



MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MONDAY, JULY 21, 2025 AT 5:00 PM

CONFERENCE ROOM AT THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 450 S. MAIN STREET, RICHLAND CENTER, WI 53581

CALL TO ORDER Chair Walters called the meeting to order at 5:07PM. A quorum was present. Oliphant affirmed proper notice. Members Present: Melony Walters, Tom McCarthy, and Ryan Cairns. Members Absent: none.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES Motion to approve the previous meeting minutes by Cairns, seconded by McCarthy. Motion carried unanimously.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

- An RFP for garbage and recycling services has been drafted and will be published soon.
- An RFP for the Innovation Planning Grant project for Symons will be published this week. An updated Symons agreement between the City and County has been submitted for Council consideration.
- LWM highlights regarding [State budget impacts](#):
 - Shared revenue increasing by 3.4% in 2026 and 2.9% in 2027.
 - Municipal Services Payments (payments for state owned facilities in city) increasing ~14%.
 - Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP) increasing funding available to municipalities.
 - Shared Ride Taxi funding increasing by 30%.
 - Talent Recruitment Grants – 5 mil included in state budget for municipalities to use to market or provide direct incentives to out-of-state households who move to their municipalities.
- A phone number was established for the City Administrator phone (608) 475-5029. The process of porting existing numbers to the Open Phone system to begin soon. Once completed, numbers will also be established for the Council and Mayor.
- WRS Contributions increasing from 6.95% each to 7.2% each, totaling 14.4%.
- ETF Insurance projected to increase by 11%.
- An ordinance creating child safety zones affecting registered sex offenders is currently being developed.
- A notice of resignation was submitted by a Buildings and Grounds employee. Their last day will be August 1st. Buildings and Grounds job descriptions have been updated, open positions are posted online, and interviews are being conducted.
- The Public Nuisance Ordinance (Chapter 300) has been under review with future amendments to be recommended.

DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

Legal Services Contract Renewal: Oliphant explained that since 2023, Abt Swayne Law, LLC has provided legal services to Richland Center under an agreement expiring September 5, 2025, with an annual renewal option. The current rates are \$150/hour for attorneys and \$80/hour for legal assistants, billed in 1/10th-hour increments, with the City reimbursing litigation costs. The proposed renewal increases the attorney rate to \$175/hour.

Motion by Walters to recommend renewal of the Legal Services Agreement to the Finance Committee. Seconded by McCarthy. Motion carried unanimously.

Ambulance Service MOU: Oliphant explained that the City has a 2023-2025 Memorandum Agreement with Richland County for 911 advanced EMT ambulance service, expiring December 31, 2025. The City pays \$119,900 annually (\$170/call for ~677 calls/year) in 12 monthly installments. Staffing and oversight issues prompt consideration of renewing the agreement or exploring alternative providers. Due to uncertain ongoing operations, the Committee instructed Oliphant to investigate alternative options.

2026 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA): Oliphant presented preliminary 2026 COLA figures, suggesting a potential 2.5% to 3% increase.

Personnel Handbook Amendment – Timekeeping: Oliphant explained that the Personnel Handbook lacks timekeeping and rounding policies. Employees use miPay for electronic time recording, replacing a prior paper system. Hourly employees are paid per minute worked, complicating time management and overtime cost control. Oliphant requested an amendment to include a requirement to use the City’s designated timekeeping system and to implement a 15-minute increment rounding system.

Motion by McCarthy to amend the Personnel Handbook to include the timekeeping policy as presented. Seconded by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

Personnel Handbook Amendment - Vacation Scheduling and Payout: Oliphant explained that the Personnel Handbook currently governs vacation time, requiring department head approval for employee time off requests. However, department heads themselves don't need approval from the City Administrator for their own vacation. Oliphant requested an amendment requiring department heads to notify the City Administrator of time off. Additionally, Oliphant explained a gap in the policy regarding vacation payout for terminated employees. While employees who resign in good standing with two weeks' notice are eligible for accrued vacation payout, the policy is silent on terminated employees. Legally, this silence means terminated employees are also eligible for payout of their accrued vacation time. Oliphant recommend amending the handbook to include language specific to terminated employees.

Motion by Cairns to amend the Personnel Handbook to include a requirement for department heads to provide notice of time off and restrictions on vacation payout for terminated employees as presented. the timekeeping policy as presented. Seconded by McCarthy. Motion carried unanimously.

Personnel Handbook Amendment - Lunch and Breaks: Oliphant has proposed revisions to the Lunch and Break Policy. Key changes include standardizing the unpaid lunch break to 30 minutes and explicitly stating that department heads will determine the scheduling of both lunch breaks and paid 15-minute breaks, as well as designating the on-site locations for paid breaks.

Motion by McCarthy to amend the Personnel Handbook to adjust the standard length of lunch breaks and to add greater specificity regarding break times as presented. Seconded by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

Personnel Handbook Amendment - Protective Clothing: Oliphant explained that the Personnel Handbook does not address protective clothing items. However, the City has historically provided protective clothing to at risk employees in the Public Works Department. Oliphant recommended amending the Handbook to include the provision of protective clothing in compliance with OSHA standards.

Motion by Cairns to amend the Personnel Handbook to include protective clothing as presented with the removal of the employee purchase option in Section C(4). Seconded by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

Personnel Handbook Amendment - Hours of Work: Oliphant shared that the Public Works Committee recently reviewed the standard hours for the Department of Public Works made the following referral:

The Public Works Committee reviewed a proposal to establish a standard 8-hour workday schedule for all Public Works employees, from 7:00AM to 3:30PM, Monday through Friday, on a year-round basis, with the ability to set flexible shift schedules. While members acknowledged the operational benefits of the change, they also discussed personnel concerns and policy implications. The Committee voted to refer the matter to the Personnel Committee for further discussion and consideration.

Oliphant has proposed standardizing City department operating hours. Based on presented data, the new year-round hours for most City departments would be Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Public Works would operate Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM to 3:30 PM. The proposal also allows for alternate work schedules. The Committee emphasized the need for a phased implementation plan to minimize any potential negative impact on employees.

Motion by McCarthy to amend the Personnel Handbook to adjust the standard work hours and allow alternate work schedules with full implementation to be completed by January 1, 2026. Seconded by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

Independent Contractor Policy & Insurance Decision: Oliphant reported that an independent contractor hired for summer services lacked the required insurance and documentation. This oversight by the department head responsible led to the contractor being notified of the insurance requirements after having already engaged in work for the department. The contractor attempted to secure adequate coverage but found it cost-prohibitive. It must be decided whether to include the contractor under the City's insurance policy or terminate their services.

Motion by Cairns to include the current Tourism Department contractor under the City's insurance until August 31, 2025, and that, effective August 31, 2025, the contracted work shall either terminate, or the contractor shall provide satisfactory proof of their own required insurance for any continued engagement. Seconded by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

Oliphant presented a proposed policy that standardizes the engagement, management, and oversight of independent contractors. This policy defines independent contractors, establishes a selection process (including bidding, insurance, and licensing), and sets clear approval thresholds for agreements (Common Council for unbudgeted or \$3,000+, City Administrator for smaller budgeted ones after City Attorney review). It also details guidelines for supervision, payment, termination, dispute resolution, confidentiality, and compliance. Oliphant recommended adopting this policy to enhance transparency, ensure legal and financial accountability, and mitigate risk exposure.

Motion by Walters to recommend the Independent Contractor Policy to the Council for approval. This recommendation is contingent on the inclusion of specific insurance limits and a waiver of subrogation, and subject to attorney review.

Benefit Opt Out Program: Oliphant reported that with insurance costs continuing to rise, a Health Insurance Opt-Out Incentive Program was developed for consideration as a potential cost control mechanism. However, an informal employee survey indicates low interest. If the program were to be implemented, current responses suggest that this could lead to additional costs if employees receive incentives to continue opting out.

SET NEXT MEETING DATE The next meeting was scheduled for August 18th at 5:30PM.

ADJOURNMENT Motion to adjourn by Walters, seconded by McCarthy. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:24PM.

Meeting minutes recorded by Ashley Oliphant