

Employee Advisory Committee (EAC)

Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2016

Mayor's Conference Room @ 9:00 a.m.

APPROVED

The meeting was called to order by Franco @ 9:02 a.m.

Article I.

1. ROLL CALL

Article II. MEMBERS PRESENT:

Judy Franco – GIS

@ 9:08a.m. Jorge Stephan Kidd – Building Maintenance

Sir Allen (Chew) – Wastewater Collection

@ 9:12a.m. Scott Golden – MPWTP

Ashley Glaze-Lyle – License & Permits

Albert Ozuna – Streets

Denise Ezell – City Clerk

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jerry Ihler – City Manager

Doug Wells – Council Member

Courteney Cacho – City Manager's Office

Tim Wilson – City Attorney

Chase Massie – HR Director

Britt Hubbard – Sewer

MEMBERS ABSENT: (*Excused **Unexcused)

* David Rolando – Solid Waste Collection

2. MINUTES

A) Approval of minutes for January 12th

Motion to approve minutes by Denise Ezell with a second by Judy Franco Ayes: Franco, Ozuna, Ezell, Glaze-Lyle, Allen Nays: None Motion carried.

3. OLD BUSINESS

A) Health Plan Review Report

Franco said since Whisenhunt couldn't be here she asked Ozuna if he could give the Committee an update.

Ozuna said he hasn't talked with Whisenhunt or Massie but he'll know more next week whether the premiums will go up or not. The Health Plan Review Committee's talking about going to a (4) Four Tier Prescription Plan. Deductibles have been changed come July (1st) first. Co-pays for Urgent Care and Emergency Room visits are going to be a little more expensive.

Franco asked what the balance was.

Massie answered we were negative around (500,000) five hundred thousand and it's been that way for about (3) three months now. He suspects that they would probably vote to recommend premium increases.

Ezell asked if all of these changes would take effect in July.

Massie answered all of the plan changes will be effective July (1st) first. Premiums will be recommended immediately.

Wells asked what the employees were paying now.

Massie answered employee-only is (\$43.26) forty-three dollars and twenty-six cents.

Wells asked how much would it go up.

Massie answered (\$4) four dollars and some change. The announcement email sent out will clarify some of the confusion. For employee-only is a (\$112) one hundred twelve dollar increase a year.

Wells asked if City employees could look into the Affordable Healthcare Act policy.

Massie answered yes, they can. We can waive it once they show proof of another coverage.

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Wells said some of the City employees, especially the lower paid, need to check out the prices for Affordable Healthcare. The subsidies that you get from the government for signing up can keep your premiums pretty low.

B) EAC Categories

Franco said she knows that Massie pulled it from the agenda. Franco asked Massie how it would work for the current members.

Massie answered that would be up to the EAC Committee to decide, that's why it was pulled. We needed to look at the language and how it would affect the current members. As far as when the EAC would be able to have (2) two representatives, the language in the ordinance doesn't call for (2) two. Would there be an immediate election? Would it be that both will serve until next election?

Ezell said she thinks they should be able to finish their term.

Wells asked if the Committee was doing away with one.

Franco said no, you would have (2) two representatives for those groups who have over a certain amount of employees.

Ezell said like she and Glaze-Lyle represent the same people. Ezell asked if they were both up at the same time.

Wells answered not until the end of your term, normally.

Ezell asked what if her term ends before Glaze-Lyle's.

Wells answered it'll be during your regular election. If your position was the one who was being kept, you would elect jurors and that other person would finish their term.

Ezell asked if whoever turns out first will have to go to the next election and whoever wins that election they both are the representative but the second person is to fulfill their term. So there's a possibility we could have (12) twelve members at one point and time.

Wilson answered Massie had wrote the EAC categories and he was reviewing it; Ezell indicated that it takes (2) two people in the same seat. You just can't do that or that needs to be written in the ordinance. To him, the cleanest way right now is that the EAC is represented by the Professional, Labor/Trade, Clerical and we are going to change all of that. The easiest way to do that is to write an ordinance that says at some point in the future we are transitioning to department/divisions, or what the Committee decides. Everybody currently on it can continue until that date and we just have elections open for everybody. Whatever happens you'll just fall in and move forward. That way the Committee doesn't have to decide which one is going to stay, let's just collect everybody new and move forward.

Massie asked if it made sense for this group to maintain until October and then in October every seat will be filled.

Ezell asked how many vacancies the EAC Committee has at this point.

Cacho answered (2) two.

Ezell said maybe then we could get those filled also.

Franco asked if the EAC has (2) two vacancies would they fall under the new category.

Tim answered no; anyone wanting to remain in their seat would have to run again in October.

Franco said we have vacancies right now. Franco asked if they would come in and fill in those vacancies under the old category.

Massie answered correct.

Hubbard asked what was going to happen. The reason why he's at the meeting is because he's in Technical now and that position is open. There has always been an issue with having enough people show up at the meetings as far as representatives. If that position is still open he would be willing to step in until everything is done.

Wells asked if there was a process where people can appoint someone.

Allen asked what dispatch was under.

Franco answered Labor/Trade # (1) one

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Wilson said there is a way to appoint someone. Wilson asked Franco if she knew what the appointment process was.

Franco said they would just go to the City Clerk's office and tell them that they would want to fill a vacancy.

Hubbard said he believes you would have to give an announcement.

Ezell asked doesn't the EAC decide because of the situation that happened with Elton Rogers and Wade Lewis. We have to put out announcements for anyone who wants to sign up and then come back to this board to make a decision.

Hubbard said he just didn't want to see any vacancies.

Allen asked about Labor/Trade # (1) one. He doesn't understand why no one wants to fill that position.

Ezell answered maybe with the changes that will all change.

Wells asked who were in Labor/Trades # (1) one.

Allen and Franco answered dispatch, police, and police technical.

Wells asked if there was a reason why nobody's interested.

Allen answered we don't know.

France said she's sent emails to them.

Wells asked if the City gives each member time to attend the meetings.

Franco answered yes.

Wells asked if the supervisors allow each member to attend the meetings and do they understand that.

Franco answered she would hope so, yes.

Allen said it's like if you have representation for each category, they know what's going on with the EAC and the City; as a Committee you make a decision. Then you have that vacant category who is not involved in any EAC decision, once it's voted on the members start getting bombarded with emails as to why.

Franco said we don't know how it affects that category.

Allen said if we had that position filled then they can tell the Committee to hold on so they can get back to their employees to let them know what's going on.

Wells said to send out an email letting them know that their supervisor will allow them to attend the meetings.

Allen said a lot of them say that they are short handed and because they work shift but he's not saying its all dispatch. He doesn't know how that works whether they are or not. He understands when you are working shifts you are short handed.

Wells said this is a Committee for general employees even if they're short handed the supervisor has to allow them to attend the meeting.

Hubbard said that doesn't always happen but people who are here now are people who care about what's going on and you have some who do not get that kind of support from their supervisors.

Wells said if the supervisor isn't allowing the member to attend the meetings then it needs to go up to the chain of command.

Hubbard said he understands but just the frankness of it is a hard position. There are a lot of employees who don't feel like this group is supported by members of management. That's why a lot of people don't want to come and sit at the meetings.

Wells said the Committee has the City Manager here who can send out an email to the directors to help support the EAC Committee.

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Ihler said he can send out an email to all of the department heads reminding them.

Allen said something else that has a lot to do with it when they are working shifts; once they are off they do not want to come back, they want to go home. The fact that they aren't getting pay for it causes them to not want to do it.

Golden asked when there's no approval by management, is there a way to have a fill-in for that and actually reach out to someone outside of that group. He knows a lot of people who would like to be on the EAC but there's already someone representing that group. Golden asked if there's an opening which no one in that group is stepping up to fill, could someone from another fill that position.

Ezell answered we could put that in the ordinance with someone offering to fill-in until someone from that category chooses to do so. If a person steps up, fills in at least there's someone representing that group and keeping them involved. So it does give them a voice but it's not a voice amongst their group.

Hubbard said with the change that will be made with the ordinance, the Committee is going to change who they're going to represent within the members, he thinks it would be good to give that a chance to work. Maybe with this change it will help all of these things as far as people showing up at the meetings and members representing people they see on a regular basis or at least familiar with.

Franco said and we can give it an option of (60) sixty or more employees having more than (1) one representatives. Franco asked could the Committee write a stipulation.

Wilson answered to a degree but let's see how it goes first because you can amend this later. Let's see if the new categories generate the interest to represent and if not the Committee can look into doing some type of alternate.

Motion for current Committee Members to complete their term until October and by October, when the new changes take effect, the Committee has a new election by Denise Ezell with a second by Albert Ozuna Ayes: Ezell, Glaze-Lyle, Kidd, Golden, Franco, Ozuna, Allen Nays: None Motion carried.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A) Discuss Educational Incentive Program

Franco said the Incentive Program was brought up by an employee who wants to know if we still have it. Franco asked if there is, even if they can file for it, who takes precedence because it is coming back to the employee as having to be paid up front so he was denied.

Massie answered the City hasn't accepting any this year because it is frozen for general employees. Fire and police have it in their contracts currently and it's not frozen. We are starting negotiations with police and one of the items to propose to Council is to freeze it to be consistent with general. Fire is in a (2) two year contract so it'll be about a year before the City can do anything with them.

Ezell said according to Chapter (17) seventeen, if she's looking at it correctly, it shows that it should have been paid.

Massie asked Ezell what she was reading that says it's been paid.

Ezell answered 17-1-4-143 and if she is reading it correctly that's what fire and police are going off of also.

Wilson said they have their own section.

Ezell said Chapter (17) seventeen allows an Education Incentive Program for the general employees. Now she knows it hasn't been paid in several years but this was another one where we didn't go back and change the code when it should have been changed. She believes it's been paid to general employees for quite some time.

Massie said his understanding was it haven't been for (3) three or (4) four years.

Hubbard asked if Massie was saying that they just suspended the program.

Massie answered yes, his understanding, it's been frozen for multiple years. It wasn't elected to be done this year.

Ezell said the cleanup hadn't been done when it should have.

Massie agreed.

Wilson said it's up to the City Manager each year when the budgets prepared whether or not to budget for a certain activity.

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Ihler said the City Manager comes up with the amount and Council approves it. What he would like to see happen is for the City to go back, adjust and revise Chapter (17) seventeen along with the contract with police and fire. Where it says there's 'x' amount of money available, it is based on a first come first served basis, and will be no other for that remainder of that year. Some other changes we have talked about was one individual can't take (85%) eighty-five percent of the funds because they want to go to the most expensive University in the state.

Ezell said Chapter (17) seventeen really needs to be where the Committee can sit down because its little things like this. Like last month when we discussed out of class pay, those things are in the code, we think code is the law but yet we didn't take care of it.

Wells said code is law. This is just like the union contract and it should all be funded or none of it should be funded. The City Manager's idea is a very good idea to open all (3) three groups, don't just count general employees.

Ezell said she didn't realize it was an issue until an employee went to apply for it, going by code that says they can, and going by policy saying they can't.

Wells said code is the law and no where does it say that the City Manager cannot fund it.

Massie said we will have some language for this and will maybe have it ready at the next meeting.

Ezell asked what Franco needed to tell this employee, that at this point and time it's not available.

Massie answered yes, because funds are not available but we will look to address it in the new fiscal year.

3. COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION

Franco said at the last meeting we discussed about the City presenting a 401k for new hires.

Wells said a (457) four fifty-seven.

Franco said some would like to know what happens to the ones who have already been investing.

Wells said his idea is this; the current plan will remain in effect for all current employees. Younger employees want something they can carry around to different jobs. Example only, an employee has to put in (3%) three percent and the City will match that (3%) three percent immediately. If they leave in a year they get both their contribution and the (3%) three percent the City put in to roll into the new job. After (4) four years, it'll got up to (4%) four percent; (4) four more years, (5%) five percent. We might even cap it at (6%) six percent, that would save the City (4%) four percent, overall starting out it'll be (7%) seven percent. Out of that (7%) seven percent he wants to add (1%) one percent additional for each new employee in the current pension system to get the current pension system up to (100%) one hundred percent; so current employees have a reliable pension system that they can rely on (30) thirty years from now. He's going to make sure that both groups are taken care of. A lot of us do not think that far in advance because (20) twenty to (30) thirty years from now that's going to be so costly that the City will no longer be able to contribute to it. You read about it happening all over the country, cities, counties, states, and governments that their pension system is going broke. What we want to do is stabilize so it doesn't happen here but we won't be able to if we keep raising percentage. In reality the City is actually paying (16%) sixteen percent towards your retirement because they pay social security and it pays (10%) ten percent for the other. That's more than what the City pays for police and fire. He's trying to come up with something that saves the current system long term and does what the younger employees want which is a 401K plan that they can carry on to another employer. He is going to try to protect the general employees.

Franco said she wants to see if we could request in March to visit with the City Manager and HR Director to discuss budgetary concerns since it is in the EAC code in Chapter (17) seventeen. Franco asked when would be a good time to request a meeting because it's budget time again and she would like to inform the employees.

Ihler answered he would have to look at his schedule. He will come to the Committee in March with some concerns or what the City is looking at for the budget year and the Committee can with what they are looking into. Swap ideas with the Committee in March.

Ozuna said a lot of employees were asking him in Public Works about step increases. Ozuna asked if there was any way the step increases would be reinstated come (1) one July.

Ihler answered he doesn't know that yet based on the midyear revenue and expenditure report. Water is down (16%) sixteen percent, general and enterprise funds are down (6%) six percent so it's not locked in stone because he doesn't know what the revenue projections are.

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Ihler said while the Committee is on the subject of things that we may or may not be able to do due because of funding, Councilman Wells has been working with the City on sick pay in lieu of. That might be something that we probably won't be able to fund.

Ozuna said it will be a hard one to fix because it went undetected for so many years and he doesn't know how they're going to fix it.

Wells said now it's hurting the City because if someone leaves they may have (1000) one thousand to (2000) two thousand hours of sick leave that they can take as terminal leave. So you have that payroll cost, you replace them, and double the cost for the payroll. Going back to sick leave in lieu of is the smarter way to do it but the City still has to have the funds. It would be cheaper in the long run.

Hubbard asked Ihler if there was an alternate plan since the money may not be there unless you stay with the existing plan.

Ihler answered because he doesn't know what the projected revenues are going to be next year but we could flat out stop the terminal leave portion. Maybe we can provide a set amount, stop terminal leave June (30th) thirtieth and limit the amount bought back the first year if that's not the preferred way. Those are just some options or continue the way that we are which is getting us further in the hole.

Wells said another option is everybody who is over (572) five hundred seventy-two hours next fiscal year just donates (96) ninety-six hours.

Ihler said another option is if the sick pay in lieu of starts over, everybody starts at (0) zero and the rest is in that historical leave. That basically gives the City (6) six years before you start getting to that point where you would have to pay or a little bit could be applied for those who are less than (572) five hundred seventy-two and start buying some of that back.

Ozuna asked has Ihler thought about allowing those over a certain amount to put some into a retirement account.

Wells answered you have that option now. You don't have to take terminal leave; you can take pay for it.

Ezell asked if you have enough hours, buy it back, and get an extra year on your retirement, doesn't state do that.

Wells answered that's what the federal government does, they don't pay any sick leave but they take all you have to give you extra credit toward to retirement.

Ezell asked if it was cost worthy.

Massie and Ihler answered yes it is.

Ezell said she likes that idea, she can keep building sick leave and when she leaves the City she can trade it all in for 'x' amount of retirement time.

Wells said that would have to go along with the retirement system because that's going to add extra cost.

Ezell said we'll have to sit down and weigh it all out.

Massie said the state says (960) nine hundred sixty hours for an addition year and there's one other city that does it in the state.

Massie said on the health insurance, cannot make a change until open enrollment unless you have a qualifying dependent. If anyone wanted to look at the exchange the City can't do anything until open enrollment.

Ozuna asked if it was in May.

Massie answered yes, most likely the first few weeks of May.

Ezell asked if we should be checking it now if that's what we want to do.

Wells answered it wouldn't hurt for people to look into it. The subsidies that they offer might be able to give you good if not better than what the City offers. Employees can go to the [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov) site, answer all of the questions, it will tell you if you qualify for subsidies and it'll tell you how much it'll be and how much it'll cost you before you ever sign up for it.

Ezell asked if it was reliable. Her scare is if it's going to go away tomorrow because she knows what she has with the City.

Wells answered he doesn't think it will ever go away but it may change the way it's configured. So many people are doing what he suggested

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because a lot of the company's prices are so high.

Massie said just keep in mind that these subsidies someone has to fund those and that's the employer. The City paid last year over (100,000) in what is called the reinsurance fee; this year (100,000) that is not the health fund but required by the government which the City funds. That's to keep the exchange flowing to pay those subsidies for people. So one way or another, we are paying it.

Massie said tentatively April (21st) twenty-first, Thursday night, will be the service awards. He should have an update for it at the next meeting. He will be announcing it by looking at those numbers of who fell between as far as (5) five, (10) ten, (15) fifteen, and it's about (140) one hundred forty people at this point.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Denise Ezell with a second by Judy Franco. Motion Carried.
Meeting Adjourned at 9:51 a.m.