

MINUTES
PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
JULY 14, 2020
VERONA CITY HALL
7:00 AM

1. The meeting was called to order by Chad Kemp at 7:01 a.m.
2. Roll Call: Heather Reekie, Chad Kemp and Charlotte Jerney were present. Also present: City Administrator Adam Sayre, Human Resources Coordinator Mitch Weckerly, Mayor Luke Diaz, Police Chief Bernie Coughlin, and City Clerk Ellen Clark.
3. Approval of the minutes from the February 14, 2020 Personnel Committee meeting. Motion by Kemp, seconded by Jerney, to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2020 Personnel Committee meeting. Motion carried 3-0.

4. Discussion and Possible Action Re: Resolution No. R-20-027 honoring the life of George Floyd with our actions.

Reekie would like the title of the resolution changed to make the purpose of the resolution clearer. She would recommend the title be more overarching to cover anti-racism in general.

Jerney agrees that the resolution should be clear that the City is concerned with the broader issue of racism, and is concerned that the only concrete action mentioned in this Resolution is regarding the City's hiring and training policies. She sees the need as a Council to encourage the public to come forward to help the Council meet its commitment to make Verona a more inclusive community, specifically as it applies to items 4 and 6 of the resolution.

Alternate resolution titles were discussed. The Committee agreed the name of the resolution should be changed to "A Resolution to Decrease the Effects of Institutionalized Racism."

Reekie stated the measurability of some of the items in the resolution is difficult. She is hoping to add something to the resolution regarding staff trainings, as that is something over which the City has control.

Jerney asked if item 6, which discusses the Common Council and City Staff engaging the community in dialogue to better understand racism and adopt policies to abolish it, means that the City would be setting up conversational opportunities in that regard.

Sayre stated COVID is the biggest challenge in terms of face to face interaction at this time. Several community events have had to be cancelled. That will be a factor going forward.

This item was tabled until after the next two items are discussed.

5. Discussion and Possible Action Re: City training opportunities and policies.

Reekie stated she has been receiving information regarding anti-racism training opportunities, and would like to see the City financially support training for the entire City staff.

Diaz asked if it is possible to check the efficacy of a training before spending money and time on it.

Sayre replied he and Weckerly have been considering virtual options due to COVID-19. They want to make sure that the training engages the employees, and has value to the employees and the City.

Weckerly stated we may be able to offer different training options that fall within a certain topic, and employees could pick what they think would be most valuable to them. A local resource is *Step Up: Equity Matters*. They offer virtual trainings set up in two ways – interactive Step Up Sessions and Step Up Labs. The classes cost between \$15 and \$30 per person, and are geared toward teams.

Kemp asked if this will be required or optional training.

Weckerly replied it could be either. He would defer to the committee on that. If it is required, it will be good to give employees options. The training can also be part of the new hire process. There are different options for ways to assign it.

Kemp asked about the cost of providing training to every City employee.

Weckerly replied the cost would be approximately \$3,000.

Kemp stated this has to be effective training. It may be good to do a pilot program with a few members of the staff first, then roll it out fully and incorporate the training into the new hire process.

Sayre stated the internal Employee Wellness Team may be a good group for a pilot program. There is one representative from each department on that team.

Reekie stated she would like a timeline on the pilot plan to get the training rolled out as soon as possible.

Diaz asked how the City handles explicit bias versus implicit bias.

Weckerly replied in matters of explicit bias, the City would be looking at work rule violations. The City also has a code of conduct in place. There are a number of classes thru CVMIC, as well, that cover behaving professionally in the workplace. Department heads have been very receptive to having their staff take those courses.

Reekie stated she likes people having a choice of courses, and suggested requiring employees to pick a number of them over a year's time. She also suggested using the *Institutes for the Healing of Racism, Inc.* as a resource in the future.

Jerney concurs with the training plan as it has been laid out, and would like to see the City pay for additional training for anyone that wants to go over and above the required amount of training.

Sayre replied he is not concerned about the cost of the trainings. Department budgets are able to absorb that amount.

Coughlin stated the Police Department staff does have diversity training available, though none is required by the state. The training they undergo now leaves little time for discretionary training, though the department is trying to incorporate diversity into late fall training. The effectiveness of the training, cost of the training, and backfilling of shifts for absent staff are all considerations when determining what trainings will be offered.

Reekie asked if the Police Department can take part in the same trainings as the rest of the City Staff.

Coughlin replied they can.

Jerney asked what kind of feedback the department is getting from the training the officers have already done.

Coughlin replied he has received a mixed response, but it has been of limited value in the opinion of most. The department will pursue more of the training that was considered good, and less of what was considered less valuable.

Sayre stated we should be able to get the pilot program completed within a month, and move forward from there with the training by the end of the year.

The consensus of the Committee was to direct the City Administrator and Human Resources Coordinator to coordinate an anti-racism training pilot program utilizing the City's Wellness Committee members, and to begin implementation of required anti-racism training by the end of this year.

6. Discussion and Possible Action Re: Hiring actions and goals.

Reekie stated she doesn't think the hiring policies are faulty. There are simply not a lot of people of color living in Verona and being employed at higher levels of City government.

Kemp does not think systemic racism is the case here.

Sayre stated we have had difficulty recruiting for department head positions over the last two or three years. The reasons are partially because it's a good economy, and partially because we have lost employees to other larger communities because of pay.

Weckerly discussed the recruitment process. The City's general policies are in compliance. He is also working with CVMIC on an audit of all the City's policies for compliance. One of the efforts that has been made is outreach. We have started sharing job posting announcements with organizations that serve underrepresented groups in our community. That will be a continuous process. Modifications have been made to some of the best practices throughout the lifecycle of the recruitment process, as well. When there is a vacancy, Weckerly and the department heads are taking a hard look at the job descriptions attached to the vacant positions to eliminate any non-essential employment requirements

from the description. The thinking is that older job descriptions may include requirements that are not essential to the position, which could discourage some people from applying. In addition, the City blinds applications by redacting names, ages and other demographics to eliminate potential bias in the selection process. Panel discussions have also been added to the selection process. Over time, all of these have an impact, and help us to hire a more diverse workforce.

Coughlin stated the number of applications for police officer postings have significantly decreased, which is consistent with the state and the nation. Today, only about 12 applicants for each position are eligible to test, and only a couple of those are eligible to hire. The last few recruitment attempts showed applicant numbers that were a little higher, but he is concerned that the numbers will go down again with the George Floyd situation and COVID-19. The department runs a comprehensive selection process. The application has point values that are the same for every applicant. The 12 top-scoring candidates are invited to the assessment center, which consists of all-day exercises made up of five practical exercises. The names of successful assessment center candidates are submitted to the Police and Fire Commission. Those chosen from there go back to the Chief. Before hire, all candidates are required to undergo a drug screen, psychological testing and a background check. Historically, it has been difficult to recruit minorities. The vast majority of the applications we do receive from minorities are from Latinos. Though the department advertises in an effort to recruit minorities, the few minority candidates that are available to recruit would rather work in Madison or other communities where a larger number of minorities live and work, and where pay and benefits are better. It comes down to a comfort level for the recruits themselves.

Reekie stated she believes the hiring policies are in order. The resolution edits may make Verona a community that is more desirable in which to work for people of color.

Jerney concurred, and appreciates the committed work put in by City Staff and Chief Coughlin.

Kemp thanked Sayre, Weckerly and Coughlin. He wants to see the City continue to work hard to improve minority hiring. Part of the reality is the discrepancy in pay. If someone is given a chance to take a job that pays more in a more diverse work environment, they will take it. At some point, if we stay persistent, we will find that there are individuals of color that are interested in working in a suburban community. We could also look at the successes that other communities have had. He would like the committee to review the City's hiring practices and goals, and have staff come back to the committee with those ideas regarding not only the Police Department, but all departments in the City, to see if there are improvements to be made to the policies systemically and to set goals to get the ball rolling.

The committee returned its discussion back to agenda item 4: Discussion and Possible Action Re: Resolution No. R-20-027 honoring the life of George Floyd with our actions.

Motion by Reekie, seconded by Jerney, to change the title of the resolution to read "A Resolution to Decrease the Effects of Institutionalized Racism." Motion carried 3-0.

Reekie asked to add an eighth item to the Resolution stating that all staff will undergo anti-bias training.

Kemp replied he believes that is already covered under item 5 of the resolution. It could be added that based on the success of the targeted pilot program, City staff would then participate in training.

Jerney suggested that this could be incorporated into item 7.

Sayre read a draft of item 7 with the requested changes: "The Common Council directs the Personnel Committee to review all internal employee and hiring policies and goals to ensure the City has a diverse workforce that is reflective of our community. The Personnel Committee has established a pilot training program based on the goals of this resolution. Based upon the success of the City's pilot training program, all City staff will undergo diversity, equity and inclusion training."

Reekie requested that the word "ongoing" be added before the word "diversity".

Motion by Reekie, seconded by Jerney, to amend item 7 of the resolution as stated by Administrator Sayre, with the addition of the word "ongoing", as requested by Reekie. Motion carried 3-0.

Motion by Reekie, seconded by Jerney, to recommend to the Common Council to adopt Resolution No. R-20-027 as amended. Motion carried 3-0.

5. Adjournment:

Motion by Reekie, seconded by Jerney, to adjourn at 8:23 a.m. Motion carried 3-0.

Adam Sayre, City Administrator