

**Minutes
EMPLOYEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Special Meeting
February 24, 2015
Mayor's Conference Room
9:00 a.m.**

The meeting was called to order by Judy Franco at 9:00 a.m.

1. *ROLL CALL*

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir Allen (Chew) –Wastewater Collection
Judy Franco-GIS
Britt Hubbard – SSC
Albert Ozuna- Streets
Jeremy Russell- Stormwater Management
Jackie Somerlott- PW Admin

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Eugene Ross- Landfill **
Kidd, Jorg Stefan- Building Maintenance**

*Excused

**Unexcused

OTHERS PRESENT:

Sherry Anderson-Assistant HR Director
Sue Smith-Human Resources

2. MINUTES

A.

Approval of minutes of February 10, 2015

Motion to approve minutes with changes by Jeremy Russell with a second by Albert Ozuna.

Ayes: Allen, Franco, Hubbard, Ozuna, and Russell.

Abstain: Somerlott Nays: None Motion carried.

3. OLD BUSINESS

None

4. NEW BUSINESS

A.

Budgetary Requests and Recommendations:

Franco asked if there were any recommendations for the budgetary requests. Somerlott said an employee recommended to her that if there were no merit increases next year then have a 3 percent cost of living for everyone across the board. Anderson said in her opinion across the board is better for the people who are topped out. Ozuna said it might hold on to some City employees because we are losing them like crazy. Somerlott said it would be good to have both the merit increase and COLA. Anderson said it wouldn't hurt to have this in the budgetary recommendation. Franco said she has a meeting with, Assistant City Manager, Jim Russell on March 5th. Russell asked if this meeting was for the proposal and budgetary items. Franco said no, just the budgetary items. She said she would ask Jim what the possibilities are of getting these budgetary requests. Anderson said since they are working on the budget, the EAC should make their recommendations now. Hubbard said and then go forward with our requests and meet with the City Manager. He said he gave the employees, who he represents, a list and told them to prioritize the items and tell him what is most important to them. Hubbard said he gave this to Sewer Rehab, Solid Waste Collection and Drainage divisions. He said the top three things people were wondering about is the step increase, COLA and retirement. Somerlott said the top three things to pull people in to work for the City. Hubbard said one of the suggestions was to keep health insurance premiums cost at a minimum. He said also someone commented that the Fourth of July event was a waste of money and the morale fund wouldn't be needed if the City treated the employees fairly. He said other comments were to keep the step increases and get a COLA instead of segregating the general employees from the rest of the City employees. Hubbard said those were the impact areas he received from this survey and this survey was given to sixty employees. Anderson asked what the comments were about the retirement. Hubbard said some people wanted to know if there were some way to have a 25 year retirement such as an early out with no penalty. Franco said they had talked about that at the last meeting. He said they wanted to know if the retirement fund was secure and wanted more information on retirement. Hubbard said he doesn't know about the new retirement plan compared to the past retirement plan. Anderson said the formula for retirement now is different from the past. She said it is career averaging now. Somerlott said that she knows someone is going to request a proposal change for the retirement system. She said it won't affect her but it will affect the new employees. Somerlott said when there are discussions about the retirement they need to call on the experts to explain about the City's retirement, such as, where it is now and where it's going to be in the future.

Ozuna said the concern in the street and drainage divisions is that the terminal leave will be taken away. Hubbard said they were saying if the City went back to accruing the 576 hours and then paying out 96 hours after that to employees twice a year to take the place of terminal leave. Somerlott said paying an employee now for 96 hours is going to be less than paying an employee for sick leave five years from now. Anderson said sick pay-in-lieu would have fizzled out in the long run anyway because

current employees don't save 576 hours of sick leave. Russell said also when you pay someone for terminal leave; the City is paying for two employees. He said the City is paying for the person who left and also paying for someone to do that job. Somerlott said if you use sick leave now you are paid 100 percent but if you wait till you retire then you are only paid a percentage of that. Hubbard said that should encourage employees save their sick leave to the maximum amount and then get the early pay out of the excess. Russell said the City can give the employee an option to cash out the sick leave or use terminal leave.

Russell said they should bring back everything that is in code, such as, safety incentives and step increases first. Allen said his division is concerned that if they get a COLA then the insurance will go up again. Anderson said the health committee agreed to bring the insurance up to what they are suppose to be paying. She said they will be paying 12 percent over the next five years. Anderson also said the other thing they are trying to do to help the fund balance is implementing Plan 65 for retirees 65 and over. She said this plan is for employees who have Medicare part A & B and was effective in January and is a fully funded plan. She also said they take the premiums from their retirement check so it is considered a group plan to get a certain rate. Anderson said they got a big hit from the health care reform that was unforeseen and hurt the balance of our plan. Russell talked about the cost of CDLs and other licenses and asked if something can be done about the City paying for employee's licenses and then they leave in less than a year. He wanted to know if the employee could pay back that cost if they leave within six months. Somerlott said this would be something to look at to see if it would save money for the City. Hubbard said it would be simple to put this on the out processing form with the clothing. Ozuna said he feels some people do use City employment as a stepping stone to other employment and he wants the employees to stay for a long time.

Franco summarized the budgetary requests to include safety incentives, education reimbursement, the COLA, if step increase will be frozen for the next budget, any increase in health premiums, an option of early retirement in 25 years with no penalties, paying in extra for retirement, will the City be losing positions or a hiring freeze, licenses and CDL pay back if an employee leaves early, training and travel budget frozen or not, and will there be a Morale fund next year and how to use this fund. Hubbard asked if there could be an option for an employee to put in more for their retirement to retire early. Somerlott said the merit increase should be expected because it is in code.

Hubbard said he told the employees he represents that they will need to show up to the Council meetings to show their support of these requests and proposals. He said there are a couple of council seats up for election and they need to get people on the council who support the general employees. He also said the EAC members need to pass this onto their employees.

5. *COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION*

Russell asked about the Morale Fund. Hubbard said that fund should be used for Spotlight Award and the employee picnic.

Russell asked if the Training and Travel account will be frozen. Somerlott said Public Works Training and Travel budget was cut almost in half this fiscal year and she said not that she knows of.

Russell said Cliff Haggemiller, Superintendent in the Street division has written up a survey to give to his division. He said the survey is given to employees who leave employment and some of the questions are how they would rate the morale in their division, was the training adequate and how were the expectations of the supervisor. Russell said the EAC should put this in their next proposal list. He said they could request to give this during employees exit interviews. Somerlott said it should be with the evaluations also. Russell said they want to keep this anonymous and you couldn't do that with an evaluation. He said they may be able to hand out this survey once a year at the safety training class. Franco said they can hand it out at the Haz Com class or Bloodborne Pathogens class. Hubbard said he would like to see the outcome of the surveys to get ideas for the changes to Chapter 17 from employees. Somerlott said they have to make sure they are following the correct procedures to do something like this and get approvals.

Russell also asked about offering career paths guidance for employees through HR. He said employees can turn in career path documents and get the help they need. Russell said he would like to look at something after this budget to plan for this.

Franco asked about the employee picnic. She said she contacted Lake Letra and they just need a date of the picnic. She also contacted the Fire department and they will help but they have to know about the funding. She said she contacted the Police and they can bring their Crime Stopper vehicle. Franco wanted to know who will help her call for donations. Somerlott said she would. Russell said he knew of some employees who will help. Franco said everyone decided to have the picnic in late May or early June. She said if the picnic is at Lake Letra, everyone will have to get a pass. Somerlott said there should be an alternative to Lake Letra if it is a hassle to get out there.

6. *ADJOURNMENT*

A.

Motion to adjourn by Albert Ozuna with a second by Judy Franco.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion Carried

Meeting Adjourned at 10:20 am