



MINUTES
Committee on Personnel
Thursday, April 9, 2020 @ 1:00 p.m.
Via audio/video conference

<https://zoom.us/j/741442980>

Meeting ID: 741 442 980

Or phone – 312-626-6799

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m. by Chairman Hussain

ROLL CALL-Via audio/video conferencing

Council Member Adam Hussain, Chairperson
Council Member Peter Spadafore, Vice Chairperson
Council Member Carol Wood, Member
Council Member Jeremy Garza, Member

OTHERS PRESENT- Via audio/video conferencing

Sherrie Boak, Council Staff
Jim Smiertka, City Attorney
Renee Richmond
Linda Sanchez-Gazella, HR Director
Ashley Banks, Hiring Specialist
Lisa Hagen, Assistant City Attorney

Council Member Hussain acknowledged the Committee for their active participation and dedication.

Minutes

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPADAFORE TO APPROVE THE MARCH 9, 2020 MINUTES AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

Discussion

City Council Committee Clerk/Administrative Assistant Interview

Council Member Hussain acknowledged Ms. Richmond for her interest in the position and performing the duties in the office so far under contract. Council Member Hussain then outlined the tasks she had performed so far as the temporary assistant, including resolutions, excel sheets, and recently a test on recording secretary. The draft minutes of that meeting

were forwarded to the Committee prior to this meeting. Lastly he outlined the process of this unique interview process.

Interview Questions

Council Member Hussain – Could you tell us a little bit about yourself.

Ms. Richmond noted she was a resident of Lansing, is willing to learn, ask questions and professionally dedicated and loyal.

Council Member Hussain – Why do you want to work here? In other words, what is attractive to you about this particular position and why do you believe you would be a good fit.

Ms. Richmond provided details on her experience in large working environments, and working with the different aspects of all Council Members, Committees. She concluded by stating she was looking forward to the challenge.

Council Member Spadafore – Where do you see yourself in five (5) years.

Ms. Richmond acknowledged she saw this position as a long term opportunity and was looking forward to learning more and helping Council.

Council Member Hussain - Describe your experience and level of proficiency with MS Word, Excel, mail merge, Outlook, Adobe, Facebook and Webpage management. And, can you give examples of how you have used these tools on the job.

Ms. Richmond acknowledged the work she had done so far with the Council offices.

Council Member Spadafore – Please share your experience and comfort as a recording secretary.

Ms. Richmond admitted doing minutes was new, and she had done dictation in the past, but that was different. Ms. Richmond stated she is capable of learning the formatting that is used.

Council Member Spadafore – What is the first step you take when given a large project to manage.

Ms. Richmond stated she would ask questions, determine level of urgency and create the time to prioritize.

Council Member Spadafore - Describe the system you use for keeping track of multiple projects. How do you prioritize your work and track your progress so that you can meet deadlines.

Ms. Richmond provided an example of working on the agendas, focusing on the deadlines and size of Committee packets. This determined her prioritization of projects.

Council Member Wood – Tell us about a time when you came up with an innovative solution to a challenge your office/workplace was facing. What was the challenge and what role did others play.

Ms. Richmond spoke about her experience in a recruiting position for 20 years where she had to defuse issues with benefits, payroll and worked on better practices.

Council Member Wood – This position deals directly with individuals and the public in general. Can you describe a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer. How did you approach the situation and what was the result.

Ms. Richmond provided examples of calls she has taken with residents, listening to the concerns and providing as much information as possible to the appropriate Council Member.

Council Member Wood – This position requires a great deal of confidentiality especially when you have eight bosses. How would you handle a situation where one Council Member asks you information about another Council Member.

Ms. Richmond stated she would not provide information and make sure private information is kept private and would verify everything. She acknowledged she understood there are certain procedures and regulations.

Council Member Wood provided an example of a Council Member speaking to her and if she would relay that discussion to another Council Member if asked about it.

Ms. Richmond stated no.

Council Member Wood – Provide an example of a time when she had abruptly re-adjust her work schedule to prepare a report or complete a task on short notice. And how did you make sure you didn't fall behind on other tasks.

Ms. Richmond provided an example when in the temporary position with the Council recently she was limited on time in that office and made every effort to complete the projects in time.

Council Member Garza asked why Ms. Richmond left her former job.

Ms. Richmond stated there was a lot of traveling involved from Lansing to the office location.

Council Member Spadafore - Provide an example of a work place conflict with a co-worker or superior that she was involved in as an administrative assistant and how she handled it.

Ms. Richmond stated that while working at Aerotek, if she was involved in a confrontation, she would go directly to that person to resolve, and her experience is to address things face to face. At her previous jobs they did "role play" on how to do a task better or address an issue.

Council Member Spadafore asked if she would be afraid to address conflict, and Ms. Richmond stated she was not.

Council Member Spadafore – Would there be any issues with setting up and cleaning up from meetings, making coffee, cleaning coffee pots, and similar tasks.

Ms. Richmond stated she did not.

Council Member Wood - List three (3) attributes and (3) faults you have about yourself.

Ms. Richmond stated she believed her attributes are loyalty, dedication and hardworking. The faults she listed were she is not well at public speaking, struggles with delegating and does have a tendency to talk a lot.

Ms. Richmond was then asked if she had any questions for the Committee.

Ms. Richmond inquired as to the process of filling the position with everything that is going on and when it will be effective.

Council Member Hussain noted the intention is to hire the position by May 4th, but currently the Mayor has a moratorium freeze on hiring any non-essential employees. He noted that did not apply to Council positions, however they lead by example and in the past have tried to follow the executive branch. Council Member Hussain then stated they would still like to hire by May 4th and will hold further discussions with the Committee after the interviews are done. One option might be to extend her current contract through May and hire in June. Ms. Richmond was told by Council Member Hussain he would contact her within 48 hours with their decision and status.

Ms. Richmond asked the Committee what their favorite part was working for Council.

Council Member Spadafore stated he likes the diverse issues Council faces, no day is the same, no meeting is the same, and he enjoys working alongside his fellow Council Members.

Council Member Wood stated is excited to solve problems for the public and giving the public the opportunity to have someone to listen to them. Sometimes they just want a listening ear.

Council Member Garza appreciated working with the residents and helping those residents. He also enjoys supporting other Council Members who support each other. Council Member Hussain too enjoyed working with the public and problem solving. He added, as a Ward Member, he enjoys focusing his help on his Ward and the SW Lansing residents and business owners.

Council Member Hussain acknowledged Ms. Richmond her willingness to engage, and the work she has done already. He added that the Committee will discuss this position and he will reach out. Ms. Richmond then left the video meeting.

Discussion on the position and filling the vacancy

Council Member Wood asked how many applications they received, how many were reviewed, and how many were vetted. Council Member Hussain confirmed there were 44 applications that were narrowed down to 12 by the Council Office Manager. Council Leadership agreed they were going to narrow to 5 at that point. Council Member Spadafore added to the details that after looking at the applications and resume's there was no one better qualified, and felt that going forward this one candidate would be the one to interview. It was also determined that once the City Hall was closed, to perform ZOOM interviews would be needed, and since Ms. Richmond was the one they felt met all the qualifications, they chose to do the one interview.

Council Member Wood stated that it appears that Council Leadership believed that after reviewing the applications, and the work tasks and typing tests performed by Ms. Richmond, she was the best experienced for the position. Council Member Wood concluded by stating that based on Ms. Richmond's answers to the interview questions and her previous work experience, she would be a good fit, so supported moving forward at this time.

Council Member Hussain referred to the resolution which spoke to the appointment being contingent on being vetted and passing the background check, would begin on May 4, 2020. But that could be changed since HR has already confirmed the back ground check was performed and passed, and the date could be "no later than June 1, 2020." He added that if that occurs, then the current contract could be extended. Council Member Spadafore concurred with moving it forward at the April 27, 2020 Council meeting, for a start date of May 4th or after the lifting of the hiring freeze.

Council Member Wood asked Ms. Sanchez-Gazelle and Mr. Smiertka, if they put May 4, 2020 in the resolution and the EO for staying home extends past April 30th, and they stay with hiring her on May 4, 2020 would she be paid like other "stay at home work from home" employees. Mr. Smiertka asked if she is considered an essential employee, then yes if hired on May 4th and working from home, she will be getting paid from home. Ms. Sanchez-Gazelle agreed with Mr. Smiertka, confirming she can work from home on assignments and get paid.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER WOOD TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION APPOINTING RENEE RICHMOND AS THE COUNCIL COMMITTEE CLERK/ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT.

Council Member Hussain confirmed that HR had performed the background check, and everything was all set.

MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

DISCUSSION- RFP Council Internal Auditor Position

Council Member Hussain confirmed that Council Member Spadafore had met with the executive branch, and the Committee at the last meeting discussed what to do in the interim of filling the position. Council Member Hussain continued outlining what has occurred with an RFP for a contractor. It was posted March 23, 2020, with a deadline of April 6, 2020, then extended to April 13th and again to April 28th. Council Member Hussain noted that as of this meeting, there were 44 interested parties, but no hard copy proposals are due until the deadline. He then asked for the Committee's opinion on continuing the search at this time since the intent was for assistance during the budget, however with the current circumstances and extended deadline, the contract might not get filled or have time before the budget is required to be adopted. Council Member Wood admitted she was in support of the urgency of filling the position before the budget process, but with the situation currently and them not having access to different materials or the office it creates barriers. She concluded that she would support the Committee looking at job descriptions to post in the future and potentially future budget amendments based on these unique circumstances. Mr. Smiertka added that he has reviewed to see if the Council could allow electronic submissions of the RFP if they wanted to continue, but does not have a formal opinion on that. Council Member Spadafore agreed with the comments by Council Member Wood, and moving forward at this time is not possible since the company could not have access to the offices. The consensus of the Committee was to withdraw the RFP on MITN, and Council staff was asked to place that request in with purchasing.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned 1:47 p.m.

Submitted by, Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on July 7, 2020