



Legislation Text

File #: Res. 2017-103, **Version:** 1

City Council Meeting Date: November 14, 2017

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Ben Martig, City Administrator
Michelle Mahowald, Communications & Human Resources Director

Consider Resolution Establishing A “Council City Employment Committee.”

Action Requested:

Staff recommends a motion to approve the attached Resolution Establishing A “Council City Employment Committee.”

Summary Report:

Mayor Pownell suggested to staff the establishment of a committee to review personnel related issues that will come before the City Council. City employment related policy items that come before the City Council for consideration of adoption can include significant legal and operational details that are often complex. Therefore, more in-depth review of items coming forward may be more efficient and effective to establish a committee to review particular items to vet before review of the full Council versus taking time during a full meeting agenda of the Council. Effective use of committees can make regular meetings more effective by allowing more thorough review before coming to Council or to allow for referral to committee by Council. The use of committees is also consistent with Robert’s Rules of Order that the City has adopted by ordinance.

The following Section 2-65 of the City Ordinance applies to Committees of the Council:

Sec. 2-65. - Committees.

- (a) All council committees shall be appointed by the mayor either upon his/her own initiative or upon the majority vote of all of the members of the council.
- (b) Each committee shall consist of three members of the council, and the chair of each committee shall be designated by the mayor. Each committee member shall serve as appointed unless excused by a majority of the members of the council.
- (c) Any matter brought before the council for consideration may be referred by the presiding officer to the appropriate committee or to a special committee appointed by him/her for a written report and recommendation before it is considered by the council as a whole. Each committee report shall be signed by a majority of the members and shall be filed with the city clerk prior to the council meeting at which it is to be submitted. Minority reports may be submitted. Each committee shall act promptly and faithfully on any matter referred to it.

(Code 1986, § 100:30; Ord. No. 902, 9-21-2009)

The City has been using the committee option with finance related policy review items that come before Council. In 2014, the City Council established a “Council Finance Policy Subcommittee” that is the only formal standing committee of the Council consistent with Section 2-65 of the City Code. On October 4, 2016, the City Council approved the establishment of the “roles and responsibilities” of the Council Finance Policy Subcommittee to ensure shared understanding of the purpose of the committee both for staff and Council. The term “subcommittee” was used with the finance committee establishment and continued with the clarification of roles and responsibilities but the legally correct term to use is “committee” to be consistent with City Code. The roles and responsibilities passed at that time and remain in effect for the Council Finance Policy Subcommittee are as follows:

The Council Finance Policy Subcommittee shall consider matters relating to the finances of the City of Northfield and such other related financial matters as they may be referred by the City Council. The Council Finance Policy Subcommittee shall only be advisory to the City Council.

The matters shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Review of new or amended financial management policies; and
- b) Review of budget performance monitoring and forecasting including any related potential recommendations on budget amendments to Council; and
- c) Review debt issuance recommendations and reports prior to City Council action; and
- d) Review utility rate studies in advance of City Council review; and
- e) Provide recommendations to the City Council related to review processes for establishing long-term capital and long-term financial plan goals and objectives.

The Council Finance Policy Subcommittee generally meets on a monthly basis and membership includes Chair Zweifel, Councilor DeLong and Councilor Colby. Finance Director Angelstad is the staff assigned by the City Administrator to serve this committee with Accounting Supervisor Grant serving as Secretary. City Administrator Martig attends the meetings as well.

Staff is recommending first creating the committee and then later establishing some more specific roles and responsibilities using the initial framework resolution as a starting point. The format is proposed to be similar to the Finance Policy Subcommittee example. The process worked well with the Council Finance Policy Subcommittee process where the committee suggested roles and responsibilities developed cooperatively with staff and the City Attorney and brought forward recommended language for the Council of which they ultimately discussed and approved.

For this committee, the intent is to establish a “Council City Employment Committee” to review, discuss, and advise on certain City employment-related items impacting employees city-wide that require City Council approval. The committee format would allow designated councilors to have additional time outside of regular full Council meetings to delve further into review of specific City employment related items that would be required for council approval and action. Examples of the types of City employment-related items that the committee would have a role and responsibility to review include the following: Personnel Policy amendments; employee benefit changes or renewals; compensation wage schedule amendments; or Administrative Policies related to City employment-related items (specific example: City Administrator Annual Performance Review Policy).

City Administrator Martig would intend for Michelle Mahowald, Communications & Human Resources Director, to assign as the staff serving this committee with Human Resources Specialist Kathy Fredrickson serving as Secretary. City Administrator Martig would likely be a regular attendee as well. Similar processes and procedures of the Council Finance Policy Subcommittee would be used with the “Council City Employment Committee” for consistency purposes. Generally, staff does not anticipate a need for a monthly meeting for personnel policy related issues but would recommend establishing a regular date and time for when items may need to be reviewed.

Staff conducted a review of other cities to see whether they had a similar council committee through a Minnesota City professional “email group share” list and received the following responses from these cities:

1. Responding cities without a Council personnel policy committee structure:
 - a. Albert Lea, Andover, Austin, Bloomington (civil service committee- does not apply to Northfield), Edina, Faribault, Farmington, Golden Valley, Lino Lakes, Maplewood, Minnetonka, Owatonna, Plymouth, Ramsey, River Falls, Robbinsdale, Roseville, Savage, Shorewood, Stillwater, Waconia (special committee on hiring does not apply to Northfield), White Bear Lake.

2. Responding cities with a Council personnel policy committee structure (including a description of their roles and responsibilities):
 - a. Marshall, Minnesota “roles and Responsibilities”

“The Council Personnel Committee meet on an as needed basis. The responsibility of the Personnel Committee is to review and make recommended changes to the council on Personnel Policy. The Committee may meet with employee representatives regarding employee’s compensation/benefit programs and make recommendations to the council. The committee reviews City Administrator’s recommended revisions for Employee Job Pay Classification System and recommend amendments to City Council. The committee shall review requests for new full time ‘regular employees’ and make corresponding recommendations to City Council.”

City Administrator Martig will present this item with additional comments from Mayor Pownell. Communications & Human Resources Director Mahowald will be in attendance as well to answer any questions.

Alternative Options:

Staff and the Mayor welcome additional suggested amendments, clarification or discussion with the Council.

Financial Impacts:

No financial impact. There will be additional time allocation resources necessary for staff and council in preparation of background reports, scheduling and meetings.

Tentative Timelines:

If approved, staff will work to establish a first meeting in the next 30-days and the “roles and responsibilities” would be one of the first items of business along with some other staff recommended Personnel Policy related items that are ready and pending for Council presentation and consideration.

