



Watertown City Council

Administration Building

149 Main Street

Watertown, MA 02472

Phone: 617-972-6470

Report of the Committee on Personnel and City Organization Meeting Date: November 27, 2023

The Committee convened on Monday, November 27, at 5:30 in the 3rd Floor Conference Room.

Present were Councilors Caroline Bays, chair; Nicole Gardner, secretary; and John Gannon, vice chair. Staff present were City Manager DPW Superintendent Greg St. Louise, Sustainability Coordinator Anya Pforzheimer, and City Engineer Tyler Glode. No one else attended the meeting.

Councilor Bays called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a proposal from the DPW Superintendent to amend the Front Office Hours at the DPW building.

The proposal was to change the front office hours from 8:30am-5pm to 7am-3:30pm permanently, aligning the hours of two staff members with the majority of all laborers, supervisors, and non-clerical admin staff.

The Superintendent sees the following benefits.

First: improved service to the public and contractors working in Watertown:

1. Residents who work 9am-5pm will now be able to go to the DPW before work, and speak to the relevant supervisor and get their questions addressed in real time.
2. Residents who now come in the late afternoon have to wait until the next day to speak with a supervisor since the supervisors' day is over. The people will continue to have to wait until the next day for service. This change will not affect service levels for them.
3. Contractors typically start their day at 7am. This change will let them get their issues addressed first thing in the morning, getting them on to their jobs quickly and efficiently.
4. Note: the DPW has an answering service on call at all times, which escalates emergencies if need be and otherwise takes a message.

Second: better work/life balance for employees. The two affected staff members will have significantly shorter commutes by working earlier days, and have asked for this change. This should enable us to more effectively retain our valued staff, all things being equal.

If approved, the DPW will work with staff to alert residents and contractors to this change. This includes social media, and the tax letter if possible.

Councilor Gannon asked if the union supported this proposal. Mr. St. Louis said they endorsed the proposal.

Councilor Gardner suggested the change be made provisionally, with a check in before making it permanent. After some discussion, the Committee agreed that it would like to have a check in with the DPW at the start of summer hours to be sure the change is working well for the public, and the staff.

Attached are letters of support from the union and from the affected employees.

→ Action Item: Councilor Gardner made a motion, seconded by Councilor Gannon, that the BFO recommend the City Council approve provisionally the change in hours until the start of summer hours. At which time the DPW should report back to the PCO on whether the change is working as expected for residents, contractors, and staff. Based on that meeting, the PCO will make a final recommendation to the Council. The movement passed unanimously.

The committee adjourned at 5:45 PM by a unanimous vote.

Report prepared by Nicole Gardner

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Caroline Bays,
Chair

John G. Gannon,
Vice Chair

Nicole Gardner
Secretary

Cookson, Michael

From: Nancy Campbell <ncampbell@teamsterslocal25.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 12:28 PM
To: Cookson, Michael
Cc: St. Louis, Gregory
Subject: RE: DPW Hours Change

Thank you, Michael for your email.

Please allow this email to be offered to the City Council's Committee showing the Union fully supports the Committees recommendation to change the hours of work for all DPW clerical workers to match the DPW operation hours. The Union and members affected have also made this request in the past to address the same concerns as the DPW Superintendent of Public Works, Gregory St. Louis, is addressing currently with the City Council Committee. We are in full support of this change and urge the City Council to approve.

Please let me know if you need anything additional on this matter, and if my attendance is needed at the December 12th meeting to verbalize this support.

Thank you,

Nancy L. Campbell
Field Representative
Teamsters Local 25
544 Main Street
Boston, MA 02129
Office: 617-241-3956
Fax: 617-242-4284



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From: Cookson, Michael <mcookson@watertown-ma.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 12:03 PM
To: Nancy Campbell <ncampbell@teamsterslocal25.com>
Cc: St. Louis, Gregory <gstlouis@watertown-ma.gov>
Subject: DPW Hours Change

Good Afternoon Nancy,

Watertown DPW met with the City Council's Committee on Personnel and City Organization on Monday night to advocate for changing DPW's front office hours to match the DPW's labor and management hours. The Committee

approved the request and the City Council as a whole will vote on the change on December 12. However, the Committee wants a formal statement of support from the union. In August, you expressed support for this change and offered to submit a formal letter of support.

Would you be willing to provide us with a letter of support that we can send to the Council before the December 12 meeting? We appreciate your time and please feel free to reach out if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Michael Cookson

Michael Cookson, J.D. (He/Him)
Assistant Director of Administration and Finance
Watertown Department of Public Works
(617) 972-6420 ext. 13110
(857) 303-6240

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To: The Watertown City Council
From: Colleen Guttkuhn & Julie Casello
Date: November 28, 2023
Re: DPW Clerks Support Front Office Hour Change

Dear Honorable City Council,

As the Watertown Department of Public Works' clerical staff, we are writing in support of the motion to amend DPW's front office hours. We have made numerous requests to align our hours with those worked by the rest of DPW's staff and are hopeful that you will approve the change.

DPW's front office is open from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. DPW's labor staff, labor supervisors, and management all work from 7:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Most contractors that work in Watertown and need DPW's oversight work these earlier hours, too. This means the community's needs are greatest early in the day and the DPW supervisors and management that residents come into the front office to speak with are most readily available in the morning. As a result, from 3:30 to 5:00, the few people that drop into DPW usually just leave a message.

Keeping the front office open from 3:30 to 5:00 doubles our commutes. Julie's commute takes 45 minutes when she arrives early at 6:30 and an hour and a half when she leaves at 5:00. Colleen's commute takes 30 minutes early in the morning and an hour at 5:00. If DPW's front office closed earlier, we would beat rush hour traffic and avoid this doubling of the time we spend in traffic. This would alleviate so much frustration and improve our quality of life dramatically.

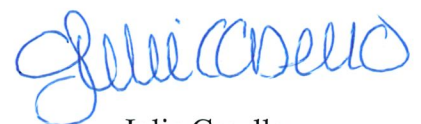
This year has brought many staffing issues and we have filled in as needed to keep DPW's front office running and serving the community. But, after a year, our work-life balances are suffering and we feel burnt out. We believe that amending the front office's hours will improve our lives and will help us better serve the community.

We truly appreciate the Council's consideration of this matter and hope the Council approves this motion.

Sincerely,



Colleen Guttkuhn



Julie Casello