

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
Monday, June 17, 2019

The regular monthly meeting of the City Civil Service Commission was held on Monday, June 17, 2019 at 1300 Perdido Street, 1st floor City Council Chambers. Ms. Doddie Smith, Personnel Administrator of the Management Services Division, called the roll. Present were Vice-Chairperson Clifton Moore, Jr., Commissioner John Korn and Commissioner Brittney Richardson. Vice-Chairperson Moore convened the meeting at 10:21 a.m. At 10:31 a.m. on motion of Commissioner Richardson and the second of Commissioner Korn, the Commission voted unanimously to go into executive session.

At 11:14 a.m. the Commission completed its executive session and proceeded with the business portion of the meeting.

Item #1 was approval of the minutes. This item was deferred.

Item #2 was a report on delegation of authority to the Sewerage and Water Board (S&WB). Brendan Greene, Executive Counsel for the Commission, reported that he was notified by S&WB's Executive Counsel that access for Civil Service staff to S&WB's HRIS system is three weeks away. This access is important in tracking metrics relative to delegation of authority to S&WB.

Commissioner Korn then motioned to add an item to the agenda relative to the consideration of Personnel Director Lisa Hudson's performance evaluation. The motion to add the item was seconded by Commissioner Richardson and approved by all. Commissioner Richardson then moved to accept the performance evaluation for Director Hudson. Commissioner Moore thanked Director Hudson and noted that she had done a good job. Stephanie Hennings, with the Chief Administrative Office, then asked if the performance evaluation was available to the public since it had been accepted by the Commission. Brendan Greene responded that the personnel evaluations of employees are considered confidential documents, so public records requests for those are not granted.

Item #3 was a presentation on featured jobs with the City of New Orleans. Shelly Stolp, Personnel Division Chief over the Recruitment and Selection

Division, presented information on three featured classified jobs: Tow Truck Operator I, Electrician, and Automotive Maintenance Specialist. Ms. Stolp also explained the benefits the city offers to employees.

Item #4 was a request from the Sewerage and Water Board for new classifications of Director of Continuous Improvement and Director of Strategic Planning. Robert Hagmann, Personnel Administrator over the Classification and Compensation Division stated that staff is recommending two new managerial level classification as part of S&WB's reorganization. The first classification is Utility Continuous Improvement Administrator. He noted that this position was being placed at an extraordinarily high level for a classified job after discussions with S&WB regarding the need for an extraordinarily well qualified candidate. This position works across all S&WB divisions searching for operational efficiencies. This position would be at pay grade 104 starting at \$90,567 and go to \$116,110 for a person with extraordinary qualifications. He noted that staff had reviewed market salaries and believes that is a very competitive rate given the expectations of the position. The second position would be a Utility Strategic Planning Administrator. This position reports to the Chief of Staff. It improves documentation and work flows by working closely with all levels of management. Due to the importance of this position it will also be at pay grade 104 starting at \$90,567 and go to \$116,110. Director Hudson clarified that that the hiring rate would be up to \$116,110 and the minimum would be \$90,567. This would be without extraordinary qualifications. David Callahan, a consultant representing S&WB, thanked the Commission for the flexibility on these positions. He noted that these positions are not necessarily direct skill positions, they are leadership positions. Whoever S&WB hires has to have leaderships skills and other skills to perform the function we are asking them to. He noted that S&WB had originally been pushing for unclassified positions, but the range in pay offered by staff is going to resolve S&WB's concerns. Commissioner Richardson thanked Mr. Callahan and noted that it is always pleasant to hear when staff has worked with appointing authorities to make things happen. Commissioner Moore asked Mr. Callahan how he envisions the Continuous Improvement position and if it would have any discretionary ability in regard to policy. Mr. Callahan responded that it would. He noted that S&WB's vision for these positions, to some extent would be for them to be policy making based on the issues and the startup of these new programs. They will be in the room with the C suite and the chiefs all the time. He noted that there is a point of dispute with Civil Service staff regarding if the positions are policy making. Mr. Callahan stated

that S&WB appreciated the flexibility shown by Director Hudson and her team. Commissioner Richardson motioned to accept staff's recommendation. Commissioner Korn seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Item #5 was a request to amend the Commission's Procedures for the Conduct of Business Meetings. Director Hudson noted that the item had been on the previous meeting's agenda and since that meeting staff had met with a representative from the administration, Stephanie Hennings. Director Hudson stated she believed that the administration was okay with staff moving forward with the proposal. She noted that the proposal gives staff the ability to ask for additional information regarding potential agenda items in order to ensure that staff has everything it needs in order to put the matter on the agenda. Commissioner Korn motioned to accept the amendments. Commissioner Richardson seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Item #6(a) under Classification and Compensation Matters was a request from Erdwin Fuentes, Personnel Division Chief, to appeal Civil Service Extraordinary Qualifications Pay determination. Mr. Hagmann noted that this item had been before the Commission previously and summarized that Mr. Fuentes was arguing that his Bachelor's Degree in Communications and 15 years of human resources experience was equivalent to Mr. Ross Matthews' Master's degree in a related area and 30 years of human resources experience. Staff did not find these two to be equivalent and had denied Mr. Fuentes' request. Director Hudson noted that at the last Commission Meeting, the Commission had asked for an opinion from its Executive Counsel. Mr. Greene noted that he had provided an opinion based on the request of the Commission Chair relative to the uniformity and equity considerations of this request. Mr. Fuentes' attorney, Karl Bernard, provided the Commission with a comparison of Mr. Matthews' and Mr. Fuentes' job duties. He noted that Mr. Fuentes has been successfully performing those same tasks at Parks and Parkways for over 15 years. He noted that on paper Mr. Matthews' experience is impressive, but that in real time Mr. Fuentes experience is equally as impressive. Mr. Fuentes then noted that he is fluent in Spanish and noted that Civil Service gives a 5% pay increase to NOPD officers who are bilingual. Commissioner Richardson asked Mr. Hagmann if the Personnel Division Chief position job posting requires internal experience. Mr. Hagmann stated that it did not. Commissioner Richardson noted that Mr. Fuentes had 15 years of experience in human resources, but Mr. Matthews has more. Mr. Fuentes has a degree but Mr. Matthews has the next level degree up. Commissioner

Richardson then moved to deny Mr. Fuentes' request. Commissioner Moore added that to approve Mr. Fuentes' request would create a slippery slope. The motion was then seconded by Commissioner Korn and approved unanimously.

Item #6(b) was a request from Sonji Skipper, Utilities Services Manager, to appeal Civil Service Extraordinary Qualifications Pay determination. Mr. Hagmann stated that Ms. Skipper was a Management Development Specialist II who got promoted to a Utility Services Manager (USM). Some time goes by and she is then restored to a Management Development Specialist II. At a later date she rebounds back to Utility Services Manager and at that time of reappointment she is requesting extraordinary qualifications pay. Mr. Hagmann stated that staff denied the request because it was not in keeping with the Rule for a number of reasons. He noted that first, Ms. Skipper indicated on her application that she would take the position at the minimum salary. Secondly, there were other candidates in the labor market who had equivalent if not more qualifications. Thirdly, and perhaps the most problematic, is that she was already in the position at the minimum salary prior to this re-promotion. Mr. Hagmann stated that S&WB was relying on Ms. Skipper's acquisition of a SHRM certification, but that the Commission has already acknowledged the value of related certifications with a 5% special rate of pay that will be in process on July 7th.

Ms. Skipper stated that the only reason she was given in writing by staff for the denial was because she indicated that she would accept the position at the base pay. She noted that her previous appointments as a USM were provisional, not probationary. There are several iterations of USM. The newly created pension and benefits USM which has different qualifications and requirements was created in 2016, so those previous provisional appointments have nothing to do with this particular request. She stated that they do however, play a part in her previous experience. She noted that she did indicate that she would take the position at the minimum, but since then she had gained her SHRM certification and an additional 2.5 years of relevant experience. She noted that the Rule references qualifications at the time of appointment and at that time she had more qualifications. Ms. Skipper then went on to state that USM is a S&WB exclusive classification that was created around 2006. That job title does require previous professional experience and it is her opinion that her experience in pension and benefits far exceeds what is required. She noted she did not have any information on the other candidates in order to make that comparison. She further stated that she had

the support of her organization and did not feel that her answer to a question in 2016 should determine the situation when she was appointed in 2019. Director Hudson noted that Ms. Skipper's form indicated that she had been actively managing the S&WB employee's retirement program since 2006. Director Hudson asked Ms. Skipper when she was appointed provisionally to USM. Ms. Skipper responded that it was in 2012. Ms. Hudson then asked what her duties were at the time. Ms. Skipper responded that her duties at that time were still with the retirement plan. She stated that it wasn't until the Pension and Benefits position was created that her duties changed. Ms. Hudson stated that staff had just added a sub-title. It is still a USM. It was just used to recruit someone who had actual pension and benefits experience. Director Hudson noted that the concern was the idea of taking a demotion and then being reappointed to the same position and getting extraordinary qualifications sets a precedent in our system. Ms. Skipper noted that this was her first probationary appointment to USM; her two previous appointments were provisional. In her opinion this is her first appointment to this classification. Commissioner Moore asked if Ms. Skipper's appointing authority supported her request. Director Hudson responded that S&WB has sent a letter of support on Ms. Skipper's behalf.

Amy Trepagnier, Deputy Personnel Director, stated that this is a slippery slope issue where you are moving between classifications multiple times and under our rules we do not consider that an original appointment which is what the Rule requires. We do not want situations where an employee spends a few days in a lower class and gets "appointed" back to their old classification and uses the time they worked in that class to qualify for extraordinary qualifications pay. Mr. Hagmann cautioned that this is a multiple incumbent position, so if prior experience is used, S&WB should take notice of other USMs. If you go up to the mid-point, this position will be making the same as a Utility Senior Services Manager which causes another set of problems. Commissioner Richardson motioned to take the item regarding the potential impact of Ms. Skipper's request on Rule IV Section 2.7(b) under advisement. Commissioner Korn seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously.

Item #6(c) was a request from the Firefighters Association for retroactive Emergency Pay for Tropical Storm Nate. This item was deferred at the request of the Firefighters Association.

Item #6(d) was a request from the Firefighters Association for an equity pay adjustment for Firefighters relative to the recent Pay Plan implementation. This item was deferred at the request of the Firefighters Association.

Item #7(a) under Recruitment and Selection Matters was the approval of examination announcements 9945-10154. Commissioner Richardson moved to approve the examination announcements. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Korn and approved unanimously.

Item #8(a) under Rule Amendments was an amendment to Rule IV, Section 2.5(h) relative to establishing Merit Pay as cumulative above the base rate. Director Hudson noted that the amendment had been introduced at the last Commission meeting and that the administration was supportive of the amendment. Commissioner Richardson motioned to approve the amendment to Rule IV, Section 2.5(h). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Korn and approved unanimously.

Item #9 was the ratification of Public Integrity Bureau (PIB) 60 Day Extension Requests. Commissioner Richardson called for public comment. There being none, Commissioner Richardson motioned to approve the extension requests. Commissioner Korn seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.


Item #10 (a) under Communications was the Personnel Director's report. Director Hudson gave an update on the Pay Disparity Study. She noted that staff was awaiting the preliminary analysis performed by SSA and expected to receive it in mid-July. The findings of the analysis will guide the need to take a look at more specific equity concerns. Director Hudson noted that this month's human resources officer training had been conducted by Robert Hagmann on June 13th. It was entitled "Career Paths and Ladders". Director Hudson noted that the budget schedule had been released and asked that the Commissioner submit to staff any offers they may have for this year's budget request.

Item #10 (b) was a report on ADP ongoing issues. Robert Hagmann stated that the city's recreation program is in full swing. The program, which lasts about five weeks, provides youth with employment opportunities.

Commissioner Korn motioned for adjournment at 12:11 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Richardson and approved unanimously.



Michelle Craig, Chairperson



Clifton Moore, Jr., Vice-Chairperson



John Korn, Commissioner