



Tacoma Civil Service Board Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: April 7, 2022 at 5:00 PM
Location: By Zoom teleconference
Chair: Dan Sexton
Coordinator: Wendy Hobson

Call to Order:

Vice Chair Sexton called the meeting to order at 5:00PM. All board members were present with the exception of Board Member Heller. Also present was Deputy City Attorney Martha Lantz.

Vice Chair Sexton: Ok, we've got three members. I think that's a quorum. We are official, is there a motion on what to do with the minutes anyone?

Approval of March 3, 2022 minutes:

Board Member Hansen motioned to approve; Board Member Andrews seconded the motion.

Vice Chair Sexton: Any discussion? Hearing no discussion, a voice vote was taken.

VOICE VOTE: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABS. THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MARCH 3, 2022 MINUTES AS WRITTEN PASSED.

Communication for Information:

Vice Chair Sexton: Wendy, do we have anything?

Wendy Hobson: I do not have anything this evening.

Vice Chair Sexton: Ok

Actions on Matters Still Pending / New Business:

Vice Chair Sexton: We had a request for an appeal. I'm sorry, did I hear someone?

Wendy Hobson: Vice Chair Sexton, we have a request for an appeal from Joseph Harris of the Tacoma Police Department.

Vice Chair Sexton: Is he here?

Wendy Hobson: I do not see him. The last time we corresponded, he was planning to be here. I have not heard otherwise.

Vice Chair Sexton: Ok. We set this aside at our last meeting because everyone wasn't able to review the documents. Has everyone received the documents? Did anyone not receive the documents for Joseph Harris' appeal? Board members? Hello.

Board Member Andrews: I did receive the documents and for clarification it was the appeal form, and then it was; where it was filled in, and then it refers to the document we received in March. If those are the documents, yes, I did receive them.

Vice Chair Sexton: Board Member Hansen?

Wendy Hobson: Board Member Hansen, are you on mute? Oh, he's on the phone.

Vice Chair Sexton: Oh, should we call back? Is he dialing in?

Martha Lantz: Is he having a communications issue?

Vice Chair Sexton: Well, should we jump ahead in the agenda? Do we have a coordinator report?

Board Member Hansen: Can you hear me now?

Vice Chair Sexton: Yeah

Board Member Hansen: You know my internet went out and then I tried to call and that didn't work. They said the passcode was invalid. And so, if my internet goes out again, I'll try again. I dialed 253-215-8782, Wendy? Can you hear me?

Wendy Hobson: That is correct.

Board Member Hansen: Can you hear me?

Wendy Hobson: Yes, that is correct.

Vice Chair Sexton: I guess if you lose your connection, we lose our quorum.

Board Member Hansen: I know, and then I'm trying to dial in and their telling me that my password is not valid.

Vice Chair Sexton: I think that's ok as long as we can see and hear you.

Board Member Hansen: Ok, it's going to go out again though, it's been going down. It's a problem.

Vice Chair Sexton: You can see and hear us, right?

Board Member Hansen: Well, it will freeze up on me.

Martha Lantz: You should be able to join both ways. You should be able to call in as well.

Board Member Hansen: Martha, I've dialed this four times, 215-8782 and entered the passcode.

Martha Lantz: Do you have to put the meeting ID in first?

Board Member Hansen: Oh. Let me do this ok? My internet is going out, so rather than use it, I'm going to use my phone. If you could please just bear with me.

Vice Chair Sexton: Board Member Hansen, go ahead and we'll come back to you.

Martha Lantz: Chair Sexton, why don't we just wait a second or two.

Martha Lantz / Vice Chair Sexton speaking at same time: inaudible.

Board Member Hansen: Bear with me hear a second, I think I can do it this time. Ok, can you hear me on the phone?

Vice Chair Sexton: Yeah.

Board Member Hansen: Hello?

Martha Lantz: Yep, we can hear you.

Board Member Hansen: Ok, (echo)

Martha Lantz: You've got two audios on

Board Member Hansen / Martha Lantz talking at same time

Board Member Hansen: I'm going to get out of this zoom, ok, I'm leaving the meeting. Ok, so I left the meeting but did get an idea that we're talking about the appeal?

Vice Chair Sexton: Yes.

Board Member Hansen: My input on the appeal is it was my understanding that the City was not contesting jurisdiction. My input would be that we go ahead and schedule the hearing. I can't remember what held it up last time. I know that there was some incomplete information on the appeal form. I did get another appeal form through FedEx and it still is blank. I don't really see; that's not really crucial as far as I'm concerned and like I said my suggestion would be to go ahead and schedule the hearing for the appeal.

Vice Chair Sexton: Thank you. The next think I want to do is ask the City if they have any objections in hearing the appeal.

Wendy Hobson: The City is not disputing jurisdiction.

Vice Chair Sexton: Ok, and that means the City has no objections? Is that what that means? That is what it sounds like it means to me.

Martha Lantz: It means they are not objecting to your jurisdiction. They might still appear at the hearing to contest the merits, but you can go ahead and schedule it.

Vice Chair Sexton: The next thing I want to do Martha, is ask our counsel for your input.

Martha Lantz: Sorry. I think I already gave it. Yes, the jurisdiction question is whether you want to go ahead and schedule it. The City Attorney's Office on behalf of HR is not contesting, so they are expecting it to be scheduled unless the board doesn't want to hear it.

Vice Chair Sexton: So, the next thing we do is we ask for discussion from the board members. We heard from Board Member Hansen, Board Member Andrews, any thoughts?

Board Member Andrews: All I can tell you is that I will not be part of the board probably by the time it is scheduled.

Vice Chair Sexton: That's fine, you're here right now. We need you right now because we're not official without you. We can't make any decisions without you.

Board Member Andrews: Then no, as far as objections to scheduling, no. The actual appeal form with content, I received through email. It's where he actually put his name; he signed it. That information was sufficient for me.

Vice Chair Sexton: Right. Going by past practice, we don't need a motion here. I'll just ask our coordinator, Wendy? I'll just ask you schedule that for us and let us know.

Wendy Hobson: Ok, I will work on that.

Considerations of Matters Set for Public Hearings:

Wendy Hobson: None this evening.

Vice Chair Sexton: Is that what we just did?

Wendy Hobson: We don't have anything this evening.

Civil Service Coordinator Report:

Wendy Hobson: I have no other report.

Vice Chair Sexton: Ok, thank you. The Human Resources Director report?

Human Resources Director Report

Human Resources Director Fritz: Thank you, Vice Chair Sexton. Good evening members of the Civil Service Board. I have a few things to report on this afternoon. First, in regard to our Classification and Compensation Study, as you know we received the final report from Gallagher, our consultant that did the study for us. We are now working on the second part of that project and that is actually with another consultant to help us identify how to design a system that is something we would want to implement. We are working through that process now, and we're anticipating that will take about four months. Then, we will determine next steps. I will keep you informed as new developments occur.

Second item is an update on our reconstitution. We have started the reconstitution efforts and have a wave of employees returning to the offices April 18th. There will be at least two additional waves that follow that. For now, committees, boards and commissions are still required to hold their meetings virtually. I haven't received any updates on when that directive might change but will certainly keep you posted as we learn more.

Vice Chair Sexton: If I may, sorry to interrupt you. That's just how I am. So, people will be moving back to the office on April 18th and our next meeting is considerably after that. I am hearing from you that we should not assume we're one place or the other.

Human Resources Director Fritz: I think for right now, you can continue to assume it's going to be virtual. I haven't heard anything from the Council and Mayor that is changing. When we hear some kind of change, we will let you know.

Vice Chair Sexton: My thinking and I think the Board's thinking is that we really want to get out of this Zoom. This really does not work well for me and Board Member Hansen's having problems tonight. We've all had issues at different times. I really hope and think it's time to retire this and can't see any reason why we can't meet safely back in Council Chambers.

Board Member Hansen: Vice Chair Sexton?

Vice Chair Sexton: Yeah

Board Member Hansen: Yeah, I agree with everything you just said and just wanted to voice my opinion on that. So yeah, I agree there doesn't seem to be any reason why we need to continue to meet virtually. My internet was working fine in the past and apparently it is not working now, and I had some trouble with it a couple of weeks ago for a Zoom meeting and so it's become a problem for me. I don't why the Zoom meetings aren't working for me and why I have had to go to other devices. It's become a problem for me and would like to see us return to in person meetings.

Martha Lantz: I appreciate the issues with technology. I just wanted to speak to what Ms. Fritz just mentioned. The reconstitution of city employees and the boards and commissions meeting in person are two separate issues so while employees are coming back to the building, the Mayor's Emergency Rule No.5, which I think I sent to

you all last week, says that the format for public meetings is that committees, boards, and commissions are still to meet remotely. Until that rule changes, there is nothing that we can do about it. It's just not allowed, and I've certainly communicated the frustrations of this body to the City Attorney as well and he is aware. Unless or until the Mayor changes that, we really don't have any other options.

Vice Chair Hansen: Vice Chair Sexton?

Vice Chair Sexton: Yeah, go ahead.

Board Member Hansen: Ms. Lantz, I appreciate you doing that and as you say, we can't do anything to change the rule, but I do appreciate you providing our input and our opinion to the powers that be. Like I say, it's all that you can do at this point, so we'll just see what happens.

Vice Chair Sexton: Ms. Fritz?

Human Resources Director Fritz: Yes.

Vice Chair Sexton: Here's the message that I would like to convey back to the City. If we need to stay on Zoom for a while, I can be understanding and I can put up with that. But the hearing that we're scheduling, and the hearing is coming up; I think it's unfair to have a hearing under these conditions. I think we need to be back in the chambers for that hearing. I can't see how the parties involved would not agree with that. It just seems like it would be fair and reasonable to put us back in the chambers for this hearing. I think anything else would not be right; it would not be a full and fair hearing. I want to strongly convey that and ask the City to really think about that and to really consider that. I think the only way it is going to work you know, if we have to be another month or however long it takes for us to keep meeting on Zoom, that's one thing. But the hearing is another thing entirely. I think we need to look at that hearing as a completely separate issue. You know, I watched the City Council meeting, and you know, they all really enjoyed themselves at that last meeting and I don't see any reason why everyone else can meet in that chambers and they expect us to have a hearing over Zoom. You know, it's pretty outrageous and I think if all the parties involved, you know, think about that, and consider that; I think they would all agree. That's my thoughts on that. Any more discussion from anyone?

Human Resource Director Fritz: Would you like me to finish my report?

Vice Chair Sexton: Yes, please. Sorry if I interrupted you.

Human Resources Director Fritz: No problem. Just a few final things. We've concluded interviews for our Management Representative candidates and have a candidate that we have sent forward to both the City Manager and Utilities Director for consideration. That's in process and I will send you all an announcement once an official appointment has been made. Ellen, I will also be in touch with you about the logistics of that and next steps. We're excited to have another person joining the board, and grateful to Ellen for her time and service as the Management Rep.

Finally, just to let you know about a high-level recruitment that is underway for our Deputy City Manager. We are currently in the process of accepting applications for that position which was vacated by Tadd Wille in March. In the meantime, Kurtis Kingsolver who is our Public Works Director has accepted the interim appointment while we're conducting the recruitment. That concludes my report for this evening.

Vice Chair Sexton: Thank you. So, I am assuming, and believe I know the answer to this, but I don't think we have any public tonight? It's just us? There's no one else here so if I ask for comments by the public, there's no public, I believe. How about comments by the Board? Any more thoughts from the Board?

Board Member Hansen: Vice Chair, your comment you just made is a good argument why we should return to in person meetings because I think the public would not even be aware of how to access or what notice is provided to them but the public is familiar with where City Hall is and so I think having virtual meetings is an impediment to the public providing their input.

Vice Chair Sexton: Board Member Hansen, I think that's an excellent point. I don't know that anyone has ever brought that up before but think that's an accessibility issue to the public; is a big issue that we should address with the City Council and the Mayor and parties involved. I think that's a big issue. If I may, Board Member Andrews, did you have any thoughts or comments?

Board Member Andrews: Well, I'm saying I think this is my final goodbye, so I probably won't see you again. Speaking to the issue of having the appeal in person, that I agree with. There will be possible two additional board members; the employee should have the opportunity to present their case in person. It's easier to read people and their body language. I think it is good for the employee and for the new board members coming in.

Board Member Hansen: Vice Chair Sexton?

Vice Chair Sexton: Yeah, go ahead.

Board Member Hansen: I would again like to thank Board Member Andrews for her service and all the valuable insight that she has provided to us and all the decision making that she's helped with us. I want to thank her. We're going to miss her intelligence and expertise and analysis. Again, thank you so much for your service.

Board Member Andrews: Thank you.

Vice Chair Sexton: I've been waiting patiently, my turn. The two things that Board Member Hansen mentioned that really stand out for me was your thoughtfulness and your intelligence. You always seemed to think of something that the rest of us had missed. You are going to be deeply missed on this board. I've really enjoyed working with you and your input and I hope our new members are half as uh, half as great as you've been. Thank you so much. Does anyone have a motion?

Board Member Hansen: I move to adjourn the meeting.

Vice Chair Sexton: There you go.

Board Member Andrews: Agree

Vice Chair: Thanks Ellen, see ya.

Board Member Andrews: Bye

Meeting adjourned: 5:26PM

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Dan Sexton

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Dan Sexton, Vice Chair

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Wendy Hobson

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Wendy Hobson, Coordinator