

Special Ordinances & Administration Committee

Monday, July 29, 2013 – 5:30 p.m.

1st Fl. Council Committee Rm. – City Hall**-Minutes-**

Present: Councilor Sefatia Theken, Chair; Councilor Robert Whynott, Vice Chair; Councilor Steven LeBlanc
Absent: None.

Also Present: Councilor Hardy; Linda T. Lowe; Joanne Senos; Marie Giambanco

The meeting was called to order at 5:38 p.m.

Councilor Whynott informed the Committee he would recuse from himself from a vote regarding the position of City Clerk because, he said, his vote could be construed as his judging the department's reorganization based on his previous experience as a Gloucester City Clerk, although there is no conflict of interest in this case.

Councilor Theken advised that under MGL c. 268A she would be recusing herself from a vote on the position of Elections Specialist/Assistant Registrar as her sister-in-law currently holds that position and did not wish to give any impression of impropriety, although there is no conflict of interest.

Councilor LeBlanc said he too was related to the Assistant Registrar, a cousin. And although he is related, under MGL c. 268A he is able to vote on that position, but wished to make that declaration that he in no way gains financially or otherwise from such a vote.

1. Continued Business:

A) Reorganization of the City Clerk's Department

• **Position of Assistant City Clerk:**

Joanne Senos, Assistant City Clerk said that she did not believe there were any changes to her job description but that every little thing she does can't be put on paper. As a substitute for each position, those positions job descriptions as well, and she works with the City Council also, she noted.

Councilor Hardy said in other words said Ms. Senos fills in for the City Clerk and provides training to everyone in the office as well as backing those personnel up. Ms. Senos confirmed that and said she does customer service. Personally, on inquiry by **Councilor Hardy**, **Ms. Senos** said her intent is to go back to school in the fall for completion of her Associates Degree. She suggested a bachelor's degree might be good for this position because it may bring more education and experience to the job. She noted the seminars she attends are valuable and explained that each seminar taken is tracked by the professional organization she and the City Clerk belong to and those points are put towards professional certification. **Councilor Hardy** asked if there is any networking done by Ms. Senos with other Assistant City Clerks. Ms. Senos said networking is valuable in sharing information in particular with other communities, like Beverly, and with former Assistant City Clerks of Gloucester. However, there are those in towns that do not apply due to their population and form of government and organization, and some cities do the same functions very differently, and gave the Councilors several examples. She noted in Beverly the City Clerk does all the vitals and Salem does not do any Council work at all. In Salem the City Clerk does all Council duties plus the minutes in addition to all City Clerk duties. She added that Salem does not have a comparable position of Clerk of Committees. There is not a comparable city or town to Gloucester in reality, she said.

• **Position of Clerk of Committees:**

No changes recommended, Ms. Lowe said, and that the job description was reviewed carefully. She pointed out there are no further clerical grades above 8B, the pay grade level which the Clerk of Committees is positioned in now. **Councilor Hardy** confirmed the increase to Grade 8B was done the previous year when all of the City's Confidential Secretaries received a grade increase. Although this position is not a union position, the benefits and pay follow that of AFSCME B union contract. **Dana Jorgensson**, Clerk of Committees confirmed that the job description was made more current by language but that duties and responsibilities are essentially the same. She pointed out there is frequent customer service that she provides which was not included in the job description. **Ms. Lowe** said these job descriptions hadn't been upgraded in some time and so this was an opportunity to look at all the jobs with a clear eye. **Ms. Lowe** also confirmed that other than adding "team player" and cross training this job description with modernized language was essentially the same. **Ms. Lowe** added that her staff still has to keep in mind their primary job function comes first before cross training and being utilized in the office for other administrative functions.

- **Position of Vital Records Specialist:**

Ms. Lowe said that although the current Principal Clerk was not present, she said that all staff were asked to give their input for their job descriptions. The Principal Clerk job category is a general one and doesn't mean much anymore, she said. The person who does this job truly is a specialist she pointed out; they have to work with State officials in Vital Records, and this new job description is more reflective of the job duties. **Ms. Lowe** spoke about the back up for the creation of the Council packet which is performed by the Assistant City Clerk. She commented that cross training is exactly for this purpose so that there is back up for various positions in the department. This position will learn to use the Council drop box as part of that job's cross training. **Ms. Senos** added that person does not have administrative rights to the drop box program at this time, presently only two employees have drop box administrative access to date.

Councilor Hardy noted when the City Clerk and Assistant City Clerk were out of the office recently, Ms. Poirier did a great job of putting the Council packet together. She asked that Ms. Poirier receive further training on constructing the Council packet to give her more experience, although not the expense of her position's regular job duties, so that she gains more familiarity with the process.

Responding to an inquiry by **Councilor Hardy**, **Ms. Senos** said she has responsibility of cross training for the staff. **Ms. Lowe** said it depends, however, if Ms. Jorgensson would be absent for a long period of time, a staff member would be cross trained to put together Standing Committee agendas and attendant packets, post the packets on line and place them in the drop box. **Councilor Hardy** suggested the position of Vital Records Specialist could be back up for the Clerk of Committees. **Ms. Senos** said that the job description does not have that in its description. Ms. Lowe pointed out that the last line of each job description reads, "All responsibilities and duties are illustrations of the types of work performed." She said the union was a big fan of cross training and told her it is valuable.

Councilor Theken said putting in the job description for the Vital Records Specialist to back up the Clerk of Committees was important if this is to be a function of the position. **Councilor Whynott** said a problem in one area is if the Clerk of Committees couldn't take the minutes of a Standing Committee or Council meeting, falls on the Assistant Clerk (see job description for that position), and that the clerical staff cannot work at night to cover a meeting. **Councilor Hardy** said this is for putting a packet together and things of that nature. She said she agreed that if the position title changes, that whomever holds that job should have it in the job description to act as the back up to create the Standing Committee Packets along with the attendant agendas. **Ms. Senos** noted there have been issues in the past where it is not in the job description and people want to be compensated out of their grade.

Ms. Lowe noted under the section, Responsibilities, it says, "Participate in cross training to assist with Council agenda preparation function of Assistant City Clerk as needed and as directed and assisted by City Clerk and Assistant City Clerk. **Councilor Theken** said it the language should be amended to say, "Assist the Clerk's office by preparing City Council Standing Committee agendas and City Council Standing Committee agenda packets as directed during normal work hours," to which **Ms. Lowe** agreed.

- **Position of Elections Specialist/Assistant Registrar:**

Councilor Theken reiterated that under MGL 268A she was recusing herself as her sister-in law currently holds this position in the City Clerk's office. **Councilor LeBlanc** also reiterated that under MGL 268A that to avoid any impropriety he declared he was a cousin by marriage to the person holding this position and that he will not benefit from any comments made this evening nor is there a conflict of interest.

Marie Giambanco, Assistant Registrar said this job description as presented describes all of the position's job functions. She said she is willing to do what needs to be done as a team, and that this is not just for her but is geared to the position and is true of the position. Speaking for herself, she said she wished to see the job description to indicate that she is to cross trained in the drop box administrative function and for the Assistant City Clerk's position because it is a disadvantage to her to not be and is not included in her job description. **Ms. Lowe** said that is not listed particularly because cross training means that a staff member is available to back up anyone's position versus eventually taking that position. There is more specificity there in the position, but everyone can be cross trained. She suggested everything should be the same across the board. Drop box, she said, is not the best example to use. Rather, **Ms. Lowe** said that she is looking at cross training is a broad matter and so at any given point everyone should be able to step into each other's shoes. True intensive training is not available due to financial constraints, she pointed out. **Ms. Giambanco** said that she has been with the City for seven years and that the person doing another job has only two years experience. She also noted this position is going to be trained on the specifics. In her job description it says she is to check accuracy for campaign finance and that she said she does not really do this and would like to go to training for this issue which **Ms. Lowe** agreed with.

Councilor Whynott asked if there were two back ups for every position in the department, and was informed there was not. He said everyone should be able to do all these functions for each of the department's positions. **Ms.**

Lowe said the upgrading of the position is also important in that most of the City doesn't realize what is involved in these jobs and that the duties are actually very complicated and very involved. She said the title of Election Specialist/Assistant Registrar is important.

Ms. Lowe noted that what is most important no matter what the cross training and job training is, these positions are all specialized; and the particular job duties must take precedence. She suggested the same language that was added to Vital Records Specialist be inserted into the responsibilities for this position. **Ms. Senos** agreed it should be in both job descriptions. If it is, it would need to be inserted into the phrase under Duties: "Participates in cross training as available for other non-election office duties" then by adding "and participates in cross training to assist with Council agenda functions of Assistant City Clerk as needed and as directed and assisted by the City Clerk and Assistant City Clerk." **Ms. Lowe** said this makes it parallel to the other job description of the Vital Records Specialist.

Councilor Whynott said in general he has never been a proponent of mandatory educational degrees where there is no equivalent. He said when he became a City Clerk, every Clerk of Committees could have become the Assistant City Clerk whether they had a degree or not because of their unique experiences and knowledge base gained from their position. When people come from the outside even with an MBA they have to learn it all from the beginning. There is better education available from the State and from other professional organizations through seminars, he said, and did not want to see a degree be a hard fast rule to judge a potential candidate for a position by. **Ms. Lowe** pointed out that a degree is preferred or equivalent experience as well. **Ms. Senos** added that no one will know what is required for each of these jobs. A degree might bring potentially qualified candidates forward, but there is extensive training involved. She said she sometimes disagrees that a degree may be necessary, although in the private sector now an Associate's degree is needed to be a secretary. **Ms. Lowe** said that none of the positions mandates a degree. Accommodation of years of education, years of experience may be substituted, she noted. **Councilor Theken** said that training is a key factor. She said she agreed with Ms. Senos that degrees are good but the experience and training is what is essential for successful performance in these positions. **Councilor Whynott** noted he had 15 years experience in management in the private sector but with a municipal government one has to start from scratch.

- **Position of City Clerk:**

Councilor Theken said that between now and the public hearing she wished to have a review between herself and Ms. Lowe on her job description and job functions. She would contact Ms. Lowe to meet with her. This would be a Committee review solely conducted by her, but that she asked the Clerk of Committees to forward an email to the Council asking for their input with any questions they may have. This meeting would take place over the next several weeks, she added.

Ms. Lowe noted as to changes in the City Clerk's job description, her research focused on cities and what their systems were. If she found anything to add into the position, she did. She said this position has been traditionally undervalued for what it does, and the necessary knowledge set and skills that must be in place in order for the position to function successfully; and she tried to make it more particular to the position. **Councilor Theken** asked if Ms. Lowe had been completely cross trained. **Ms. Lowe** said she did a City Clerk's training very recently. **Ms. Senos** said she did not go to the same training as both she and Ms. Lowe could not be out of the office for several days at the same time, and that also there was a lack of funding. **Ms. Lowe** said the intention was that Ms. Senos would attend a similar seminar to the training she herself had just completed and reiterated it is a lack of funding why staff is not attending training seminars. **Councilor Theken** said it is also important to attend such things from a networking standpoint which can be extremely helpful. **Councilors Theken** and **Whynott** discussed how Ms. Senos and Ms. Lowe might try to work to obtain more training for themselves and their staff.

Councilor Hardy asked about pay grade reclassifications saying that of the positions are unionized, she said with the exception of Clerk of Committees which is not a union position. She asked if a position is if someone goes from, say, Grade 6 to a 7, the current step is step 5, if that position is reclassified to a pay grade of 7 would the pay grade begin at the within the same step 5, which Ms. Lowe confirmed it would. Once the reclassification takes place, a step increase will not be made for 12 months following that change, said **Ms. Senos** added. The Committee viewed the AFSCME Wage Scale B effective 7/1/2013 (on file) and discussed the steps of current positions and grades that go with it.

Management pay grades are different, **Ms. Senos** said, who a member of the GMAA (Gloucester Municipal Administrative Association) union. Ms. Lowe, she noted, is in the other group that follows it, much as the same way in which the Clerk of Committees position follows ASFCME B. She noted for her position when she received her last said that she did not move into the new pay grade with a corresponding step, but was placed between one step and the next higher step. This, she said, can be done for middle management and the City Clerk. The only step

established is for the City Clerk, **Councilor Hardy** pointed out. The pay raise is not for a Pay Grade. It is not assumed that the person does not go directly down the column

Councilor Hardy said researched with other municipalities that were they cities by population. **Ms. Lowe** for comparisons she stuck with cities. **Councilor Hardy** said in her research she looked at populations of cities and that perhaps sometime before the public hearing it should be looked at. **Councilor Whynott** said that along with population, total budget of a city should be looked at together. **Councilor Hardy** said she was looking just at City Clerk's position, but she said she should also be looking at statistics for Assistant City Clerk, noting the information she had was from FY12 and found on line. It is something to draw a correlation from she pointed out. **Councilor Hardy** noted her research showed that in FY12 Gloucester had a population of 28,789 and the City Clerk base salary was a low of \$63,700 to a high of \$75,400; and the next highest city was Chelsea with a population of 35,177 with a base salary low of \$56,000 and high of \$72,000. Beverly had a population of 39,500 with a base salary of and pays \$70,000 to \$74,000. This data sheet is available to the Committee, she said, and is something that should be reviewed. FY13 information is not yet available. **Councilor Hardy** said she hasn't noted yet whether stipends are included in salaries are not, although she said she believed stipends were included in salaries in the information she had gathered with the exception of Fitchburg. Gloucester is about average from the report she had, **Councilor Hardy** said. She did not do an assessment for the Assistant City Clerk, she said. **Ms. Lowe** said she has that data from the MMA but she did on line research going directly to city websites and looked at their current and just passed budgets to get more detailed information. **Ms. Lowe** said she could provide that data to the Council by the time of the public hearing.

Councilor Theken asked when the pay grade increases would go into effect. **Councilor Hardy** said it would be retroactive to July 1, 2013. She then reviewed the City Clerk's pay history. She noted that the City Clerk was hired in November 2009 at a Pay Grade of M8 at step 12 which was that grade's highest step which came to \$75,453. A 2 percent COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) was given in July 2011 bringing the salary to \$76,989. In January 2012 the position's pay grade was upgraded from an M8 to an M9 bringing the total salary to \$77,574. **Councilor Hardy** noted in July 2012 all management took a zero percent increase. In July 2013 by this reorganization proposal, the City Clerk's Pay Grade is proposed to go from a Pay Grade of M9.5 at \$81,922 to a new Pay Grade of M10. **Councilor Hardy** pointed out the salary increase the last time was a small one relatively speaking compared to other recent department reorganizations which may have been more.

Councilor Theken said the decision as to what step Ms. Lowe will fall under in the new Pay grade can be determined and is not dictated by union contract. **Ms. Lowe** said right after the reorganization is done the Committee decides where the City Clerk and Assistant City Clerk fall in the steps within their management pay grade. **Councilor Hardy** noted that the money for increases in pay was put aside in Dept. 900 during the budget deliberations. For union members, those steps were a known factor and were budgeted accordingly. As for the Assistant City Clerk and City Clerk, those two positions the steps where they would fall under had yet to be determined and so ball-park figures were used to assure funds were available for non-union positions.

There was a discussion of Ms. Lowe's review by the Committee and Councilor Hardy. **Councilor Theken** confirmed a review would be done by her with Ms. Lowe one-on-one. The review will be based on the reorganization. She will ask for input from the Council. **Councilor Hardy** asked that a Personnel Review Form be filled out to be placed on file. **Councilor Theken** also confirmed she meets with Ms. Lowe from time to time as part of her duties as Chair of O&A to address some of the matters that concern the department. She said she has had comments from Councilors and does address them with Ms. Lowe. **Councilor Hardy** added that when the City Clerk's pay grade went from M8 to M9, it was not a big raise in pay amounting to about several hundred dollars.

MOTION: On motion by Councilor LeBlanc, seconded by Councilor Whynott, the Ordinances & Administration Committee voted 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend to the City Council to accept the City Clerk's Reorganization Plan based on the chart and new job descriptions as submitted to the City Council on June 17, 2013 in accordance with the City Charter Sec. 7-1 retroactive to July 1, 2013; AND FURTHER TO ADVERTISE FOR PUBLIC HEARING.

MOTION: On motion by Councilor LeBlanc, seconded by Councilor Theken, the Ordinances & Administration Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Whynott) present to recommend to the City Council to amend the Gloucester Code of Ordinances, The Personnel Ordinances, Appendix C., Compensation, Appendix B to change the pay grade for the position of City Clerk from Pay Grade M9 to M10 retroactive to July 1, 2013; AND FURTHER TO ADVERTISE FOR PUBLIC HEARING.

MOTION: On motion by Councilor LeBlanc, seconded by Councilor Whycott, the Ordinances & Administration Committee voted 3 in favor, 0 opposed to recommend to the City Council to amend the Gloucester Code of Ordinances, The Personnel Ordinances, Appendix C., Compensation, Appendix B to change the pay grade for the position of Assistant City Clerk from GMAA M5 to M6 retroactive to July 1, 2013; AND FURTHER TO ADVERTISE FOR PUBLIC HEARING.

MOTION: On motion by Councilor LeBlanc, seconded by Councilor Whycott, the Ordinances & Administration Committee voted 3 in favor, 0 opposed, in connection with the City Clerk Reorganization Plan to recommend to the City Council to Amend the Personnel Appendix A and B of Section 4 of the Personnel Ordinance designated as Appendix C of the Gloucester Code of Ordinances retroactive to July 1, 2013 as follows:

- 1. That Appendix A, Classification Plan, be amended by changing the title of the position of “Principal Clerk” to “Vital Records Specialist/Clerk”;**
- 2. That Appendix B, Compensation Plan, be amended by setting the compensation for said position of “Vital Records Specialist/Clerk” from an AFSCME Pay Grade 6 to AFSCME Pay Grade 7; AND FURTHER TO ADVERTISE FOR PUBLIC HEARING.**

MOTION: On motion by Councilor LeBlanc, seconded by Councilor Whycott, the Ordinances & Administration Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Theken) recused, in connection with the City Clerk Reorganization Plan to recommend to the City Council to Amend the Personnel Appendix A and B of Section 4 of the Personnel Ordinance designated as Appendix C of the Gloucester Code of Ordinances retroactive to July 1, 2013 as follows:

- 1. That Appendix A, Classification Plan, be amended by changing the title of the position of “Assistant Registrar” to “Elections Specialist/Assistant Registrar”;**
- 2. That Appendix B, Compensation Plan, be amended by setting the compensation for said position of “Election Specialist/Assistant Registrar” from an AFSCME Pay Grade 7 to AFSCME Pay Grade 8; AND FURTHER TO ADVERTISE FOR PUBLIC HEARING.**

A motion was made, seconded and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,
Dana C. Jorgenson
Clerk of Committees**

DOCUMENTS/ITEMS SUBMITTED AT MEETING: None.