

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
COUNCIL ROOM, CITY HALL
THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2026
2:00 P.M.**

The Personnel Committee was called to order by Chair Barbara Petkovsek. On roll call: Council Members Barbara Petkovsek, William Neville IV, Rolly Gelhaus and Mayor Duane Poeschel present.

Also present: Director of Public Works Director Luke Friemoth, Chief of Police James Mankowski and City Clerk-Treasurer Rex R. Roehl.

Chair Petkovsek declared the minutes of the previous meeting approved as filed with the City Clerk.

There were no appearances.

Chair Petkovsek presented a request from Chief of Police Mankowski requesting a Part-time Officer Wage Adjustment from \$21.65 to \$26.50 per hour to remain competitive with other law enforcement agencies in the area. This would not affect the total amount budgeted for Part-time wages, instead fewer hours would be worked.

Chair Petkovsek asked if this is just for the first Part-time Officer.

Chief of Police Mankowski stated it would be across the board, they cover hours for training and vacation.

Discussion followed on 24-hour coverage, the Overtime budget is for the regular officers and based on union contract considerations, the Extra Help budget is for Part-time officers, holding the Part-time officers under 1,560 hours to avoid health insurance, at 1,200 hours the Part-time officers become eligible for Wisconsin Retirement.

Mayor Poeschel proposed increasing the wage to \$26.00 per hour.

Discussion followed on matching the Public Works Foreman wage of \$26.42, a Part-time employee being paid more than Full-time employees.

Chief of Police Mankowski stated that the Full-time employees get benefits, in order to get qualified candidates we need to increase the pay rate, police officers need an Associates Degree plus the Police Academy, what is important, filling shifts or leaving them open.

Motion Gelhaus, second Neville to recommend to the Common Council to accept Chief of Police Mankowski's request to increase the Part-time Police Officer wage to \$26.50 per hour. All Aye.

Chair Petkovsek stated that the Police Department job descriptions were emailed for review. This has been worked on for over a year, the format follows the League of Wisconsin Municipalities format used for the Recreation Director position, if we use the League format they will review and defend the City if necessary, the department heads filled out the information as they know best what their employees do.

Motion Neville, second Poeschel, to forward the draft Police Department job descriptions for legal review by the League of Wisconsin Municipalities. All Aye.

Chair Petkovsek presented drafts of the City's current Organization Chart and Transitional Organization Chart.

Chief of Police Mankowski stated the new chart has him reporting to the Administrator/Director of Public Works. State Statute §62.13 states the Chief of Police reports to the Mayor.

Council Member Neville asked is it typical for the Administrator position.

Chair Petkovsek stated it can be done either way, if you are trying to build a team, day-to-day operations would be through the Administrator.

Chief of Police Mankowski stated that he has no problem being on the team, but with being under someone who does not understand how a Police Department works, being under an elected official is different.

Chair Petkovsek stated this is a transitional plan, it doesn't mean it cannot be changed.

Discussion followed.

Council Member Gelhaus requested the Transition Organization Chart be tabled until we get a review by the City Attorney.

Chair Petkovsek presented the proposed ordinance creating the Administrator/Director of Public Works position. When Act 11 was passed it suggested every employee be an at-will employee, the City's handbook states for just cause. This draft should be sent for legal review before Council action.

Motion Poeschel, second Neville, to approve the draft ordinance and refer it to City Attorney for legal review. All Aye.

Chair Petkovsek stated that job descriptions were emailed for review for the other departments.

Discussion followed.

Motion Poeschel, second Neville, to approve the draft job descriptions for legal review by the League of Wisconsin Municipalities. All Aye.

Discussion continued on the Administrator/Director of Public Works job description being in two sections, so if it doesn't work, the position can be split; there would also be a contract with the individual; duties; checking on election administration.

Chair Petkovsek announced a closed session per Section 19.85(1)(c) of Wis. Stats. to consider employment, promotion, compensation, performance or evaluation of public employees over which the City of Neillsville has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility, specifically regarding interviewing and promotion for Administrator/Director of Public Works position and may reconvene in open session for possible discussion and action on the above noted matters.

Motion Neville, second Gelhaus, to invite Director of Public Works Friemoth and City Clerk-Treasurer Roehl to remain for the closed session. All Aye.

Motion Poeschel, second Neville, to go into closed session per Section 19.85(1)(c) of Wis. Stats. to consider employment, promotion, compensation, performance or evaluation of public employees over which the City of Neillsville has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility, specifically regarding interviewing and promotion for Administrator/Director of Public Works position and may reconvene in open session for possible discussion and action on the above noted matters. On roll call: All Aye.

CLOSED SESSION

3:15 P.M. – Motion Poeschel, second Neville, to reconvene into open session. All Aye.

Motion Neville, second Petkovsek, to recommend that the Mayor move to the Common Council the appointment of Luke Friemoth as City Administrator/Director of Public Works effective May 1, 2026. On roll call: Council Members Neville and Petkovsek – Aye, Mayor Poeschel – Aye, Council Member Gelhaus – Nay. 3-Aye, 1-Nay. Motion carried.

Director of Public Works reported that seven Indeed contacts were received for the Public Works/Utilities position, with only three having followed through with filing the application form. Of those three, two don't have a CDL and one wants more money than we are offering.

Discussion followed on the current wage rates, sending applicants to school for the CDL training and test, the need for a CDL, the need for water and sewer licensing, eliminating a position, levy funding versus utility rate funding, employee rotation and weekend hours.

Motion Poeschel, second Gelhaus, to adjourn. All Aye.

Barbara Petkvosek, Chair

Rex R. Roehl, Clerk-Treasurer