



WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held Wednesday July 11, 2001, for the purpose of continuing discussion of the employee compensation study.

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:10 p.m. It was held in the Multipurpose Room of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, Alan Turnbull, and Mayor Judith F. Davis. Mr. White had indicated he could not be present.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; Consuella Harris, Human Resources Officer; Chief James Craze, Police Department; Celia Craze, Director, Planning & Community Development; Hank Irving, Director, Recreation; Joe McNeal, Supervisor, Community Center; Craig Rich, F.O.P.; David Moran, Assistant to the City Manager; Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk, and others.

ALSO PRESENT WAS: Amy Boyes, the Gazette.

Mayor Davis announced that this was a follow-up to the first work session on the compensation study, which was held May 30. Mr. McLaughlin reviewed the major points that came out of the first work session. First, the recommendations from the Hendricks study had been discussed. There were four key recommendations, three of which were supported by the City Manager. Second, it had been presented that there would not be enough funding to close the pay gap this fiscal year, assuming the Hendricks guidelines were used. Last, there were three primary decisions that needed to be made: whether the Hendricks study should be adopted; whether the funds that were budgeted for a COLA this year should be dispersed in the traditional way, as a percentage of salary, or based upon the midpoint of the salary range; and whether performance pay should be reviewed as part of this package or, at least for the time being, continue to be allocated as it has been in the past.

With regard to the COLA decision, Mr. McLaughlin noted that using the midpoint would give some advantage to newer employees, while a traditional COLA would give some advantage to longer-term employees. Either way, the funds budgeted for a COLA would still be over and above the increases received to close salary gaps. The Mayor asked where the greater inequities lay. Mr. McLaughlin replied that the inequities were related to specific positions, not to issues of short-term versus long-term employment.

At the first work session, staff was also asked to bring back information on the impact of benefits on the salary gap. Mr. McLaughlin said including benefits closes the salary gap with the comparison group by about 10 percent. Mr. Roberts stated he thought Council had to take benefits into account, since they are paid for by the taxpayers just as salaries are. Mayor Davis said she would repeat a request she had made before that employees be told on an annual basis what the value of their benefit package is. Mr. McLaughlin said this would be done by an

insurance consulting company with which the City will contract. He also reminded Council that he had suggested shifting money from deferred compensation to salary previously but that Council did not at that time wish to take any action that would affect benefits.

Mr. McLaughlin then reviewed questions raised by the F.O.P. in a letter dated May 11.

Mr. Putens expressed concern that the reorganization of employees into the new pay plan does not recognize as an upgrade a situation where an employee's status changes. Mr. McLaughlin said that because everyone is effectively being "reclassified" into the new system, there is no intention of viewing relative changes for groups of employees as either upgrades or downgrades. He added that this is separate from the reclassification program that has been in place for some time and which has attempted to address that type of inequity and change on an ongoing basis. He said it is true that in looking at the structure with "new eyes," Mr. Hendricks effectively did some additional reshuffling, but any employees affected by that will eventually catch up because their salary increases will be based upon a new salary midpoint. Mayor Davis asked if the existing reclassification program would continue. Mr. McLaughlin said it would but that, because of this restructuring and the opportunity for appeals, the next open season for requesting reclassifications should probably be November 2002 for the FY 04 budget.

Regarding the classification of police corporals, Mr. Putens suggested that in this case, and perhaps others, the City should look more rigorously at how it defines "supervisory" because individuals may in fact function more as "team leaders," assigning work and duties without having true supervisory authority to perform such tasks such as hiring and firing, discipline, and approving leave. He said he would provide more information on this, since it is an important issue in labor negotiation. Mr. Rich said in Greenbelt corporals do have this authority, but corporals in the Prince George's County police force do not. Mr. McLaughlin said he believed Mr. Hendricks had handled this properly since the county is not part of the City's comparison group.

With regard to the MPO/PFC classifications, Mr. Putens asked why, if supervisory work was the basis of the distinction of the MPO position, the MPO was not classified a grade higher. Ms. Harris responded that the MPO was a good example of the individual Mr. Putens had previously described as a "team leader." She said the study did not find the distinction to merit a full grade's difference. Chief Craze said the MPOs are all sent for supervisory training, however.

There was discussion of the "shadow pay plan" and how that would operate temporarily.

There was considerable discussion, without consensus, on how to handle the COLA. Mayor Davis and Mr. Putens tended to support the COLA as traditionally calculated, which would slightly benefit longer-term staff. Mr. Turnbull and Mr. Roberts favored adding those funds to the total to be distributed based upon the midpoint calculations. Mr. Turnbull suggested that doing it that way would get the City further along the path to its goals. Mr. McLaughlin noted that the needs of longer-term employees would be greatly aided by the new pay plan, which would give room for salary growth to people who are currently "maxed out." He said he thought this was considerably more important to longer-term employees than the basis for the COLA

calculation. Furthermore, it is clearly the intention to continue to move the whole pay plan forward. These are just different approaches to doing that.

The compensation plan will be on the August agenda for action.

Other Business

Mr. McLaughlin distributed some information related to the July 12 Metroland hearing, and there was discussion of who would attend. The plan was to meet at the City Solicitor's office at 9:00 a.m.

Mayor Davis distributed some materials from a COG meeting she attended today. She also reported that because it appeared it would fail to pass, COG had tabled a motion to contribute funds to prepare an amicus brief in support of the EPA's extending the number of years for compliance on environmental issues in a lawsuit with the Sierra Club.

The meeting ended at about 10:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher

City Clerk