

MEETING MINUTES

FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY - OCTOBER 4, 2006 - 6 p.m. - COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Members Present: Romberg, Morack, O'Connell, Betts, Henke

Others present: Luaders, Tate, Paul Weise, Karen Gething, Tourism Commission; Laurie Shaw, Chamber of Commerce; Brenda & Duane Grove, Villiesse, Hager, Rousseau

1. Romberg called the meeting to order. Morack/Henke to adopt agenda, with two deletions. Carried 5-0. [AFSCME grievance and Residency Ordinance were withdrawn].

2. Paul Weise of Weise Risk Management Service spoke to the Committee about the Health Insurance industry and the causes of high health insurance. He attributes rising health costs not to technologies but to the aging population, the high cost of malpractice insurance and scarcity of medical professionals. He encouraged the City to consider developing a long-term health insurance strategy. Laura Betts gave him information she had downloaded on the State Health Plan and he promised to look it over and give us a comparison with our current plan.

3. Karen Gething gave the Committee a progress report on the activities of the New London Tourism Commission. On display were traveling panels and a large traveling sign and brochure dispenser. These were full of pictures from New London with information on various activities and things to do and see in the immediate area. Getting first read the Commission's mission statement "to promote the New London area and events to attract tourist". She then reviewed the Commission's activities over the past months, which include New London Day at the Big Picture Show, appearances at local fests and fairs, creation of a brochure and display signs, participation in Smart Growth and "Envision New London". The major thrust of current activities is to "brand" New London – to come up with a simple slogan or phrase and image to encapsulate what New London is all about and which encourages people to come here. Their aim is creation of multi-day events or strings of events which would encourage an overnight stay in the City. They are working with local motels to make them more fisherman-friendly. The Commission is also pursuing marketing grants, exploring the creation of new events and working to tie in the golf course, now under new ownership, with it efforts.

She also described a mutual visit to Rhinelander as a part of the first impressions initiative. Finally, she asked the Committee to consider making Commission membership more flexible with an ordinance change allowing 4-6 persons as members, rather than 5. Morack/Henke to recommend to Council adoption of an ordinance which accomplishes this. Carried 5-0.

4. Earl Luaders explained that the City has a mortgage in a secondary position on an apartment complex on W. Wolf River Avenue. River Place Apartments was built using CDBG funds. The original developer has died and his estate apparently is just walking away from these buildings. Thus, the primary mortgage has gone unpaid and the mortgage holder, First State Bank, wishes to foreclose. The Bank wishes to know if the City would buy out the Bank's position, in order to preserve the City's interest.

Earl explained the foreclosure process. It appears that the equity of the property is about equal to the outstanding mortgages and delinquent taxes. Earl advised that it would be in the City's best interest to let the foreclosure process continue. O'Connell/Morack to do nothing at this time. Carried 5-0.

5. Kent Hager reported that he has found that the position title of Public Facilities Manager has caused some confusion in the market place, with most applicants being buildings and grounds specialists. He asked to readvertise using the job title Streets & Parks Superintendent and not stating a beginning salary range in the ad. The Committee concurred and suggested that he make the new ads a bit bigger.

6. Henke/Morack to adopt the Employee Asbestos and Flammable Liquids Policies. Carried 4-1 (O'Connell against).

7. Budget reports were distributed. The Economic Development Report was discussed.

8. Villiesse explained that the City of Menasha's leaving the WPPI Health Insurance Trust will have only a small affect upon remaining members, and that our premiums for next year will be up 12%.

9. There being no other business, Morack/Betts to adjourn. Committee adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Jim Villiesse
City Clerk