



December 16, 2013

Mayor Devine and
Members of the Common Council
West Allis City Hall
West Allis, Wisconsin

Re: City Administrative Officer Position/Reorganization

Dear Mayor & Common Council Members:

Following the announcement by Paul Ziehler that he will be retiring, the Director of Development, the Public Works/Engineering Director & City Attorney have been discussing the City Administrative Officer position as well as the overall organization of the City. At the Committee of the Whole meeting on Monday December 9, 2013, some issues were raised as well as concerns from the alderpersons about efficiency & costs savings. After much discussion and exchanging of ideas amongst ourselves, we are of the opinion that Paul's retirement presents the City with a unique opportunity to make significant changes to the City's organizational structure, make the City more efficient, and save money. To those ends, we have several suggestions to make.

The proposed plan to create several new department head positions obviously raised concerns that this would be a net increase in cost to the City. Common sense dictates that elevating division heads to department head level will result in more points and, hence more pay under the City's personnel evaluation system (Hay system). Instead, we propose that the City Administrative Officer position be eliminated. We recommend that a Department of Administration & Finance be recreated. That department would keep the current divisions within it with two exceptions. We propose that the Clerk/Treasurer position become its own Department and that the Human Resources Division be moved into the City Attorney's office. We think that the Finance Manager (Mark Wyss) would be the most logical choice to assume the Administration & Finance Department Head position. For the Clerk/Treasurer position, we think that Monica Schultz is the logical choice for this Department head position.

No doubt, the Administration & Finance Department Head and the Clerk/Treasurer positions would both merit pay increases. In addition, there may be a need to hire another accountant to take over job duties that Mark could no longer perform. Nevertheless, there would be substantial savings in salary. Should the Council chose, it could use some of those cost savings to evaluate the other Division Head positions to determine if a merit pay increase is warranted.

As the Clerk/Treasurer already serves as the office that makes agendas, takes minutes, and keeps records (among other duties), the Clerk/Treasurer can serve as a liaison between the Common Council and department heads. This position was once at a department head level and we think that it merits being restored to that level. The other job duties of the City Administrative Officer can be taken over by the Administration & Finance Department Head or dispersed to the Mayor or other department heads. For example, risk management duties are already shared between the City Administrative Officer & City Attorney. They could either be entirely shifted to the City Attorney or the Mayor or Head of the Administration & Finance Department could assume those duties currently performed by the City Administrative Officer.

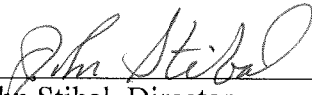
The issue of control & liaison with department heads was a topic of significant discussion at the Committee of the Whole meeting. We are of the opinion that things have changed significantly since the creation of the City Administrative Officer position. It is our opinion that, since department heads sign a contract with the Common Council and, pursuant to Policy 405, are subject to Mayoral management but ultimately the Common Council is the deciding authority, the Common Council has more than adequate control over department heads. If an alderperson wishes to question a department head or give specific direction, that department head can be called before the Common Council. If a department head thinks a mayor is overstepping his/her bounds, that department head can likewise go before the Common Council. In short, we think that, in no small measure due to Paul's outstanding performance in guiding and transforming City operations, the City is in the position to eliminate a top level office and make other significant structural changes.

With regard to the Human Resources Division, moving the division into the City Attorney's office has several advantages. Many of Human Resource's duties concern ensuring that the City is complying with numerous state & federal laws. That task transcends all departments and is closely aligned with what the City Attorney does. Furthermore, moving Human Resources into the City Attorney's office would not result in additional pay to the City Attorney. As the position is elected, the pay cannot be changed during the term of office. The City Attorney's pay is not set through the Hay system; rather, it is set by the Common Council. The Common Council has no obligation to increase the City Attorney's pay due to this reorganization. Lastly, this change would provide the City with an opportunity (granted, it would be years down the road) to require that the Human Resources manager be an attorney and combine the Human Resources Manager & Assistant City Attorney/Labor positions. This would create further efficiency and cost savings.

Lastly, whether all, some or none of these recommendations are adopted, we urge you to take your time in exploring various ways in which the City can take advantage of this opportunity. While we understand the desire to fill the City Administrative Officer position as soon as possible, we think that the City would be better served by a thoughtful and thorough examination of all options and ideas.


We wish to emphasize that these suggestions should not, in any way, be viewed as a criticism of any particular individual or department/division. On the contrary, we have the highest regard for the work Paul Ziehler has done for the City and have great admiration for the department and division heads impacted by these proposals. As stated above, our goal is to have the Common Council consider these as well as any other options that may be raised in an attempt to reorganize the City's structure to create a more streamlined and efficient delivery of services.

Sincerely,



John Stibal, Director,
Department of Development

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Mike Lewis, Director,
Public Works/Engineering



Scott E. Post, City Attorney

Cc: Audrey Key
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