



**Personnel Board Meeting
Pelham Senior Center
February 20, 2020 – 6:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

Proper notice of the scheduled meeting of the Pelham Personnel Board was given in advance of such public meeting and the notice remained posted throughout the scheduled meeting.

Date: February 20, 2020
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: Pelham Senior Center
Present: Board Member Don Green
Board Member Martina Winston

Others Present: Tracy Hill, HR Director, Department Heads, city employees, and members of the public.

CALL TO ORDER

Tracy Hill called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the invocation.

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Tracy Hill asked Candy Porter, Payroll & Benefits Analyst, to call the roll and record attendance. It was noted that Board Member Green and Board Member Winston were present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board was asked to accept the minutes from the meeting held on January 15, rather than approve since they were not Board members at that time. A motion was made by Board Member Winston to accept the minutes as presented. Board Member Green seconded the motion and the members voted to accept the minutes as presented.

NEW BUSINESS

Tracy Hill turned the meeting over to the new members to discuss the appointment of the third seat on the Board. Board Member Green stated that he felt it was important to have a member with experience on the Board so he made a motion to re-appoint Jim Collins to the Board. Board Member Winston acknowledged that there were six candidates (Barbara Roberts, Mike Harris, June Fletcher, Jim Collins, Greg Darnell and Will Moore) who had expressed an interest in serving on this Board. She thanked them for their interest and for participating in the process. She asked Board Member Green for his thoughts on the other candidates. The following candidates and their qualifications were discussed:

- Mike Harris has a long standing history with the City of Pelham and runs a successful business within the city. He also understands personnel issues because of the low turnover within his business.
- June Fletcher has a long history of active involvement with the City of Pelham and with her work with the Red Cross and would certainly be qualified.
- Barbara Roberts has a long history with the City of Pelham as a department head and was very involved with establishing the library and making it what it is today.

Board Member Winston acknowledged that the re-appointment of Jim Collins would bring consistency to the Board since both she and Mr. Green were new members. However, she does think it is important that this is an opportunity to bring a new perspective and fresh ideas to the Board. She stated that it is her understanding that unless she and Board Member Green both agree on a new appointment, Jim Collins retains his seat on the Board. Tracy Hill verified that she was correct. Board Member Winston stated that she did not want to delay the process so she seconded the motion to re-appoint Jim Collins. She added that while Jim Collins would bring the history and consistency, she and Board Member Green would bring a new perspective. A voice vote of the members re-appointed Jim Collins to the Board for a term of four years. Board Member Winston asked if she could take a moment to thank all of the candidates who expressed an interest in serving and hopes that they will continue to support the Board.

Board Member Green stated that he would like to provide the opportunity at the end of each meeting for employee comments so that the Board may hear the perspectives of others present. Board Member Collins and Board Member Winston expressed their willingness for the same. Board Member Green made the motion to allow comments to every agenda and limit the comments to five minutes unless the Board extends the time allowed. The motion was seconded by Board Member Winston and a voice vote of all members approved.

Board Member Winston asked if anyone present would like to address the Board.

- Larry Palmer, the retired Police Chief and a resident of Pelham, stated that he was excited to see new members along with the experienced member of the Board and he expects great things from the Board and had every confidence that they would deliver.
- Gretchen DiFante, City Manager, stated that she would like to see the Board present updates of the Civil Service Act to the state legislature per the recommendation from the HR audit that was conducted last year by HRM.

Discussion was held by Board members regarding the process that would need to be followed to address and make recommended changes. Mrs. DiFante stated that she and Tracy Hill would gather examples of other Acts that have undergone recent changes for the Board to review. Board Member Green asked her for a specific example of a change she would like to see. She explained that there are inconsistencies in the Act where it addresses vacation usage and the limitations imposed by the Act regarding compensation of new employees are only a couple of examples.

- Rick Hayes, a member of the City Council and Pelham resident, addressed the Board explaining that the Civil Service Act underwent a revision in 2015 and that the process took seven months. It involved himself, Mayor Waters, the personnel board submitting proposed changes to the state legislative delegation and it then had to go through the approval process at the state level. Board Member Collins asked Mr. Hayes if he recalled the amount of time it took to have the changes approved by the state legislature. Mr. Hayes stated that the Board will need to file the changes to the legislature at least a couple of months before the next session is to begin.
- Gretchen DiFante added that the current CSA document does not address the City Manager form of government. She elaborated on the limitations that are currently imposed concerning compensation restrictions and vacation leave for new employees and the compensation limitations for cross training/obtaining new skills of current employees.

Board Member Winston stated that while she certainly agrees that there is work to be done, she would like to see the Board identify the changes that need to be made, review what other entities are doing well and review the process that Mr. Hayes explained the Board would have to follow to make the changes.

Tracy Hill explained the difficulties that are currently being experienced in recruiting experienced candidates to fill vacancies and limiting their use of vacation during the first year. She explained that an hourly employee has the ability to work extra hours and convert that time to compensatory time that can be used during that probationary year but a salaried employee does not have that ability. She explained to the Board that she recently requested a legal opinion from Josh Arnold for clarification on what is allowed under the Act. He explained that there are contradictions within the document.

Board Member Winston suggested that the Board look at the recommendations as a whole initially rather than focusing on each individual issue until farther along in the process. Tracy Hill informed the members that she would have a copy of the Human Resource audit recommendations for the members at the next meeting on March 4th. She agrees that the Civil Service Act will certainly be on that list but that there may be other items that can be more easily addressed. Board Member Green asked if all of the recommendations required action by this Board. She advised the Board that most of the items did not require any action by them. For example, one of the recommendations was to put established hiring processes in place. We now have implemented established guidelines for the interview process and now have consistency across departments. She also explained a difficulty in the inability to not compensate an employee who obtains a certification but remains in the same classification. For example, we would like to see employees obtain their water certification which is required to work as a well operator but we only need them to work as a back up to the current well operator. We do not have guidelines in place to allow that employee to be compensated for obtaining that additional certification since they are not changing classifications. Board Member Winston stated that she was understanding that the Board was being asked for assistance in establishing guidelines that could be implemented in every department to create consistency. All Board members acknowledged that these are all conversations that will need to take place as we proceed.

- Rick Hayes wanted to clarify that members of the city council did speak with state legislators during the previous process when the CSA was updated. At that time, it was recommended that language adding the City Manager should not be added until later. He added that everyone was aware that the issue exists and that there was not any reason to change it at that point in time.
- Board Member Green asked if Pelham's form of government had ever been changed and he was informed that it had not. Gretchen DiFante informed the group that the City Manager position exists by ordinance and not by the form of government.
- Ron Scott, a member of the City Council and Pelham resident, asked to make a statement. He stated that he is encouraged by the Board and believes that each member brings their own strengths, Don's time as an employee, Martina's work in the corporate world, and Jim's knowledge from his prior years on this Board, will work well going forward to accomplish great things. This city has experienced significant changes since 2015 and he thinks that this Board will have the advantage of a City Manager and an HR Director that are able to articulate the challenges they face and that will allow this Board to make the best decisions for the employees and the city. He thanked the Board members for their willingness to take on this task.

ADJOURNMENT

With no additional business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned with a motion by Don Green and second by Jim Collins at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted this 28th day of January, 2020.

Tracy Hill, Secretary
Director of Human Resources