



## **Watertown City Council**

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### **Report of the Committee on Personnel and City Organization**

Meeting Date: October 2, 2024

The Committee convened on Wednesday, 5:30 pm in the Council Office.

Present were Councilors Caroline Bays, chair, Nicole Gardner, secretary; and John Gannon, vice chair, joining at 6:05 pm. They were joined by HR Director Colleen Doyle.

Councilor Bays called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm. The purpose of the meeting was to evaluate the performance management process used by the City Council to evaluate Council Staff.

She began by explaining that the process used to evaluate Council staff has not been reviewed in many years, and that the Council's goal is to ensure that the process used in future incorporate best practices. Using a performance management process (rather than only evaluation) will ensure that the most important work is prioritized, and will contribute to the development and retention of staff. The four staff reporting to the Council are the Manager, the Auditor, the Clerk, and the Council Analyst.

Ms. Doyle then shared a summary she had prepared on what makes for a successful performance evaluation process, see Attachment.

The key points of the summary are:

1. Performance deficiencies should never be brought up for the first time during a performance evaluation.
2. Frequent two-way communication and follow up throughout the year are essential.
3. The system should comply with all applicable labor laws, and should document performance evaluations and disciplinary action, if any.
4. Individuals should have goals, developed mutually with their manager, designed to meet both organization and career development needs.

5. A simple hybrid review process that incorporates both achievements against goals and an assessment of competencies may be an appropriate approach. Self evaluation should be a part of whatever is developed.
6. Each employee should have a liaison for both regular performance check ins (perhaps monthly or quarterly) and formal annual feedback and goal setting.

Ms. Doyle said that the City is currently building a performance management structure, based on the Manager's Leadership Formula translated for all roles, and best practices. The committee felt that having aligned performance management structures would be desirable, for simplicity of administration and alignment.

As a first step in developing the performance management structure, the City is having job descriptions developed. The Committee asked that the 4 jobs that report to the Council be included in this process. This work will take several months.

Based on the discussion, the Committee identified the following next steps:

1. Make a recommendation to the Council regarding the liaison for each role.
2. Determine whether to recommend that Council staff develop 2025 goals, working with their liaison, in anticipation of a new system being put in place in 2025.
3. Once the job descriptions and the City's performance management structure are completed, assess whether the same approach can be used for Council employees, or whether it needs to be adapted, and make a recommendation to the Council. As part of this, discuss whether compensation should be tied to performance management assessments.

The meeting adjourned at 7 pm.

Report prepared by Nicole Gardner