

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Syracuse City Council held on July 15, 2016, at 2:00 p.m., in the Council Conference Room, 1979 West 1900 South, Syracuse City, Davis County, Utah.

Present: Councilmembers: Andrea Anderson  
Corinne N. Bolduc  
Mike Gailey (left the meeting at 4:00 p.m.)  
Karianne Lisonbee (left the meeting at 4:04 p.m.)  
Dave Maughan

Mayor Terry Palmer  
City Manager Bovero  
City Recorder Cassie Z. Brown

Staff Present: Finance Director Steve Marshall  
City Attorney Paul Roberts  
Public Works Director Robert Whiteley  
Police Chief Garret Atkin  
Fire Chief Eric Froerer  
Parks and Recreation Director Kresta Robinson  
Information Technologies (IT) Director TJ Peace

### 1. Meeting Called to Order/Adopt Agenda

Mayor Palmer called the meeting to order at [2:02:44 PM](#) p.m. as a special meeting, with notice of time, place, and agenda provided 24 hours in advance to the newspaper and each Councilmember.

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Councilmember Gailey led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and Mayor Palmer offered an invocation.

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### 2. Public comments

TJ Jensen addressed the item on the agenda regarding the City's secondary water system; he received a notice yesterday that the water level at Jensen Park was very low and he is curious as to why that is. He stated it jogged his memory about something else; over Memorial Day weekend he viewed the relief trench running from Jensen Pond to the County drain system and at that time there was quite a bit of water leaving the pond. He wondered if that water can be captured during the runoff and stored somewhere for use later in the season to supplement the water supply. He stated that most farmers like to front load their water because they are trying to get their crops to grow in the early summer for harvest in late summer, but the City needs it all year. He suggested the City look into shifting its allotment to take 60 percent of the allotment at the beginning of the growing season and 120 percent of it later in the hotter summer months. He stated if there was a holding pond near Jensen Pond it could be used to store water that could later be pumped back into Jensen Pond.

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### 3. Discussion regarding Employee Recruitment and Retention Policy and Fiscal Year 2017 Employee Compensation Plan.

Mayor Palmer invited Councilmembers Bolduc and Lisonbee to provide their presentation of their proposed Employee Recruitment and Retention Policy; he noted they will be followed by Councilmember Maughan, after which Council discussion regarding the two proposals can commence.

A memo from Councilmembers Bolduc and Lisonbee explained their proposal takes into consideration all of the comments by Council and Department Heads that have been forwarded. It has been revamped multiple times to answer the concerns expressed. They do not want to dismiss what the City is already doing; their desire is to more closely define the direction and process for employee compensation. This proposal encompasses the attached policy, a sample Merit Map and these explanatory notes:

Overview of proposed changes made to the Employee Compensation Plan:

- Check in with the market every 5 years at council's discretion
- Check in with the market every 10 years required
- Benchmarks must be like-to-like comparisons
- Creating predictability and stability for employees
- Merit based employee increases with the expectation that future changes will not include compression without consideration of the merit system and divergent merit increases
- Suggested changes to Education Policy
- Each department is addressed separately
- After wage scale max is reached – a plan for future adjustments

Overview of policy regarding Merit Maps:

- Each Department will have a Tier 1 and a Tier 2 Merit Map.
- Public Safety will move through the wage scale in 17 years for Tier 1 and 22 years for Tier 2.
- All other employees will move through the wage scale in 27 years for Tier 1 and 30 years for Tier 2.
- Moving through the wage scale will be individualized per employee. We will no longer have some moving through in less than 10 years and some moving through in 30, with the average being 18 – the new proposal creates an individualized merit increase for each employee that moves them through their scale in the exact years that everyone else in a similar position is moving through theirs depending on performance evaluation.
- Moving through the scale in the prescribed number of years is set at “exceeds expectations”. Employees whose performance evaluations reflect a rating of “consistently exceeds” expectations will move through their wage scale at a fast rate. Employees who “meet expectations” will move through their wage scales at a slower rate.
- This system reflects a merit based program. This is not a step program or a COLA proposal.

This proposal maintains 100% merit advancement as requested by city management. The Merit Maps and policy are meant to provide greater predictability to the city, the employees, and the taxpayer.

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Councilmembers Bolduc and Lisonbee used the aid of a PowerPoint presentation to provide the Council with an overview of their proposal; they also discussed their proposed amendments to the Employee Recruitment and Retention Policy and Fiscal Year 2017 Employee Compensation Plan documents.

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Councilmember Maughan reviewed a memo he included in the packet regarding his proposal for adjusting the Policy and Plan documents; the memo reads as follows:

1. Biannual review- While my original thought of a departmental review was flexible to allow this to happen on an 18, 24, or 36 month cycle; after careful consideration I feel strongly the right rotation is a 24 month period. By reviewing every other year we are less likely to see a major shift in the market or be caught reacting to a sudden shift similar to the one we dealt with in the Police department this year. By reviewing more frequently small adjustments could be absorbed much easier into the overall budget, and possibly we may find there is no adjustment or such a subtle adjustment that no action is required at all. It is also very convenient that the City Council is elected on the same 2 year cycle. While we all serve 4 year terms, every 2 years a new version with new members of the council is possible.
2. Striking the strict adherence to a benchmark “percentile” allows us to react to departments as a market shift without holding us to a uniform standard. I would consider it an acceptable addition to set the minimum of the 50% to demonstrate to employees that we intend to provide at minimum no less than a market mid-point. My preference is to omit this reference and make this reference department by department as we go through the review cycle, as it may be deemed appropriate to address the position in the market differently. Many employees would like to consider that all things should be equal, but they simply are not. When faced with a situation such as the police market shift of 2016, we shouldn’t be held to making an adjustment city wide to respond to that market shift. We need the ability to treat departments differently according to the market.
3. Adding an additional layer to employee evaluations is a shift away from rewarding average performance. No employee who has been evaluated as average or adequate should be informed their job is at risk, but neither should we set a standard to reward minimum standard performance. The incentive of a raise should be enough to help an employee raise the level of their performance from average. The term “Exemplifies Expectation” was chosen to indicate that an employee not only lived up to the letter of expectations but also the spirit of expectations. This person does things for the right reasons, and really commits to meeting all expectations and interpretation of expectations. Defining sincere efforts this way should help an employee at this level take the next step to exceeding expectations in subsequent years.
4. After discussing career development with a retired career city manager serving multiple cities I recognize that we are already paying for career development in the budget of the city. We pay for training, continuing education, recertification, learning events such as conventions and annual meetings, and dues and subscriptions. Recognizing that the current career development program was beyond this to include additional higher education degrees, generally this only serves to qualify a person to seek a higher position elsewhere. The benefit is rarely realized by the city they serve in because a higher position most likely

- only exists outside of the city. By paying for as much as we do in the budget I believe we need to leave non-required education to the individual.
5. For budgeting and management purposes there should only be 1 category in the budget for an employee increase. It is misleading to stack multiple compensation increases across several categories, and quickly challenges the Cities ability to respond to these expectations. Regardless of what it is titled, only one category for compensation increase should exist in the annual budget per employee. Whatever the adjustment, it needs to be quantified in one place.
  6. For absolute clarity we should add a section to spell out how much increase is allowable for each performance rating. This number can be determined in our deliberation. I am willing to suggest, but more important is that we make a designation for this in our policy.
  7. By eliminated Career development (a second increase) I recognize that the total allowable number for increase could absorb this extra budgeted money and this number may change. This number is left for designation in our deliberation.
  8. After discussion of promotion I recognize that there is a possibility that an employee could receive a promotion to a position where they already exceed the entry level wage for. This new position comes with the opportunity to exceed their potential in the previous position, and they can advance further. I am concerned with writing a provision that we are obligated to give a raise with each promotion as that allows the potential to start this new position many years into the wage scale of this new track. For this reason, I suggest eliminated the obligation of “whichever is greater” from the promotion and advancement sections making this discretionary.
  9. Departmental reviews to the city council is a best business practice and the city would do well to make this a standard. This review is an opportunity to do a “deep dive” into the mission of each service department, set expectations, required resources and accountability for the resources to the citizens of the people. It will serve to keep the City Council informed and provide the exchange an elected body should have governing services. We are more than a review board for development and code, this is an efficient way to check in on the services provided to the citizens.
  10. These suggested changes are a means to future governance. This does not deal with the increases for the fiscal year 2017; which I believe should be handled separately. I believe quantifying distribution of set funds to individuals is more the responsibility of the City Manager than it is the City Council. I also believe the City Manager is accountable for this distribution and accountable to stretch the value as far as possible. The City Council should dwell more on policy for governance rather than micromanaging details of policy execution. This is just vantage point information from which I approached these adjustments.

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Councilmember Maughan welcomed feedback and questions regarding his proposal, but noted that he is really looking to simplify the plan to make it easier to understand while giving City Administration some flexibility to do things that keep the Departments and employees of the City motivated. He does not believe the Council should review employee performance evaluations, but it may be important to review each Department with Department Heads to ensure they are meeting their goals.

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Mayor Palmer then facilitated a discussion among the Council, with input from staff, to develop a comparison of the two plans that have been presented. There was a focus on components like the Council review of creation or filling of new positions, development of wage scales, market indicators, benchmark entities, employee evaluation practices, the rate at which employees can move through their wage scales, and frequency of benchmarking.

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Mr. Bovero indicated that he can create a document that provides a detailed comparison of the two plans and provide it to the entire Council for review and consideration in preparation for the next meeting during which this topic will be discussed. The discussion concluded with a continued focus on benchmarking practices to be used by the City to determine appropriate compensation. Councilmember Lisonbee indicated that drafting policy is a huge responsibility for the Council; she and Councilmember Gailey have had experience with working with other Councils in the past and she has found that the more vague a policy, the more damage it can cause the City in a situation where a future Council may not be as involved as the current Council and City Administration has the opportunity to take advantage of the policy. She stated this type of situation has occurred in the past and it was very damaging. She understands Councilmember Maughan’s desire to simplify the policy and make it vaguer because the Council trusts staff, but as a body the Council has the responsibility to draft a policy that not only directs the current Council, but will offer direction for future Councils as well. Councilmember

Maughan stated that if the Council develops a policy that is too specific, they are overstepping their bounds and not giving those hired to run the City the freedom to do their job. If the Council felt that an employee were acting out of line or taking advantage of the policy, that employee should be held accountable rather than the Council second guessing whether the policy is refined enough. Councilmember Lisonbee agreed and stated there is a fine line between staying within the powers and duties of the Council and overstepping them.

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Mr. Bovero asked Councilmembers Bolduc and Lisonbee a few brief questions regarding their proposal to gain a clear understanding of the implications of various components in order to provide an accurate comparison of the two proposals.

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4. Discussion and/or action regarding the adequacy of the secondary water system and a plan for education and enforcement of a watering schedule during weather events and other stress events on the system.

This item was discussed during the July 12 City Council meeting, but was tabled to allow for further discussion. Public Works Director Whiteley has provided a copy of the watering schedule and notice provided to City residents in 2015.

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Mr. Whiteley reviewed the watering schedule notice included in the packet and engaged in discussion with the Council regarding their suggested feedback for amending the notice for use this year. He facilitated a discussion among the Council regarding the appropriate watering restrictions with the goal of reducing concerns regarding lack of pressure or inadequacy of water. There was also brief discussion regarding the consideration of a policy that would address water shortages each year; such a policy would be helpful as the Council would not need to revisit the issue every year depending on weather conditions. The Council concluded to proceed with including a suggested watering schedule in the City newsletter, on the City website, and advertised on the City's social media pages. They decided to institute "no water Wednesdays" in order to preserve secondary water for farmers throughout the City and recommend that all other watering be done just two days each week.

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COUNCILMEMBER MAUGHAN MOVED TO DIRECT CITY ADMINISTRATION TO PUBLISH A SUGGESTED WATERING SCHEDULE ASKING RESIDENTS TO WATER THEIR LANDSCAPING JUST TWO DAYS EACH WEEK AT THEIR DISCRETION, BUT THAT NO WATERING BE DONE ON WEDNESDAYS TO PRESERVE THE AVAILABILITY OF WATER FOR FARMERS. COUNCILMEMBER ANDERSON SECONDED THE MOTION; ALL VOTED IN FAVOR. Councilmembers Gailey and Lisonbee were not present when this vote was taken.

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5. Council business

The Council and Mayor provided brief reports regarding the activities they have participated in since the last City Council meeting.

The meeting adjourned at [4:22:39 PM](#).

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Terry Palmer  
Mayor

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Cassie Z. Brown, CMC  
City Recorder

Date approved: August 9, 2016