion by Ald. K. Smith, second by Ald. Olson, to increase Revenue Fund No. 640-46768 by
47 \$3,579.

48

49 On voice vote, motion carried.

50

51 Ald. Stevens asked that the committee discuss the proposed personnel additions both in public
52 safety and general administration, noting some of the financial figures have moved around based
53 on contracts that might need to be adjusted, or the fact the city might have to stagger hiring new
54 employees. Ald. Stevens asked City Administrator Rindfleisch to give the committee an update
55 regarding the status of hiring new police officers and firefighters, and also other general
56 personnel. Ald. Stevens also asked City Administrator Rindfleisch to discuss how the city will
57 prioritize hiring these individuals.

58

59 City Administrator Rindfleisch said the proposed increase of three police officers and two
60 firefighters is at this time included in the budget, and the positions are fully funded. City
61 Administrator Rindfleisch also said only the police contracts have been finalized and approved,
62 and he told committee members financial changes had been discussed Tuesday evening. City
63 Administrator Rindfleisch said there had been discussions about potentially delaying hiring for
64 the positions so that throughout the year the wages and benefits costs are fully budget, as they
65 currently are. City Administrator Rindfleisch told the committee that by delaying hiring, the city
66 can afford to pay some of the up-front costs of the contract, and all the positions still would be
67 fully funded on January 1, 2021. City Administrator Rindfleisch said there was an anticipated
68 shortfall of approximately \$88,000, and he told committee members Fred had calculated an
69 \$85,000 shortfall. City Administrator Rindfleisch said there would be \$77,676 in full roll-ups on
70 each firefighter, and each police officer is \$80,100 in roll-ups. The total increase in cost with the
71 Police Department is \$232,732, and City Administrator Rindfleisch said the positions likely
72 would be funded if two officers were hired at the end of the year, and one officer was hired in the
73 middle of the year. City Administrator Rindfleisch told committee members the new hires for
74 the Fire Department are proposed for January 1. However, a contract has not yet been negotiated
75 or signed, and budgetary impacts with that would cause a delay in hiring.

76

77 Fred distributed copies of calculator tapes to committee members.

78

79 Hope said the spreadsheet given to committee members outlines the changes with the contract
80 for OPPA, and she noted SORD has not been completely bargained for. Hope said she attempted
81 to include the worst-case scenario, and told committee members the proposed contract changes
82 next to the COLA for 2020 total \$63,281.45. Hope said the city typically budgets for COLA and
83 step increases that already are in the system. Hope noted she had added a bonus of \$100,000,
84 which must be accumulated, and she said Fred had run the tape for a police officer and

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85 determined that \$85,739.56 would be the necessary funding. Hope also noted the total cost of an
86 officer would be \$88,100, and she told committee members that delaying the hiring of one of the
87 positions – and also delaying the hiring of the other two officers for the bonus portions – will
88 assist with that.

89

90 Fred said the bottom left of the calculator tape represents the worst-case scenario, and it also
91 includes the sergeants. Fred then noted the following from the tapes:

92

93 • The \$283,000 is what is in the current 2020 budget.

94 • The \$297,000 comes from Hope’s sheet, and it shows a shortage of \$14,311.06 for
95 SORD.

96 • There would be a shortage of \$17,812.98 for SORD if the \$14,311.06 is multiplied both
97 by FICA and WRS.

98 • The \$1,573,842.72 shown on the first sheet is what is in the 2020 budget for patrol. The
99 \$62,000 represents overtime, and the \$4,000 represents on call. Fred said Hope had
100 calculated \$1,639,962 and told committee members there is a \$68,883.72 deficit in
101 wages. The \$85,739.56 sum includes FICA and WRS.

102 • The total shortage would be \$232,732.54.

103

104 Ald. K. Smith asked Fred to discuss how the delayed funding adds up.

105

106 Fred said the total for every police officer is \$88,100. Fred said the total would be 2.63 people if
107 \$232,732.54 were divided by \$88,400, which was his figured compared to the \$88,100 sum
108 Hope had calculated.

109

110 Ald. K. Smith said it is her understanding the budget theoretically will balance if one officer is
111 hired midyear and two more are hired at the end of the year. Ald. K. Smith asked if the budget
112 may be left as is to take this action, or if the committee must make an adjustment.

113

114 City Administrator Rindfleisch said he believes the budget may be left as is because the
115 personnel for WRS already is being funded. City Administrator Rindfleisch also said he does
116 not believe the committee has to make a motion to delay hiring, noting it is administration’s duty
117 to ensure the budgets are being met, as directed by the Common Council. City Administrator
118 Rindfleisch said the public must be made aware that while the positions are there, two of them
119 will not be funded until the end of the year, and one will not be funded until midyear.

120

121 Ald. K. Smith said, “Then we’ll be in a position to fully support them.”

122

123 City Administrator Rindfleisch noted the positions are in the budget and funded, adding that will
124 carry over into 2021. City Administrator Rindfleisch said there will be a one-time cost for not
125 hiring new employees throughout the year.

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126

127 Ald. Stevens noted there had been a discussion pertaining to potentially hiring a Human
128 Resources Generalist and asked if there had been any changes to this.

129

130 Ald. K. Smith said one of her concerns with personnel funding is she believes the city is long
131 overdue for the compensation study, which she noted is still in the 2020 Capital Improvements
132 Budget. Ald. K. Smith said she not only wants to support the compensation study, but she also
133 wants to have funding available in the budget so that when the study has been completed, the city
134 may make the necessary adjustments. Ald. K. Smith noted there is a shortage of workers across
135 the nation and stressed the importance of keeping employees content so that a skilled workforce
136 may be maintained. Ald. K. Smith said, "In order to do that, it's always difficult to find things in
137 the budget. But I think that in thinking that through, it only makes sense that we wouldn't be
138 making any big additions other than to public safety, which we're committed to improving that.
139 But adding any other positions or making any major changes to positions until that compensation
140 study was done ... Hopefully that will reveal some areas where adjustments need to be made, or
141 perhaps where we have gaps. Then we need to have some money in the budget to do that. What
142 I'm proposing is that we remove the [HR] Generalist position and delay any grade changes to
143 personnel until the compensation study is complete. By removing those, we would be able to
144 gather up some money to hold for the process of implementing whatever the compensation study
145 reveals."

146

147 Hope said she is requesting removal of the HR Generalist position as well as the Human
148 Resources Director's wage increase. However, Hope also said she wants to keep Payroll/HR
149 Assistant Amy Hewitt's wage increase in the budget as Amy will be assuming additional
150 responsibilities in 2020.

151

152 Ald. K. Smith asked how much would be directed toward the employees.

153

154 Hope said she estimates it would be approximately \$85,000 and told Ald. K. Smith, "With the
155 roll-ups for WRS and the FICA/Medicare, along with insurance for the [HR] Generalist, I think
156 with those funds that would assist greatly if we needed to fund other positions' increases for next
157 year, I would prefer to do that and fund it with that money so that we can start on the right track
158 next year."

159

160 City Administrator Rindfleisch said that by utilizing the \$77,676 Fred had calculated for the
161 firefighters, the changes could fund a third firefighter so that there would be a new employee on
162 all three of the Fire Department's shifts. City Administrator Rindfleisch reminded committee
163 members two firefighter positions are currently fully funded within the budget beginning January
164 1 even though no firefighters are anticipated to be hired at that time. City Administrator
165 Rindfleisch said any hiring delays within the Fire Department could offset the wage impacts for
166 2020 that the wage study would show.

167

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168 Ald. Stevens asked Fire Chief Hayes how a third firefighter position would be utilized compared
169 to only having two firefighters.

170
171 Fire Chief Hayes said there are three rotating shifts in the Fire Department, and he told Ald.
172 Stevens two shifts would be set at five firefighters and one shift would be set at four firefighters.
173 Fire Chief Hayes said the contract would determine factors such as shift assignments and the
174 number of firefighters needed for minimum staffing of a shift, and he told Ald. Stevens having
175 three more firefighters would allow the Fire Department to increase its threshold of minimum
176 staffing.

177
178 Fire Chief Hayes said, “Whether we go to three full-time or four per shift as minimum staffing, it
179 would have an impact on reducing our overtime because we obviously would have one shift that
180 would be short, so we would probably see savings in our overtime budget because you also have
181 to factor in this has been an anomaly of a year with turnover as well as light duty – it’s really had
182 a huge impact. By increasing all three shifts by one person, it levels out the playing field. It
183 increases the minimum staffing to where you have three assigned to an engine company at all
184 times, which is our minimum that they have to have. Or if you have an EMS call, two can
185 respond out. If four people are on duty that day, you have two EMS units that can respond out.
186 We’re seeing more and more back-to-back calls where we’re having to wait for part-timers to
187 come in to pick up the second EMS call. Many times we’re cancelled because Tri-State
188 [Ambulance] has already arrived on scene because of the delay on our end. That would equal
189 out all three shifts, obviously, to provide a better service delivery, and also to maintain
190 consistency across all three shifts where one is not treated differently because they have fewer
191 people.”

192
193 Ald. Stevens asked if having a third person on all shifts would impact response times or the Fire
194 Department’s ability to function.

195
196 Fire Chief Hayes said yes.

197
198 Ald. Stevens asked how different it would be for the city.

199
200 Fire Chief Hayes told Ald. Stevens it would have a tremendous impact and noted currently four
201 firefighters are assigned to a shift. Fire Chief Hayes said having only three firefighters working
202 on a particular shift, there only would be one person at the fire station if two firefighters respond
203 to an EMS call. Fire Chief Hayes reiterated the Fire Department is receiving more back-to-back
204 calls that occur at the same time, noting that the department recently had received three EMS
205 calls within a four-minute span and could not staff two of the calls. Fire Chief Hayes told Ald.
206 Stevens there had been a significant delay and said if the department had had minimum staffing
207 of four, two teams of two could respond to EMS calls, or four firefighters could respond to a fire
208 call.

209
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210 City Administrator Rindfleisch noted the shift schedules for the Fire Department and the Police
211 Department are substantially different, and he said an officer who is assigned to a shift generally
212 only works that one shift. By comparison, the Fire Department has rotating 24-hour shifts, and
213 City Administrator Rindfleisch there are random days in which one of the shifts is understaffed.

214
215 Fred said a reduction of the HR Director grade would total \$3,816 for the wage differential
216 (FICA, WRS), and the roll-ups and the wages for the HR Generalist position would total \$60,956
217 for a total of \$64,772 in the General Fund Budget.

218
219 Ald. K. Smith said, "Part of the reason I'm proposing this, [or] another parallel reason, is I am
220 insistent that we fund some results of the compensation study. It's non-negotiable as far as I'm
221 concerned. And also, with my comfort level, we're already adding a lot of positions. In the
222 current budget we're adding three police [officers] and two firefighters. That's already a lot, and
223 to increase it to an additional one, I just think that's taking up too many new people. It's too big
224 of a change. It's too big of a commitment in increasing personnel. I think five is a lot, and
225 increasing the pay wage of the rest of the people is good. I know we need more firefighters and
226 we need more policemen, but we need to do it in a sequential, kind of slow-growing kind of
227 fashion. I'm not comfortable with suddenly adding any more than five."

228
229 Ald. Stevens told Ald. K. Smith he appreciates her sentiment, and he said, "My opinion is a little
230 contrary. I think our priority here should be in public safety. We have a responsibility. Our city
231 has grown. The number of calls has gone up significantly. If we can increase our response time
232 ... I understand your point, but I think that we know that we need to fill these positions. I'm not
233 sure that we need to wait. I like the idea of the study, and I understand your viewpoint. It's not
234 necessarily wrong; it's just a question of priorities and when do we pull the trigger. Part of why
235 we're here is we're in the business of providing public safety services for our residents. I think
236 we need a third officer on each shift, and I would like our firefighters and EMTs to be able to
237 respond quicker if the occasion arises. It's a different viewpoint that I would be interested to see
238 what discussion would look like in the general Council."

239
240 Ald. Olson said he agrees with Ald. Stevens and stated, "I think we've put off a compensation
241 study for some time, and I think it's time that we address that. But I feel for Billy and those
242 guys, too. We've got some decisions to make about what is important for us. This is not going
243 to be easy, but I think we need to look at this. We've put that study off for quite awhile."

244
245 Ald. K. Smith said this is the best time to put forward a recommendation if the committee
246 members wish to change what currently is in the budget, noting the public hearing will be held
247 Monday.

248
249 Ald. Stevens noted there will be funding available if the HR Generalist position is eliminated and
250 asked if perhaps there is a way the city may conduct the wage study and also add three positions
251 apiece in both the Police and Fire Departments.

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252

253 Ald. K. Smith said she believes the reason there is a gray area is because the committee is
254 attempting to envision how much money the city might need to make adjustments that are
255 recommended during the compensation study. Ald. K. Smith said there is no way to know and
256 that the compensation study might reveal no deficiencies, and therefore no changes are
257 necessary. Ald. K. Smith noted that scenario is not likely, but it is possible, and she said it is a
258 matter of making “a wild, educated guess based on how we think our wages compare to the
259 marketplace, which I think that Eric and Hope and Fred and all city staff probably have a pretty
260 good idea of. They do comparables for the union negotiations, so this really isn’t that big of a
261 deviation as compared to that. I think in my mind I would like to have at least \$80,000 to fund
262 potential changes. There are always many ways of something, and this is just one idea. I also
263 don’t like the idea of sending the message that we’re removing the HR Generalist to hire a
264 firefighter instead because I think it is a valuable, needed position. The world only becomes
265 more complex. That’s the reason why we have a City Attorney right now; we used to just have a
266 contractual one. We have one in house because times are changing. It is also our responsibility
267 to protect our city from the legal obligations that we have to our employees. That’s where an HR
268 Generalist could help within that department.”

269

270 Ald. Stevens noted Ald. K. Smith had stated she wishes to have at least \$80,000 to fund potential
271 changes, and he asked if it is necessary to have those funds in the 2020 budget, or if perhaps
272 those changes could be taken into account and made in the 2021 budget.

273

274 Ald. K. Smith told Ald. Stevens that based on her experience, there will be many unhappy city
275 employees if the study is not funded in this budget cycle.

276

277 Hope noted the previous compensation study the city conducted predated her employment with
278 the City of Onalaska, which began in 2007. Hope told committee members there was a
279 minimum, a midpoint, and a maximum when she began her employment with the city, and she
280 noted there was no way to move along that scale until 2012. Hope said, “My concern is if we
281 don’t do anything, all we’re doing is delaying the issue, and now we have angry employees
282 because now they know how much they’re worth, and they’re going to go other places.”

283

284 City Administrator Rindfleisch said the mistake of having a compensation study done is not
285 being able to fund the study once it has been completed, and he stated, “I think that speaks
286 volumes to the relationship with the employees if you don’t fund the results of that study.” City
287 Administrator Rindfleisch addressed Ald. Stevens’ question and told him he believes there likely
288 are ways of doing both. City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “The reason I suggested there are
289 ways to do both is the impact to the public is going to be bigger than they’re used to seeing
290 because of foregoing the expenditure restraint and using the full levy, as what my budget
291 proposes. There’s no denying that. But it’s a one-time shot. If you exceed the expenditure
292 restraint and forego that payment for one year, you’re only doing it for one year. If you decide to
293 try to fund it down the road and exceed your expenditure restraint in year two, now you’re

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294 doubling up – compounding interest, if you will – on the missing expenditure. While it's not
295 much, it's enough you can still fund a position with over time. If you're maximizing your levy
296 and exceeding your expenditure restraint, I would suggest only doing it one time. What can you
297 get with that one-time purchase and then resetting yourself for future use? I believe you can do
298 both. As we just did in the Police Department, you can deal with it by understanding you're
299 funding a position, but you're delaying hiring those positions until such time that it becomes
300 budget-neutral. That would be the case with the firefighter position. It would be utilizing the
301 [more than] \$60,000 [Fred] pointed out here for the changes in the Administration/HR Suite for
302 one position, but then delay hiring those positions until the results of the wage study come back.
303 We would know what the impact has to be, then we'd fund those impacts through _____ study. I
304 think as long as the departments understand that, there's a way of doing that. Then those
305 positions are in place January 1, you reset yourself, you recollect expenditure restraint, and you
306 only have minimal levy adjustments going forward.”

307

308 Fred said that when City Administrator Rindfleisch turned over the budget to the Common
309 Council, the total was \$11,691,088. Fred said the city must work within that total and stated,
310 “That's exactly what we're doing, because we can't go higher.” Fred said the \$11,691,088 puts
311 the city under the outside cap, and it gives the committee the \$64,772 to move elsewhere.

312

313 Ald. K. Smith said, “What I'm trying to express about adding the other firefighter is, I
314 understand we can do that for this budget. But I'm thinking ahead to the next budget and feeling
315 concerned that I would like to have the wiggle room of not being committed to a position
316 because of all the variables in life that happen.”

317

318 Fire Chief Hayes acknowledged this is a sensitive subject, noting that he had submitted three
319 firefighter positions and stating he never will turn down two positions. However, Fire Chief
320 Hayes also noted that for years the city has followed the Chippewa Valley Technical College list
321 regarding how it does its application, CPAP, and psychological processes. Fire Chief Hayes said
322 the list CVTC provides has been exhausted because of turnover and backgrounds of individuals
323 who have applied. Fire Chief Hayes said it would be necessary to create a list because the Fire
324 Department would not have any eligible applicants until May 2020 if it followed the CVTC list.
325 Fire Chief Hayes said that while it is possible for the Fire Department to create its own list, the
326 department would have to work with Local 127 and Amanda on creating its own process of
327 advertising on its own, accepting applications, and operating its own process. Fire Chief Hayes
328 said he cannot see any way for the city being able to hire someone past the first quarter, and he
329 stated, “Whatever savings that would be, as much as I would like to say I would love to have
330 three firefighters January 1, I'm going to say it's impossible at this point. There would be some
331 savings somewhere that we could recognize.”

332

333 City Administrator Rindfleisch noted the savings would be \$77,676 if two firefighters were delay
334 hired July 1. City Administrator Rindfleisch said the wage study likely will have been
335 completed by that time, and the results will need to be implemented. City Administrator

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336 Rindfleisch told committee members there will be \$77,676 in savings if neither firefighter is
337 hired by July 1, and he noted there would be potential savings later in the year with a third
338 firefighter that is funded via the other positions. However, City Administrator Rindfleisch also
339 said what will happen the following year is unknown, and he stated, “The worst-case scenario is
340 by the time we know what the end results are, if you’re funding those positions within that
341 budget, the impact is so great – quite frankly, I don’t think it’s going to be more than the
342 [\$77,676], but let’s say it is – that you still fund the positions in 2021, but we’re delaying hiring
343 the position again until further on in 2021 until we can afford to do so. The position is if you’re
344 funding them though they exist, we don’t necessarily have to hire them until we can afford to
345 hire them. I do not anticipate that is going to be the case, but if that is the case we still have that
346 third firefighter on the roster, but we just don’t fill it until 2021.”

347
348 Fred noted the bonus portion with the FICA for 2020 totals \$129,180, and he said that will not be
349 there moving into 2021, and that will allow some of the positions – the Police Department, Fire
350 Department, or a combination of both – to be filled.

351
352 Ald. Stevens asked if some of the one-time savings had been allotted for the third officer in the
353 Police Department, and he asked if the savings also could be utilized for the third firefighter
354 position.

355
356 City Administrator Rindfleisch said the 2.63 officers to which Fred had referred earlier is all-
357 inclusive of that, and he also noted there is a one-time cost of \$120,000 this year that the city will
358 not have. City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “You’re budgeting for this year, but that is
359 available in the following years for implementation of wages or new positions down the road.
360 That’s in addition to what I was referring to.”

361
362 Fred told the committee the city will lose more than \$70,000 in 2021 in reference to the levy cap
363 and said that must be taken into consideration.

364
365 Ald. K. Smith noted she is serving as an alderperson until at least April 2020 and said she does
366 not want future alderpersons to express frustration over decisions being made during this budget
367 cycle that they will have to deal with. Ald. K. Smith said she believes there is agreement on
368 removing the HR Generalist position and also the grade change for the Human Resources
369 Director. Ald. K. Smith also asked if the grade had changed for the Payroll/HR Assistant
370 position had changed.

371
372 Ald. K. Smith was told yes.

373
374 Ald. K. Smith said the committee must decide whether to support Hope’s request and leave the
375 position as is in the budget, or not make any changes until the compensation study has been
376 completed.

377
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378 Ald. Stevens inquired about Payroll/HR Assistant Amy Hewitt's additional duties.

379

380 Hope said she anticipates Amy will take charge of the safety functions, and she noted there are
381 several policies and procedures that have not been updated since before she began her
382 employment with the city. Hope said Amy also will be in charge of trainings and handling
383 workers compensation.

384

385 Ald. Stevens asked Hope if it would be more appropriate to wait for the compensation study, or
386 if she recommends leaving in the budget what is proposed for Amy's position.

387

388 Hope said she recommends leaving it as proposed as come January 1 she may give Amy the
389 additional responsibilities without feeling like she has to wait for a compensation study to do
390 that.

391

392 Motion by Ald. Stevens, second by Ald. Olson, to remove the HR Generalist position from the
393 2020 Proposed Executive Budget.

394

395 City Administrator Rindfleisch asked that the positions, including the HR Generalist position,
396 not be removed as there must be an approved position description that may be studied as part of
397 the wage study. City Administrator Rindfleisch said that without the positions existing or
398 changes in the positions existing, the comparables will not be comparable to what the actual
399 duties are. City Administrator Rindfleisch said the committee should remove the funding for the
400 HR Generalist position from the budget.

401

402 Motion restated:

403

404 Motion by Ald. Stevens, second by Ald. Olson, to remove the funding for the HR Generalist
405 position from the 2020 Proposed Executive Budget.

406

407 On voice vote, motion carried.

408

409 Motion by Ald. Stevens, second by Ald. Olson, to remove the pay increase for the Human
410 Resources Director position in the 2020 Proposed Executive Budget.

411

412 Ald. K. Smith asked if the grade will change.

413

414 Hope said the grade will remain where it is currently.

415

416 Ald. Stevens asked if the committee needs to specify Hope will still qualify for COLA increases.

417

418 City Administrator Rindfleisch said perhaps the motion should state it is for the pay change that
419 would come with a grade change.

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420

421 Motion restated:

422

423 Motion by Ald. Stevens, second by Ald. Olson, to remove the pay grade change for the Human
424 Resources Director from the 2020 Proposed Executive Budget.

425

426 On voice vote, motion carried.

427

428 Motion by Ald. Stevens, second by Ald. K. Smith, to approve the increase of one additional
429 firefighter/EMT position to the current two firefighter/EMT positions to be hired on a staggered
430 basis in the 2020 Proposed Executive Budget.

431

432 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, "Because we have the funding for the third firefighter to be
433 hired on a staggered basis, I think from the language Kim had proposed for what purpose, I think
434 if we state the purpose of funding the impacts of the wage study, it would direct staff to why
435 we're staggering those hires."

436

437 Ald. Olson asked if it will be possible to conduct the wage compensation study and hire a third
438 firefighter.

439

440 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, "I believe so, yes."

441

442 Fred said, "We're not increasing the budget. We're adding a firefighter, but you only have
443 \$64,772. By delaying that position to accomplish both the study and then delaying it until you
444 have sufficient funding to back it up, keep in mind in 2021 that will be annualized." Fred also
445 noted the city will lose \$73,000 in 2021.

446

447 Ald. K. Smith stressed she would love to add the third firefighter position, and also that she
448 believes the city needs it. However, Ald. K. Smith also said, "We are adding some, and we do
449 need to prioritize the compensation study, and we need to look ahead to the following year."

450

451 Fred noted the one-year cost for three policemen and two firefighters is \$419,652.

452

453 Ald. K. Smith said the city would be adding \$500,000 to its 2021 Operating Budget.

454

455 City Administrator Rindfleisch noted the city will have to be aware of the items it funds now in
456 2021, and he said, "For funding everything, including the impact of the wage study in 2020, it's
457 two firefighters at a cost of \$77,676 that are already funded as of January 1, which we already
458 know we're not going to be able to recruit and hire through a delayed hire, so there's \$150,000
459 available if neither one of those two are hired at all. You're putting them in the budget, but
460 you're not funding them, plus the \$67,000 from the changes made in the HR Department as well.
461 I think there is room to fund it that way. As I stated [Tuesday], 2021 is a challenge, but the

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462 ability in 2021 to grow and hire new positions will solely be dependent on our net new
463 construction. It's a one-time thing. If we're going to forego the expenditure restraint for a year
464 and do it for a year, create the positions you truly want for the long term. It's a one-time
465 opportunity that we have which we won't be able to go back to next year, and we could lose the
466 expenditure restraint for 2022 and hire a third firefighter. What I am suggesting is that this is the
467 opportunity to do it on a one-time basis. It does increase by \$500,000 in the levy, but going
468 forward the levy is only being increased by your ability through net-new construction and
469 growth. ... [I know] 2021 will be a challenge; there's no doubt about it. [However], 2022 will
470 mean that we have six additional public safety people on staff."

471

472 Ald. Stevens said it is his understanding the city might have limited options if it wanted to add
473 the third firefighter in 2022.

474

475 City Administrator Rindfleisch said that is correct.

476

477 Ald. Olson said, "We're in the position to make these decisions out of need, and we've defined
478 that the compensation study and the firefighter are needs that we have that are important to us. If
479 all of you agree, I think we can defend this to the public because they are needs that are
480 available. Does everybody agree with me?"

481

482 Ald. K. Smith reiterated she believes the city needs a firefighter, but she also said, "I think it's
483 outside of the traditional, conservative spending of the Onalaska City Council. This deviates far
484 from that."

485

486 Ald. Stevens said, "We're already deviating from that by deviating from the expenditure
487 restraint."

488

489 Ald. K. Smith said, "I don't think that's true, because although Onalaska is traditionally very
490 financially conservative, it also is very progressive in that the Council has always tried to have a
491 vision for the future. I think that by passing the restraint, I think that was a very frugally
492 responsible thing to do to maximize the ability that we are able to spend. But that doesn't open
493 the floodgates and put us in a position where we're spending money that is then committed to be
494 spent again in the following year. We're trying to fix some of the things that are wrong and not
495 overextend ourselves again into an area. I will go with the majority and support the firefighter,
496 but I feel obligated to try to explain my position as best I am able to."

497

498 Ald. Stevens said, "I think both sides are defensible positions. I completely understand the
499 viewpoint. They are two different approaches, and I don't know that one is particularly right or
500 wrong. It's just a choice that we're going to have to make, and what is the best way to get to the
501 future that we want. If something were better all the way around, I think there would be no
502 discussion over it."

503

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504 Hope said she does not want to be laying off employees in 2021, stating she believes the worst
505 thing the city could do is hire someone and then lay off him or her the following year. Hope
506 said, “Even if we delay hiring them, as much as we need them, that is my biggest concern. Or
507 we eliminate another position to keep that position.”
508

509 Ald. K. Smith said there was a push to create the firefighter position when funding for the HR
510 Generalist position was removed from the budget. Ald. K. Smith said, “I brought forward that
511 recommendation with the intent of helping our employees as a whole, and that was picked up
512 and used to add another firefighter. Whatever explanation you want to use, that is what
513 happened, so that is the message that we just send our HR Director, who also just got a pay grade
514 adjustment she didn’t ask for taken away as well. There are people who perhaps are needing
515 responses for their questions that they have about HR issues.”
516

517 Ald. Stevens told Ald. K. Smith he agrees with her, and also that she has raised excellent points,
518 and he said, “My counterpoint is that we have a responsibility to give our employees the tools
519 necessary to do their job well. But we also represent the people of Onalaska, and I think that the
520 priority is that we fill holes or deficiencies in the public safety category. Like I said, they’re both
521 valid.”
522

523 Fire Chief Hayes told committee members he understands the dilemma they face as well as the
524 position they have to take. However, Fire Chief Hayes also said he must speak for the members
525 of the organization, and he stated, “The fact that we have such low staffing with the service
526 expectations that the public is expecting us to deliver, and the turnover that we’ve had this year
527 has directly related back to the safety and our low-staffing situations into the burnout period.
528 One firefighter each shift is going to help, but again, this is a small step toward a larger solution.
529 You asked me at the [Finance and Personnel Committee] meeting what it would take to get us
530 where we need to be. Certainly, 16 more positions is where we should be. I know this
531 organization will never get there. That’s a lot to say. But one position each shift will make a
532 difference and get us in the right direction because we want to retain our good employees.
533 We’ve lost a lot of good employees in the last year and a half since I’ve been here just because of
534 the staffing issues.”
535

536 Ald. K. Smith said she believes the larger discussions pertaining to the budget need to occur
537 sooner so that these items are not still being debated as the budget process nears completion.
538 Ald. K. Smith then welcomed input from Ald. Wulf, Ald. Iyer, and Ald. T. Smith, all of whom
539 were in the audience, before the committee votes on the motion on the floor.
540

541 Ald. Iyer echoed Hope’s concern regarding having to potentially lay off an employee and said
542 she would like to avoid that possibility.
543

544 Ald. Wulf said she understand both Ald. Stevens’ and Ald. K. Smith’s respective points of view,
545 and she stated she would love to hire three firefighters. However, Ald. Wulf also stated she sides

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14

546 more with Ald. K. Smith this evening and said it is a matter of being good stewards of the
547 taxpayers' dollars and not leaving the next Council to face potential issues. Ald. Wulf reiterated
548 Ald. K. Smith's point that the City of Onalaska always has been conservative and progressive at
549 the same time, and she also reiterated she supports Ald. K. Smith this evening.

550
551 Ald. T. Smith said he also agrees with Ald. K. Smith, stating he is concerned about city staff.

552 Ald. T. Smith said, "We're all here to keep the city running, and we also have employees that
553 keep the city running."

554
555 Ald. Stevens said tonight's discussion gives the Council guidance going forward, and he stated,
556 "I think if we put it to a vote I would probably still vote for my motion. I'm also for the
557 employees, so this isn't something I'm going to hold up the whole process on."

558
559 Motion restated:

560
561 To approve one additional firefighter/EMT position to the current two firefighter/EMT positions
562 to be hired on a staggered basis in the 2020 Proposed Executive Budget.

563
564 On voice vote, motion carried, 2-1 (Ald. K. Smith).

565
566 **Item 5 – 2019 Omni Center Financials**

567
568 Fred reported that revenues total \$447,029.22, and expenditures total \$455,965.23 for a deficit if
569 \$8,936.01.

570
571 Motion by Ald. Stevens, second by Ald. Olson, to accept the 2019 Omni Center Financials and
572 place them on file.

573
574 On voice vote, motion carried.

575
576 **Item 6 – 2019 General Fund Financials**

577
578 Fred addressed Street Department Expenditure Account No. 100-53311-370 ("Salt & Sand") and
579 noted the current deficit is \$22,531.56. Fred said Jarrod is expecting a deficit of approximately
580 \$30,000. Fred next addressed Revenue Account No. 100-00000-46725 ("Swimming Pool
581 Revenue"), noting \$68,000 in revenue was anticipated and \$63,328.88 was collected. However,
582 \$12,000 was budgeted for Revenue Account No. 100-00000-46711 ("Park Facility Rental"), and
583 \$17,249.90 has been collected.

584
585 Motion by Ald. Stevens, second by Ald. Olson, to accept the 2019 General Fund Financials and
586 place them on file.

587
588 On voice vote, motion carried.

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15

589

590 **Item 7 – Approval and authorization for City Clerk to submit Memorandum of**
591 **Understanding between the Wisconsin Elections Commission and the City of Onalaska**
592 **regarding election security subgrant program**

593

594 Cari told committee members the state has provided election security funding for municipalities.
595 Cari said security is very high for elections, and she told committee members her computer needs
596 to be updated or she will be cut off from service in January because it is not adequately
597 providing. Cari said her computer will be replaced, and thus she will be applying for a \$600
598 grant that will be put toward the purchase of a computer. Cari said the city may only submit for
599 one at this time, but she also said she hopes the city could do a second submittal if there are
600 funds remaining after municipalities have submitted their paperwork.

601

602 Motion by Ald. Olson, second by Ald. Stevens, to approve and authorize City Clerk to submit
603 Memorandum of Understanding between the Wisconsin Elections Commission and the City of
604 Onalaska regarding election security subgrant program.

605

606 On voice vote, motion carried.

607

608 **Item 8 – Gundersen Lutheran Parking Ramp Financials for 3rd Quarter 2019**

609

610 Motion by Ald. Stevens, second by Ald. Olson, to accept the Gundersen Lutheran Parking Ramp
611 Financials for 3rd Quarter 2019 and place them on file.

612

613 On voice vote, motion carried.

614

615 **Item 9 – Approval of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Medical Director Agreement**
616 **with Gundersen Lutheran Administrative Services**

617

618 Motion by Ald. Olson, second by Ald. Stevens, to approve Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
619 Medical Director Agreement with Gundersen Lutheran Administrative Services.

620

621 Ald. K. Smith asked if this is the same agreement the city does every year.

622

623 Fire Chief Hayes said this is the first time Gundersen has offered a specific agreement, telling
624 committee members that Dr. Chris Eberlein has been the medical director. Fire Chief Hayes
625 noted this has been more of an agreement between the two agencies. However, because Tri-
626 State Ambulance is the provider for La Crosse County as well as this region through Gundersen,
627 Dr. Eberlein is the medical director for a majority of the agencies. Fire Chief Hayes said this is
628 an attempt to establish an agreement, and he noted both Amanda and Gundersen’s attorney had
629 changed the language in the agreement. Fire Chief Hayes said, “This is just to finally have a
630 medical director in writing agreement.”

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16

631

632 On voice vote, motion carried.

633

634 **PERSONNEL**

635

636 **Item 10 – Monthly department presentation: City Clerk Department**

637

638 Cari's presentation included the following:

639

640 • The City Clerk Mission Statement is to “*maintain and provide public records, quality*
641 *services and assistance to the citizens of the City of Onalaska, elected officials and City*
642 *Departments relative to the functions of government in a courteous, timely and cost-*
643 *effective manner.*”

644 • The City Clerk staff includes Cari, Deputy City Clerk JoAnn Marcon, Office Clerical
645 Support Stacy Wilk (allotted 25 percent of staff time), Chief Inspectors, and Election
646 Inspectors. The elections staff includes approximately 30 regulars and 30 alternates.

647 • The areas of focus in the City Clerk's Office are Ordinances and Resolutions, Agendas
648 and Minutes, Elections, and Licensing.

649 • The process for ordinances and resolutions is as follows:

650 ○ Either a staff member or an elected official makes a request for a change.

651 ○ The City Attorney typically drafts the ordinance or resolution.

652 ○ City staff reviews ordinances and resolutions.

653 ○ Ordinances are presented to the Administrative and Judiciary Committee, and
654 resolutions are presented to the appropriate board or committee.

655 ○ Ordinances and resolutions are presented to the Common Council for approval.

656 ○ When necessary, ordinances and resolutions are published in the Coulee Courier,
657 the official city newspaper.

658 ○ Ordinances are merged into the Code of Ordinances, which are updated monthly
659 on the city's website.

660 • The process for agendas is as follows:

661 ○ Information is submitted for agenda preparation, and agendas are distributed.

662 ○ A committee meeting is held.

663 ○ Information is submitted for the Common Council agenda, and that agenda is
664 distributed.

665 ○ The Common Council agenda

666 ○ There is an official record kept of the meeting agenda and the attachments.

667 • The process for meeting minutes is as follows:

668 ○ A meeting takes place.

669 ○ The transcriptionist prepares the minutes.

670 ○ Staff reviews the minutes.

671 ○ The minutes are edited and distributed.

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17

- 672 ○ The city’s website is updated, and an official record of the minutes is retained.
673 • The process for elections is as follows:
674 ○ The public is informed of elections via publications.
675 ○ The list of poll workers must be approved every two years.
676 ○ Training occurs. Cari said the city likely changes over one election team every
677 year, and the turnover is likely five people per year.
678 ○ Supplies are purchased and prepared.
679 ○ Voting machines are tested.
680 ○ Election staff works with absentee balloting.
681 ○ Election staff works on security and accessibility.
682 • The majority of licensing is liquor licensing. A majority of the licensing is annual, and it
683 also is ongoing.
684

685 Ald. K. Smith asked Cari if codifying the Code of Ordinances will be a positive effect for her.
686

687 Cari said she does not know if it will save a significant amount of time as the process will be the
688 same. However, Cari said what will be gained is staff will have a tracking record of when things
689 were changed. They also will be easier to search for, and easier to utilize on a cellphone.
690

691 Ald. Stevens said his interactions with the City Clerk’s Department have been “smooth and
692 professional,” and he asked Cari what she considers to be the biggest challenge to her office.
693

694 Cari said keeping up with elections due to the high volume of changes. Cari noted there
695 sometimes are 5,000 absentee ballots, and also that she has worked in three different voter
696 registration databases. Cari said there is a proposal for individuals to automatically be registered
697 at the Department of Motor Vehicles.
698

699 **Item 11 – Update from Human Resources on any Police and Fire staff vacancies (for**
700 **information only)**

701
702 Hope reported that one vacant firefighter position had been filled in late October, and the
703 firefighter will be completing his two weeks of 40 hours and going on a shift next week. Hope
704 also reported a formal offer had been made earlier today to a candidate to replace Brian Everson.
705 This candidate is currently a part-time staff member, and Hope said the Fire Department will be
706 at full staff once the candidate joins the staff. Hope said there still are two vacancies in the
707 Police Department. The professional panel and the Police and Fire Commission have conducted
708 interviews, and testing still must be set up. Hope said the goal is to have at least one officer start
709 before the end of the year.
710

711 **Item 12 – Review and consideration of changes to the following job descriptions:**
712

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18

- 713 A. DARE/GREAT Officer
714 B. School Resource Officer (SRO)

715

716 Hope said the physical requirements have been changed. Also, under Section E of “Essential Job
717 Functions,” the officer works as a patrol officer when school is not in session. During summer
718 break, the position will revert back to a 5-2/5-3 schedule, with shift assignment being designated
719 by the Police Chief based on seniority between the DARE and SRO positions. This will under
720 normal circumstances be one assigned to the day shift and one assigned to the night shift, but this
721 may change based on departmental needs. Days owed for any time working a 5-2/5-2 schedule
722 will be scheduled by administration to fall on days during the school year when school is not in
723 session (holidays, breaks, staff days). Weekends are excluded.

724

725 Motion by Ald. Olson, second by Ald. Stevens, to approve the changes to the job descriptions for
726 the DARE/GREAT Officer and the School Resource Officer.

727

728 On voice vote, motion carried.

729

730 **Item 13 – Review and consideration of VelocityEHS/MSDSonline contract for January 31,**
731 **2020 through January 31, 2023**

732

733 Motion by Ald. Olson, second by Ald. Stevens, to approve the VelocityEHS/MSDSonline
734 contract for January 31, 2020 through January 31, 2023.

735

736 On voice vote, motion carried.

737

738 **Item 14 – Review and consideration of out-of-state travel for Kim Isensee to attend Federal**
739 **Transit Administration (FTA) Triennial Review Conference in Chicago, IL from December**
740 **18-20, 2019**

741

742 Motion by Ald. Stevens, second by Ald. Olson, to approve out-of-state travel for Kim Isensee to
743 attend Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Triennial Review Conference in Chicago, IL from
744 December 18-20, 2019.

745

746 On voice vote, motion carried.

747

748 **Item 15 – Discussion regarding communication with and role of Council in Personnel issues**

749

750 City Administrator Rindfleisch distributed to committee members a two-page memo he had
751 written and highlighted the following points:

752

753 **Council Powers**

754

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19

- 755 • Cities are governed by a Common Council consisting of alderpersons and the Mayor.
756 Alderpersons are the individual members of the Common Council, which makes
757 decisions as a body. Individual alderpersons are not empowered to act on behalf of the
758 city, and may only exercise power when a quorum of the Council is present.
- 759 • The Wisconsin State Statutes do not provide a list of duties for alderpersons, although the
760 Common Council has full legislative or policy-making authority. The Common Council
761 appoints the City Administrator and confirms appointments made by the Mayor. It has authority for the management and
762 control of city property; management and control of city finances and highways; the
763 power to act for the government and good order of the city, for its commercial benefit,
764 and for the health, safety, and welfare of the public. The phrase “management and
765 control” as used in Wis. Stat. 62.11(5), refers to its general role as the governing body of
766 the city rather than to any daily management or supervision of city affairs.
- 767 • To exercise management and control, the Council enacts ordinances, resolutions and
768 motions; creates committees, boards and commissions; approves and amends the annual
769 budget; levies taxes; approves the paying of claims made against the city; grants licenses
770 issued by the city; and enters into contracts on behalf of the city. It may carry out its
771 powers by license, regulation, suppression, borrowing of money, taxation, special
772 assessment, appropriation, fine, imprisonment, confiscation, and other necessary and
773 convenient and legal means.
- 774 • The Council does not enjoy executive or administrative powers of city government,
775 which are carried out by the City Administrator, who serves at the pleasure of the
776 Council.
777

778
779 **Personnel Issues**

780
781 To carry out its policy-making authority, the Common Council by its very nature needs to be a
782 deliberative and public body. Therefore, by definition the Council is not the appropriate venue
783 for discussions and decisions regarding individual personnel issues:
784

- 785 • **Authority:** The Council is empowered by statute to make broad personnel policies for
786 the city through its legislative role, but is not statutorily empowered to exert executive
787 authority over police or fire department personnel, which is vested by statute to the
788 Mayor, or administrative authority over all other employees, which is delegated to the
789 Administrator by ordinance.
- 790 • **Confidentiality:** Employees have an expectation of privacy in dealings with their
791 employer, and in many cases have a right to confidentiality in regards to information
792 obtained by their employer (HIPAA laws, harassment claims, performance reviews,
793 investigations, etc.). Because individual alderpersons cannot exercise authority
794 individually, they must deliberate with other members of the Council. Because this
795 deliberation must include the sharing of information, confidential personnel issues must

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20

- 796 remain in the executive and administrative domains.
- 797 • **Liability and legal issues:** Any disclosure of confidential personnel information,
798 intentional or accidental, can lead to legal and financial implications to both the city and
799 the individual causing the disclosure. These can run to the hundreds of thousands to
800 millions of dollars.
- 801 • **Grievance Procedure:** State Statutes require the Common Council to be the final arbiter
802 for non-union employee grievances. In order to appropriately provide a non-biased
803 decision should a personnel grievance come before it, the Council needs to not have
804 information which could taint its impartiality.
- 805

806 City staff will continue to communicate personnel issues to the Common Council as appropriate.
807 However, in general these communications will be employee non-specific, or will be seeking a
808 policy-making decision such as creating or changing a policy, budgeting for personnel issues,
809 creating or changing position descriptions, and filling vacancies.

810

811 Ald. Stevens said, “In cases of police and fire, which are governed by the [Police and Fire
812 Commission] and the Mayor, one of the issues that had come up – and there was a concern
813 amongst Council – if there are personnel issues that are extraordinary, my understanding after
814 reading this memo is that the Council itself is actually not really responsible for those issues
815 [which are] governed by the PFC, the Mayor, and yourself. Is that correct?”

816

817 City Administrator Rindfleisch said it would be correct on an individual basis.

818

819 Ald. Stevens asked City Administrator Rindfleisch if he retains the authority to decide if issues
820 need to come before the Council if extraordinary measures come to light.

821

822 City Administrator Rindfleisch said any issue that would require a policy-making decision would
823 not be his authority to individually decide, telling Ald. Stevens it would need to come before the
824 Council.

825

826 Ald. Stevens asked if it would be appropriate for the Council to be apprised of a situation in
827 which outside counsel was being utilized.

828

829 City Administrator Rindfleisch told Ald. Stevens the funding of outside counsel would be a
830 budgetary impact and said, “Whatever is delegated by Council to staff to make decisions is
831 ultimately delegated by the Council.”

832

833 Ald. Stevens said that as an individual alderperson, he does not think it is his duty to be involved
834 in the administrative aspects, nor does he wish to micromanage how staff is employed.

835 However, Ald. Stevens said there are instances where the Council should be brought into the
836 picture, and he asked how the alderpersons should know whether or not an issue should come

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21

837 before the Council.

838

839 City Administrator Rindfleisch said anything that would require Council action would come
840 before the body.

841

842 Ald. K. Smith said it is her understanding any issues that have a budgetary impact or an
843 unbudgeted impact, or would require an agreement, need to come before the Council.

844

845 City Administrator Rindfleisch said something such as a budget amendment or an agreement
846 would need to come before the Council.

847

848 Ald. K. Smith asked if the Council would be informed of an employee who needed to be let go
849 and there was a contract between the city and the employee regarding his/her departure of
850 employment.

851

852 City Administrator Rindfleisch said yes, if there were an agreement in place.

853

854 Ald. K. Smith asked, "Any time there's something signed?"

855

856 City Administrator Rindfleisch said yes.

857

858 Ald. K. Smith asked, "Even if it's the Police and Fire Commission?"

859

860 City Administrator Rindfleisch said that would not be correct.

861

862 Ald. K. Smith asked, "Unless there was a budgetary impact to the city?"

863

864 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, "It requires a change in the budget, yes."

865

866 Ald. K. Smith asked, "If the agreement happened between the Police and Fire Commission
867 representing the city and the employee and there was no budgetary impact – unbudgeted impact
868 to the city – the Council would never know about it if everybody were held to the confidential
869 level they're supposed to be?"

870

871 City Administrator Rindfleisch said it is a dangerous answer as "never" is a very strong word.

872

873 Ald. K. Smith asked if that is what is supposed to happen, and she told City Administrator
874 Rindfleisch, "We want to do the right thing. We're communicating with you now because we all
875 want to have good communication, and we want to know what our expectations are."

876

877 City Administrator Rindfleisch said he is struggling with that answer because if the Police and
878 Fire Commission has the ultimate authority, "there may be a case that I don't know about it if

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22

879 something happens and it's purely within the purview of the PFC." City Administrator
880 Rindfleisch said that if charges are filed and the PFC investigates a claim, it is conducted in
881 Open Session and he and the Council would be aware of it at that point in time. City
882 Administrator Rindfleisch said this is why the "never" part is challenging, stating, "It depends is
883 an answer. It's not an answer that would satisfy anybody, but ultimately that's the answer."
884

885 Ald. Olson said that by his definition, communication requires the input of two people, and he
886 asked, "If the Common Council is, by law, the only entity that can spend taxpayer money – and I
887 believe that's true – anything that requires expenditure of funds should be communicated to us.
888 Correct?"
889

890 City Administrator Rindfleisch said yes.
891

892 Ald. Olson said, "In a reasonable fashion."
893

894 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, "Ultimately those kinds of things would all be done in Open
895 Session if it's something the city has to agree to."
896

897 Amanda said there is a difference between communication and input, telling committee members
898 if the Police and Fire Commission hires a position, it may be communicated to the Council.
899 However, the Council has no input over that.
900

901 Ald. Olson said he assumes that any item that requires an expenditure of funds must go through
902 the Common Council.
903

904 Amanda said, "If you've already funded the position and then they're hiring for it – the actual
905 hiring for that position has already been allocated – the Council would not have any purview or
906 any decision-making authority over it. It could be communicated to you, but you wouldn't have
907 actual input over it."
908

909 Ald. Stevens asked if an agreement could be a verbal agreement as well as a written document.
910

911 City Administrator Rindfleisch said only written agreements that have been approved and signed
912 have force of law.
913

914 Ald. K. Smith noted the Council is funding positions through the budget with the intention that
915 they not be filled until a certain date, and she said she believes City Administrator Rindfleisch's
916 interpretation is much looser than what Amanda described.
917

918 Amanda referred to a comment Ald. K. Smith had made, noting she had historically included a
919 date when she has delayed. Amanda said, "You're giving the direction to the PFC that you're
920 funding it at a delayed date."
921

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23

921
922 Ald. K. Smith said she believes the Common Council traditionally directs the Police and Fire
923 Commission when it is time to hire.

924
925 City Administrator Rindfleisch said he will utilize his employment document as an example,
926 stating that if the Common Council decides to terminate his contract with or without cause, there
927 is an implication and perhaps an expenditure of funds that might not be budgeted, but it is in the
928 agreement. City Administrator Rindfliesch noted the Council had approved that agreement, and
929 he said there are no such agreements with that that would go before the PFC. City Administrator
930 Rindfleisch said that in theory if the PSC made a disciplinary decision with funding it does not
931 control, the Council would have to approve that funding.

932
933 Ald. Olson said he is not concerned with usurping someone else's authority regarding a position.
934 Rather, he is more concerned with communication of a budget item for which the Council is
935 responsible for funding, and how it is handled coming before the body. Ald. Olson cited the
936 example of something being suggested in the budgetary process for the particular year, he
937 expects it to be in the budget for the Council to review at the time its members are reviewing the
938 initial budget and not at the last minute. Ald. Olson said, "I don't think that's fair to us. That's a
939 communication issue."

940
941 Ald. Stevens suggested tabling a late item until the Council has time to review it.

942
943 **Item 16 – Closed Session**

944
945 To consider a motion to convene in Closed Session under Section 19.85(1)(e) for the purpose of
946 deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds or
947 conducting other specified public business whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a
948 closed session:

- 949
950
- 951 • IAFF, International Association of Firefighters, Local 127
 - 952 • SORD, Supervisory Officers Relation Division
 - 953 • IAFF, International Association of Firefighters Grievance, 2019-3

954
955 If any action is required in Open Session, as a result of the Closed Session, the Committee will
956 reconvene in Open Session to take the necessary action and/or continue on with the printed
957 agenda.

958
959 Motion by Ald. Olson, second by Ald. Stevens, to convene in Closed Session.

960
961 On roll call vote: Ald. Jim Olson – aye, Ald. Dan Stevens – aye, Ald. Kim Smith – aye. In
Closed Session at 9:10 p.m.

Reviewed 11/8/19 by Fred Buehler

**Finance & Personnel Committee
of the City of Onalaska**

Wednesday, November 6, 2019

24

962

963

964 Recorded by:

965

966 Kirk Bey