



City of West Allis

Meeting Minutes

7525 W. Greenfield Ave.
West Allis, WI 53214

Board of Police and Fire Commissioners

*Commissioner Joseph Kempen, President,
Commissioner Kevin Haass, Vice-President,
Commissioner Wayne Clark, Secretary
Commissioners: Donald Nehmer, Harold Mester*

Tuesday, March 5, 2013

5:30 PM

City Hall, Room 128

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING WITH COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Kempen at 5:35 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Joseph Kempen, Wayne Clark, Kevin Haass and Harold Mester

Excused: Commissioner Don Nehmer

Also Present: Mayor Dan Devine; Alderpersons Thomas Lajsic, Gary Barczak, Michael Czaplewski, Michael May, Cathleen Probst, Rosalie Reinke, Dan Roadt, James Sengstock, Vince Vitale and Martin Weigel; Sheryl Kuhary and Scott Post, City Attorney's Office; Audrey Key and Jane Barwick, Human Resources Office; Paul Ziehler, Chief Administrative Officer, Jim Jandovitz, IT - City of West Allis; Interim Fire Chief Gary Streicher, Assistant Chief Steve Bane, Assistant Chief Martin King, Equipment Operator, Dion Volk, Firefighter Mark Sura - Fire Department; Acting Police Chief Charles Padgett, Deputy Chief Bob Fletcher, Lieutenant Steve Beyer - Police Department; Bob Selin - Greenfield Police & Fire Commission; Bridget Kennedy, recording secretary - Police and Fire Commission; Janel Lemanske, recording secretary - Committee of the Whole.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Ald. Sengstock, seconded by Ald. Vitale, to approve the minutes of the July 3, 2012 Committee of the Whole Special Meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

D. OTHER MATTERS TO COME BEFORE THE COMMITTEE FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION

- 2013-0116** Discussion of Possible Opportunities Presented to the City by the Concurrent Vacancies in both the Police Chief and Fire Chief positions, including, but not limited to, potential Chief Public Safety Officer, Joint Services with other Communities, and Modification of Internal Department Structure.

Common Council President Lajsic recognized City Attorney Scott Post and requested that Mr. Post address both groups and give an overview of the general considerations that may apply in considering the different possible opportunities presented by the concurrent vacancies in both Chief positions. Mr. Post began by stating that both the Common Council and the Police and Fire Commission needed to make the one same decision, but noted that the Common Council had primary authority. Mr. Post stated that the Common Council's authority included considering the passing of an ordinance to establish an actual combined position of Public

Safety Director and salary ordinances for that position. Without these ordinances the Police and Fire Commission could not establish the combined position. Mr. Post also stated that given the Option Powers of our current Police and Fire Commission, operational issues are its responsibility. Among the considerations that the Police and Fire Commission could consider included (1) one combined Public Safety Director, (2) combining both departments into one, and (3) joining in some form of joint operation or sharing services with one or more surrounding municipalities. Mr. Post noted that implementing any of these options would present certain challenges. Beyond these comments, State Statutes do not go very far in specifics to follow.

Council President Lajsic asked if there were any questions or comments regarding Attorney Post's overview, and seeing there were none, opened the floor to discussion regarding the stated agenda item.

Discussion ensued regarding the feasibility and actionability of this type of joint position. Ald. Barczak and Ald. Reinke both noted that this topic had come before the council members a number of years ago and was not implemented at that time. Ald. Barczak stated that in reviewing the survey information conducted by Human Resources of various counties around West Allis, it was determined that cities approximately the same size as West Allis opted not to move forward with this type of combined position as it was not a financially sound decision nor were qualifications of this type of position easy to quantify and thus, finding a suitable candidate difficult at the very least. Ald. Sengstock noted that the City needs to take into consideration the efficiency and improvement and cost savings of such a combined position would offer otherwise, it is simply a waste of time. Additionally, he stated that the Council is asking the Police and Fire Commission to review and make changes in the current Police and Fire structures to reflect financial savings for the City during the next budget discussion process. Ald. May stated that although not in favor or against this type of combined position, he would like to encourage a discussion as it relates to creating a 10-year restructure plan of the Police and Fire departments responding to the projected budget constraints for the City of West Allis and their citizens. Ald. Czaplewski commented that from a financial standpoint, why is a Chief of Police or Fire necessary when you have Deputy Chiefs that have been in place for some time and are capable and able to handle the responsibilities. Further, Ald. Czaplewski stated that if Chiefs are hired for these positions, he wants to see a change in their departments to reflect financial savings for the City. Ald. Probst stated that she agreed with the statements made by Alderpersons Barczak and Reinke, reiterating that the cost savings in the long run does not seem feasible given the specialization of each department as well as the specific skill sets and qualifications needed of such an individual to be successful in this type of joint position. Police & Fire Commission President Kempen agreed that with the vacancies in the Fire & Police Chief positions, opportunity for change of structure within the departments is a viable option for discussion, however, he would not want to compromise the effectiveness and efficiency of either department and restructure and/or reduction of staff would need to be closely reviewed and scrutinized. Council President Lajsic stated he is in agreement with the other Alderpersons, and does not believe that a Joint Safety Director position is the right course of action for the City. He stated that the City's Fire and Police departments are highly trained, well educated professionals and believes that each department needs a strong Chief to not only inspire their individual departments, but also to be willing to take a hard and truthful look at their respective department structures and determine a best course of action to benefit financially and efficiently in the years to come.

Council President Lajsic asked for a consensus of the Common Council members to continue moving forward with the pursuit of a Joint Safety Director Position and the consensus was unanimous to not move forward with said position at this time.

Ald. May stated that he would like the Police & Fire Commissioners to investigate feasibility of combined administrative efforts between the West Allis departments and surrounding

departments. Ald. May stated that he understands this is not a quick turnaround objective, but is suggesting an ongoing, open discussion with other counties regarding possible involvement in such combined administrative services. Commission President Kempen stated that both departments are regularly involved in shared services with Wauwatosa, Franklin, New Berlin and Milwaukee. Commissioner Kempen stated that relative to Ald. May's statements, it may be easier to approach current Fire Chief's with such a combined administrative proposal working within a 10-year plan to ease the potential for transition, should this process prove successful to move forward. Mayor Devine stated conversations he and retired Chief Hook have had with West Allis community neighbors regarding this type of combined efforts were not met positively. Mayor Devine stated that giving up one's autonomy was not a favored action, and most were reluctant to lose control over their departments at any level.

E. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Ald. Sengstock, seconded by Ald. Weigel, to adjourn at 6:33 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

*Paul M. Ziehler
City Administrative Officer
Clerk/Treasurer*