



## **Watertown City Council**

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### **Report of the Personnel and City Organization Committee Meeting Date: December 17, 2024**

The Committee convened on Wednesday December 17 pm in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chambers, with remote participation by Zoom.

Present were Councilors Caroline Bays, chair, Nicole Gardner, secretary; and John Gannon, vice chair. Staff present were City Manager George Proakis, Deputy City Manager Emily Monea, Chief Financial Officer Ari Sky, and DPW Director of Administration and Finance Michael Albano.

Councilor Bays called the meeting to order at 7:09 pm with a roll call. The meeting had two purposes:

- First, to review and discuss the last year's temporary change in the Department of Public Works hours for front office employees, and
- Second, to discuss the Qualifications and Qualities for a new Procurement Director.

#### ***DPW FRONT OFFICE HOURS***

Councilor Bays began by reminding everyone that last year, the hours worked for front office DPW staff were change to start and end 2 hours earlier, from 7am to 3:30pm, to match the hours worked by the other employees. This was at the request of the employees and supported by the union. The rationale was twofold:

- It would help with staff work life balance and strengthen the team.
- It would better serve the public who interact with the DPW, since contractors want to get in and start early in the day, and often need to speak with field staff in order to get issues resolved.

When asked about the impact, Mr. Proakis said that there has been no feedback pro or con from the public, and there has been no operational impact. Mr. Albano said that vendors have given him positive feedback because if they need assistance when they come into the office, the supervisors are there to provide it. He also said the staff appreciate the change, because they feel they have a better work life balance, and they appreciate the "one team" feeling that the change has created.

Chair Bays said she had the same feedback from former DPW Superintendent St. Louis before he left.

→ **Action Item: Councilor Gardner made a motion, seconded by Councilor Gannon, that the Committee recommend the City Council make permanent the change in hours, aligning the DPW office staff hours with their colleagues. Passed unanimously.**

### **QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR A PROCUREMENT DIRECTOR**

Mr. Sky began the discussion by explaining that a retired Procurement Director from another community is currently serving in the role, and that while there is a lot of work to get done, the backlog is being worked down. He observed that while the process in Watertown is compliant, there are opportunities to take it to the next level. For example, he explained that “boilerplate” Request for Proposal templates could be developed, which – once reviewed and approved by legal counsel – could be used repeatedly, rather than each RFP being created from scratch. This approach is faster and saves the City money on legal review.

In discussing qualities and qualifications, the Councilors and staff raised the following recommendations:

- Understanding of public procurement laws, policies, and procedures, including the Uniform Procurement Act and Massachusetts contract requirements. Ideally the individual would be certified as a Massachusetts Procurement Officer or have the ability to get such certification quickly based on their prior experience and expertise.
- Experience with the bidding process and sensitivity to the bid opening process
- Strong financial acumen and negotiating skills in order to be able to get favorable terms and pricing
- Creativity in placing RFPs and sourcing bids, in order to get a broad range of responses, rather than hearing only from the same known vendors
- The ability to assess the most qualified vendor among the bidders, to manage risk and ensure
- Excellent communication skills and collaboration skills for when working with vendors
- A legal mindset, understanding the risks and implications of contracts
- A problem solving and analytical mindset

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.  
Report prepared by Nicole Gardner

### **ELECTED OFFICIALS**

Caroline Bays,  
Chair

John G. Gannon,  
Vice Chair

Nicole Gardner,  
Secretary