

## **BUDGET AND FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

**April 9, 2002**

**4:10 P.M.**

The Budget and Finance/Personnel Committee was called to order by Councilman Taylor, Chairman, with Councilmen Benson, Robinson, Page, Lively, Hakeem, and Littlefield present. City Attorney Randall Nelson and Shirley Crownover, Assistant Clerk to the Council, were also present.

Others present include Mike Compton, Donna Kelley, and Joe Shaw.

### **PROGRESS REPORT ON RIF EMPLOYEES**

Ms. Kelley thanked the committee for giving her the opportunity to speak. She presented summary information on those employees involved in the downsizing, stating that Joe Shaw, Employment Manager, has hands on with this daily and that the situation changes hourly. She stated that the total placements by Personnel is 14 out of 63 positions; 17 have been taken off the RIF list; 9 total retirements are expected and 5 resignations. She stated that they were actively working with 15 people and explained that some employees are not working with them and are pursuing other courses; that they had made several outreach attempts.

Councilman Hakeem asked if they were documenting these attempts. Ms. Kelley responded "absolutely". She turned the meeting over to Joe Shaw.

Mr. Shaw stated that they were trying to keep up with the jobs that each person applied for; that they were referred and certified. He provided each person with a breakdown of the activities for each of the RIF people, and this is made a part of the minute material. He explained that they had some new RIF individuals, as well.

Councilman Hakeem verified that there were some RIF employees since this was presented and asked if the new ones were included in the 15 that Ms. Kelley was talking about. Mr. Shaw verified that they were included in the 15.

Chairman Taylor asked about the ones who had not applied for anything. Mr. Shaw stated that they did not know the reasons; that they had met two times with RIF people to update them on jobs and give them information needed and 16 had decided not to respond at all. He explained that they had sent letters out to the individuals to encourage them to apply with them as time is getting short.

Councilman Hakeem asked if the letters were certified; that people could say they did not get them. Mr. Shaw stated they could send out other letters and certify them. Councilman Hakeem asked that they talk to Attorney Nelson to see if this is necessary.

Ms. Kelley added that they have “read” receipts on E-Mail.

Councilman Benson questioned the first employee on Page 2 with “No” under the “Referred” List, stating he did not understand this. Mr. Shaw explained that once they get the applications, if the person is not qualified, they do not refer them.

Councilman Hakeem questioned if we have informed the employees, and if they understand.

Ms. Kelley explained that when they get a job opening in the Personnel Dept., they notify every person working with them and the ones that are not working with them; that everyone has the opportunity to say whether or not they are interested.

Councilman Hakeem still questioned if we had told them.

Mr. Shaw responded “yes”; that they had had two meetings; that all jobs are available for them to apply; that there is a contact person in their office and that they were doing all they could.

Councilman Benson asked who did the referring. Ms. Kelley responded that Personnel does. Councilman Benson questioned if they just look at a person and say that he/she is not worthy of being referred. Ms. Kelley responded that they are encouraged to apply and are not bound by any title; that sometimes there are five people who have been laid off and all want the one job; that it is competitive. Mr. Shaw added that some people just do not have the qualifications. Councilman Benson pointed out that the information provided just names the position applied for, and the Council has no way of knowing what that person is doing now. He stated that this information did not mean a lot to him.

Councilman Littlefield stated that in looking at some of these names of individuals, he knows they are capable of doing these jobs. He questioned if the process was that they were being referred and then interviewed and the one doing the interviewing just says we don’t want this person and then hires someone from the outside. He stated that he thought we were doing better than we were; that it was hard to know what the “x” means on the summary.

Ms. Kelley stated that the (x) meant that they had been interviewed and no decision had been made. She stated that Mr. Shaw had offered these individuals skilled training, and he was trying to place them and working to make them qualified.

Councilman Littlefield stated that it should not be easy for the people making the decision on whom to hire to say they would not hire a RIF person from the inside and then go and hire from outside; that we are allowing this to happen too often, and we need to change this procedure; that he knows some people decline jobs they should have taken, but he cautioned not to overlook RIF people.

Mr. Shaw stated that they did what they could to encourage people to hire the RIF employees but that they could only encourage them to do this; that they are not able to say that they have to.

Councilman Littlefield stated that we have to establish a policy to ensure that RIF people get the jobs that are available.

Councilman Benson stated that we need a just cause, and they need to follow due process; that they need a chance before they are terminated and there needs to be a just cause and due process; that this looked to him like an opportunity for the people doing the hiring to say that there were rumors and that they did not want these people and turn them down and hire a brand new person from outside.

Ms. Kelley stated that we needed to look at this more microscopically; that this is not the case; that Mayor Corker was strongly supportive of this and the department heads were supportive of this.

Councilman Hakeem stated that from what he was hearing it was below the department heads where the hiring was taking place; that he would like for Personnel to pass on to these people that we are looking at this and are going to monitor this; that if people are not hired, we need some justification for why they are not being hired; that there needs to be a full opportunity for these people to be considered for employment.

Councilman Franklin pointed out that some don't want another job. Councilman Littlefield stated that he was not trying to help these people. Councilman Franklin stated that we should exhaust every opportunity to find employment for them.

Mr. Shaw reiterated that we have yet to know the reasons why some have not applied; that sending a certified letter might be a good way to document this; that we did not know what would happen on December 31<sup>st</sup>; that we need to document that we have made contact.

Councilman Hakeem stated that every effort should be made; that he has no problem with what Personnel is doing, but he did not want a person who is below a department head putting us in a position we don't want to be in.

Councilman Page asked about the active recruits and the documentation of those that have not applied and questioned if it should be made mandatory. Mr. Shaw stated that they had sent another letter to again encourage them to get in touch with Personnel to go over the process and response had been low. Councilman Page questioned if it might be a transportation problem in getting here; that we needed to allow them time off to do this. Mr. Shaw stated that each RIF person is assigned to a placement officer, who is available to them anytime.

Councilman Littlefield stated that he knew the Mayor was committed to this; that he was not concerned about the upper end of the spectrum; that he was concerned about the people making the decision to hire and doing the interviewing and their motivation, and the message needs to go out to them clearly; that we are looking at the reasons why these people are not being hired, and we are going outside to hire someone; that there needs to be a temporary policy adjustment.

Councilwoman Robinson asked how many people we were dealing with; how many positions did we start with and how many of our city personnel have moved into these positions and how many outside hires have moved into these positions to date.

Mr. Shaw confirmed that she wanted to know how many outside people have been hired versus the RIF people.

Councilman Franklin stated that another window deals with individuals who have applied for jobs and not gotten them and someone from the outside was hired; that either the person was not qualified or the one doing the interviewing did not “pan out”; that it goes back to the person doing the interviewing; that it falls through the cracks in the interview.

Councilman Benson stated that he felt sorry for the Personnel Department; that he thought we could mitigate the problem with exit interviews and employment counseling; that with the exit interview process and a letter going out to them and employment counseling to direct them to employment within the area, then we could find out how they feel about certain things and let them know we appreciate their employments; that he thought we needed to be doing exit interviews now.

Councilman Franklin reiterated that we needed to exhaust every opportunity.

Councilman Benson asked Ms. Kelley and Mr. Shaw if they knew what he meant by an “exit interview”. Ms. Kelley responded in the affirmative, noting that it was a way to get information about jobs. Councilman Benson stated that when they were getting ready to go, we needed an exit interview. He noted that we were now down to 15 people.

Councilman Littlefield asked who had been taken off the RIF list. Ms. Kelley responded those people who have been placed; that we advertise jobs in-house and let all city employees apply; that their idea was that if we hire one city employee, and they move, that their job is then available.

Mr. Shaw stated that they made the Progress Summary available to Mrs. O'Neal, and she would permit them to look at the update on this.

Chairman Taylor noted that this meeting was for information only.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 P.M.

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