



Office of the City Manager
312 W. Whitewater Street, P.O. Box 178
Whitewater, Wisconsin 53190

MEMORANDUM

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Telephone: (262) 473-0104
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To: Finance Committee
From: John Weidl, City Manager
Date: April 18, 2024
Re: Grievance process

Dear Finance Committee-

I am writing to address recently raised concerns regarding our current grievance process and to propose a modification intended to enhance transparency and trust within our city administration. This action is prompted by issues raised during the tenure of a former council member.

Historically, our grievance policy has been robust, designed to provide a fair and systematic approach for addressing employee grievances, including issues related to discipline, termination, and workplace safety. However, allegations were made suggesting that the involvement of the City Manager in the grievance process could potentially deter staff from filing grievances against the City Manager due to perceived bias or fear of retaliation.

Though these claims are unfounded, it is essential to address even the perception of bias to ensure all city employees feel they have access to a fair and impartial process. The integrity of our grievance process is paramount, not only to uphold the rights and well-being of our staff but to maintain the functional integrity of our city operations.

Therefore, in consultation with the HR department, we propose the following modification to the Grievance Procedure, specifically for grievances that involve the City Manager:

Step One, Section 5 (new):

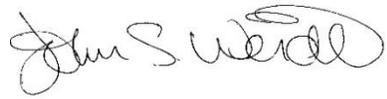
"In the event the grievance or complaint involves the City Manager, the employee may initially file the grievance with the HR Manager, who shall coordinate the investigation with an impartial hearing officer. The impartial hearing officer in this case would be selected by the HR Manager or City Attorney."

This adjustment ensures that the grievance process remains untainted by potential conflicts of interest and reinforces our commitment to a transparent and equitable resolution process. The selection of the impartial hearing officer by the HR Manager or City Attorney, rather than the City Manager, adds a layer of neutrality and is designed to restore confidence among our employees in the grievance system.

We will request the council's review and approval of this modification. Implementing this change will help fortify our employees' trust in their leaders and the processes that support their professional environment.

Thank you for considering this necessary amendment to our grievance policy.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John S. Weidl". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Weidl" clearly distinguishable.

John S. Weidl, City Manager

JSW/RLM