

**NMFR Joint Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**October 15, 2024 – 4:00 p.m.**  
**City of Neenah Hauser Room**

**Draft**

Present: Pollnow, Grade, Grade, Boyette and Sevenich

Excused: Ald. Marshall

Also Present: Chief Teesch, Director Fairchild, Director Rasmussen and MA Ellis

Public: Scott Becker, 1061 Green Acres Lane, Neenah

Ald. Boyette called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Public Forum: Mr. Becker encouraged more transparency on the fire station remodel project. He felt memos regarding the costs lack detail and transparency. Chief Teesch invited Mr. Becker to meet with him and he can go over anything he has questions on.

Minutes: The committee reviewed the meeting minutes from July 23, 2024 and August 27, 2024. **MSC Borchardt/Pollnow to approve the July 23, 2024, meeting minutes and place on file, all voting aye.**

**MSC Pollnow/Borchardt to approve the August 27, 2024, meeting minutes and place on file, all voting aye.**

Salary Offer for Vacant Assistant Chief/Fire Marshal Position: Director Fairchild reviewed the City of Neenah policy take any offers above mid-point to Finance for approval. She explained that all candidates who were interviewed did meet the qualifications to start at above mid-point. She reviewed the pay scale in Grade 13 and explained the differences in salaries between the annual hours noted. This position falls under the 1,950 hours. The question was asked if the salary range was advertised with the position. Director Fairchild confirmed this. She requested support to put the new candidate into step 18 of Grade 13. **MSC Sevenich/Pollnow recommends the City of Neenah and City of Menasha Common Councils approve the offer to the intended candidate for the position of Assistant Chief/Fire Marshal above the midpoint at a starting rate of \$89,739 annually, all voting aye.**

Consideration of 3% add rate using the highest paid Assistant Chief in comparison to the Shift Commander pay as of January 1 and applied unilaterally to the alternate Assistant Chief:

Director Fairchild reviewed her memo regarding the request to approve a 3% add rate for the two Assistant Chief positions. A handout was reviewed that shows the comparisons of base salaries between the Shift Commander, Deputy Chief and two Assistant Chief positions. It further shows the additional pays the union positions receive that the chief positions do not such as clothing allowance, first responder pay, longevity, college credit and holiday pay. Union dues was removed from the information to show the actual total compensation of this union position compared to the non-union positions. She explained her multiplier formula and how the differential pay is computed it. She further explained this formula is like what is used at the police department for their non-union staff. Fire has one position (Deputy Chief) that has this for their salary as it was negotiated by the employee when offered the job. Director Fairchild said for consistency this would make both union departments equal on how we handle non-union pay versus union pay and to make sure there is not compression issues. She further noted this additional pay is additional pay that is not subjected to WRS earnings and additional fringe benefits.

This additional pay is reviewed annually for the Deputy Chief's position and would be for the Assistant Chief's position. How this works is the base salary is looked at for the non-union positions after the approved annual increase. It's compared to the union position base salary after their negotiated/approved increase. The additional pay percentage is the difference between to make sure they are at that percentage higher than the union position. If one year the non-union position receives a higher raise than the union position the base pay for the non-union

position is higher and the additional pay is lower. However, if the union raise is higher than the non-union position then the additional pay would be higher for that year. This is why this additional pay is looked at annually.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding the pay. Why there would be a different percentage for the Deputy Chief position versus the Assistant Chief positions. The total difference is just under \$14,000 for the 2025 budget. Director Rasmussen noted this additional cost would be absorbed in the 2025 budget by Chief Teesch. Chief Teesch reviewed his two options for absorbing this within his 2025 budget. It was noted that he needs to do this because his budget has already been reviewed by both Mayors and cuts have been made. Ald. Borchardt has no problem finding money in Fire's budget on how to cover expenditures. His is concerned about the ripple that would happen without a process in place moving forward and how this may compound every year moving forward.

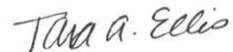
Ald. Sevenich asked why this additional rate needs to be done. He also doesn't feel Chief Teesch should have to find money within his budget to afford this. A discussion was held on why this additional rate was developed.

A discussion was held on what happens if this is not passed. Director Fairchild said she will go back to the candidate and they would decide if they want the job or not. She has no other options to counteroffer with. Chief Teesch noted the other candidates who applied all asked for a starting salary that is closer to the top of the pay scale. Director Fairchild noted that means if the internal candidate turns us down she will be back at a future meeting to have the same conversation in pay with the external candidate(s).

Ald Sevenich said he supported this as it's an internal candidate we are offering the job to. Ald. Pollnow said he would not support this. The employee has done their due diligence with negotiating. The Council has not done their due diligence to say no to the internal candidates and look at external candidates for positions. If we must change our rates and steps, we should have that conversation on this versus a bandaide approach. Ald. Boyette said we have had this issue for a very long time, and no one has every fixed it in over 20 years. She doesn't support this request. **MSC Sevenich/Grade recommends the City of Neenah and City of Menasha Common Councils provide an add rate to the assistant chief positions equivalent to a 3% differential between the highest paid assistant chief and the shift commander, Ald. Sevenich, Borchardt and Grade voting aye and Ald. Pollnow and Boyette voting nay.**

**MSC Borchardt/Grade to adjourn at 5:20 p.m., all voting aye.**

Respectfully submitted,



Tara Ellis

Management Assistant