

**CITY OF NORWALK
COMMON COUNCIL AD HOC COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 11, 2018**

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Rilling; John Kydes, Chair; Thomas Livingston;
Doug Hempstead; Nick Sacchinelli; John Ignneri; Mike
Corsello

STAFF: Laoise King, Mayor's Assistant
Ray Burney, Personnel Director

OTHERS: Nilda Havrilla, Managing Attorney, Connecticut Legal
Services

ROLL CALL

Mr. Kydes called the meeting to order at 8:00PM and called the roll. A quorum was present.

1. DISCUSSION OF MAYOR'S PROPOSED REORGANIZATION.

Mr. Kydes said that the committee has received the proposed job descriptions and ordinance changes for the Mayor's proposed reorganization. He said that several of the committee members have received e-mails regarding the changes to Fair Housing and requested that either Mayor Rilling or Ms. King speak to what the thought process was behind it, and what will be seen from the proposed changes. Mayor Rilling said that there was a meeting held with representatives from Fair Housing, NAACP and the Connecticut Counseling Services who had filed the consent decree and talked about what the purpose of what the reorganization is, and that it is not to diminish or do away with the Fair Housing position but to combine Fair Housing with Fair Rent to make it a one stop shop.

City of Norwalk

Ad Hoc Committee of the Common Council

Special Meeting

June 11, 2018

Page 1

He said that the meeting was good and it was made very clear that we would not challenge the consent decree and that we will honor it and will continue to meet with the group to ensure that when the final product they are happy with it and that the consent decree has not been violated. He said this was also looked at as an opportunity to make the consent decree more binding and will protect people in the future when someone may challenge it. Mr. Corsello asked if it will need to go back to Federal Court to amend the consent decree. Mayor Rilling said that they do not think so and if the parties can agree and as long as the substituent components of the consent decree are not changed. Mr. Kydes asked Mayor Rilling in his opinion if there will be a lack of services with this change. Mayor Rilling said "no" if fact we believe that it will strengthen the process. Ms. King said that there are currently four positions that are working in this area and under the new organizational structure there will still be four people doing those same jobs, but will be switching which people are doing the jobs so that the housing jobs are all focused on one employee doing Fair Rent and Fair Housing who will be supported by the program person who will help with the investigation. She said that there will be a fair housing section and it will make it clearer for the public when they are coming in with a housing issue and the other duties that are currently being done by the person that does Fair Rent. Mr. Livingston asked if the committee will receive the new job descriptions. Ms. King said "yes".

Mr. Hempstead said that he guesses he is looking for more meat on the bone and that in some of the responses it talks about improving and/or creating efficiencies, but that he has still not received a list or what the analysis was of what the inefficiencies were that were identified to assume there will be efficiencies by this reorganization and asked if there is a list. Mayor Rilling said the most glaring one is 19 direct reports to the CEO and that's not a very easily managed span of control, and that there are departments that are performing like functions and as a result of looking at the duties we found that there is a lot of redundancy and right now there are 19 departments pretty much operating in a silo, and that the goal is to increase communications and reduce redundancies and inefficiencies and that like functions should be grouped together. He said that this would reduce 19 budget proposals to nine and can more easily identify the redundancies that exist. Mr. Hempstead asked if the Director would establish the budget for all of the departments under them. Mayor Rilling said "yes" they would submit the budget but would work together.

Mr. Sacchinelli said that he is on board with the reorganization and he likes a lot of what we have been discussing but he thinks there might be some other level of review that is necessary, and that rearranging departments might mean removing a wall and physically moving them and part of the concern that the

City of Norwalk

Ad Hoc Committee of the Common Council

Special Meeting

June 11, 2018

Page 2

committee has had and what they have been discussing is that Council members might be too close to the situation, that a third level may be required because without the fundamental figures of tracking over the years, labor in labor out, it's hard to make a conscientious decision for any of us, so, where we stand, is we should look at other levels of asset allocation. We have been looking at this strictly on a personnel level, and our concern being maybe we will be defeating the purpose, maybe we will lose efficiencies that we currently have if we strictly look at it through that lens and that he doesn't want to throw a wrench in things but it is, to Mr. Hempstead's point, it's hard to make a decision based on anecdote alone. Mayor Rilling said in a reorganization you look for reducing the span of control which a span of control of 19 is very difficult to manage and to group like functions together and that his team studied the structure of other cities, larger and smaller, and didn't find any that had 19 direct reports to the Mayor. He said that this has been discussed for many years and It's time to look at it and do something about it, and if we implement something then obviously it will be implemented with view towards evaluation, and you are not going to make a perfect reorganization right way, and there's going to be some bumps in the road, perhaps some hiccups. But we have to make sure that we evaluate it and look at it down the road and currently there are 19 departments working independently and we are trying to group them together so that they can communicate more effectively, but together a more effective budget and the efficiencies will be recognized, and that the team that they have put together has studied organizational structures and have been working on it for over approximately one year, and the four options that have been presented is the way they feel the city should be organized and as we move forward and that this should not be a static process but should be a dynamic process, a living breathing thing that changes as our city changes. If you look back, this has been the way the city has been operating for decades and nothing has changed. Mr. Corsello asked if a formal method of evaluating the reorganization had been planned. Mayor Rilling said that is going to be constantly evaluated and that they have met with all the departments and there is little to any objection to it, and there is not one department head that will have their position reduced or diminished but will be organized along functional lines.

Mr. Hempstead said that he doesn't disagree with the thought process and the big picture and he would agree with the rest of my caucus that the city's organization probably needs to be modernized, but that he is troubled from the business side and that more background information is needed for this kind of change. He said that the reorganization seems to be more in theory and there also seems to be no goals and if we combine the land use departments into one silo what are the goals for that grouping, and that the Council does not have a lot of expertise in this and that is why he thinks an outside source maybe needed.

City of Norwalk

Ad Hoc Committee of the Common Council

Special Meeting

June 11, 2018

Page 3

Mayor Rilling said that organizational structure is a theory and that is how it implemented and identify the things that are inefficient and identify the things that work and make the changes where necessary, and the idea is to group like functions together so that there is the greatest chance of eliminating redundancies and inefficiencies, and increase communication and reduce the span of control to a workable about.

Mayor Rilling asked the committee who believes that the current system is fine and should be left alone, or who believes that we should look for improving upon the system and moving forward with reorganization and who is in the best position to identify what needs to be done. He said he recognizes that this is a very challenging thing for the Council because it is left upon the Council and we have provided you with our expert opinion as to what we need to do, but if you look at the current organizational structure I think you would pretty much agree that its very inefficient and does not allow for effective communications. Mr. Sacchinelli said that he agrees with a lot of what Mayor Rilling is but that his caution is there is no way around it that there will be disruption of services to the residents, and there will also be potential negative aspects to the internal workings of the city, with possible employee departures and in the corporate world, different lenses and make sure there is a remediation in place for the potential adverse impacts. He said that that he thinks it's great that the organization was brought it forward but that it just a little difficult being on the Council with the resources that we have in front of us, making the decision, knowing that we are going to be impacting people, we are going to be impacting services with no recourse in place and nothing to go on except, we'll fix it, once it's done. Mayor Rilling said that there should be no disruption of services, everybody will know exactly what their function is, and that no department heads will lose their authority and that the idea is to implement what we believe to be the most effective reorganization, and again he thinks that we all agree that we are not going to be able to consider everything all at once. There may be some hiccups, there may be some bumps in the road. That's when we do that process and make the changes that we feel are appropriate based on implementation and you can't identify how effective something is 100 percent until you implement it. That's what the evaluation process is all about.

Mr. Livingston that he thinks this is much needed but I think one of the things we are struggling with is not knowing what we don't know and asked how success would be defined. Mayor Rilling first, the city would improve upon its delivery of services, and second there would be cost savings, and that measurables don't just include calls to customer service but that the Mayor's Dashboard, which would allow the public to keep track of issues, is almost ready to go online.

Mr. Ignieri said that he agrees that we need to reorganize and that it is long overdue,” and asked how the reorganization would be implemented. Mayor Rilling said that the Council needs to decide upon a direction for the reorganization and once we understand what model the Council wants and then we implement it. Ideally, we implement it all at once but there’s going to be some things that we need to roll out, and get it done, not piecemeal but get it done, whatever we can do immediately and whatever we need to follow up. He said that Mr. Burney had been senior vice president at Metro North and has been in this process. Mr. Burney said that he has been through many reorganizations and stated his experiences of working with consultants that included McKinsey and Price Waterhouse and that not the exercise that we are suggesting to the Common Council and what we are looking at is the low hanging fruit, and that we are not even there that would require a consultant and we haven’t aligned the resources that the city functions in a way that is rational, that is functionally parallel so once we do that then maybe then the city finds some money for someone to come in and walk you through a more detailed SWOT. Or you bring in someone with a six sigma background but we are nowhere near that level yet, which is why I think some of you are frustrated. We have to take the first step to get to the end product and that first step is simply taking the resources that we have and then lining them up so it makes sense and there is a clear line of responsibility. Mr. Corsello said this is just such a basic reorganization and that the more he looks at it that’s all it sounds like it is and that this is just a start. Mr. Kydes said shuffling union employees can be very complex in much different ways versus the private sector and he wants to be sure that what they are proposing is the right thing, and asked if the Council would be liable if a job description is changed knowing that the person who is currently has it will no longer qualify. Mr. Burney said if the position description is changed solely to exclude someone we would be in trouble but if it is changed as part of a reorganization the city would be less open to complaint or law suit. Mayor Rilling said one of the things that he had mentioned early on to the team that the two things that needed to be looked at very carefully and avoid is that if there were any union issues they would need to be identified and determine what we can and cannot do because union contracts are just like the consent decree and are governing documents, and number two was to identify any charter or ordinance issues and that there are a few issues that will need to be addressed.

Mr. Hempstead said he guesses we’re going to disagree on some methodologies and that’s a good thing, that’s not a bad thing. I am not trying to be an adversary; I am trying to say in my mind, in my experience, 37 years out in the business world. I disagree, a SWOT is usually one of the first things and at the end of the day there needs to be goals and the deliverables need to be measurable and he does not see anything that they have take a measurement to.

City of Norwalk

Ad Hoc Committee of the Common Council

Special Meeting

June 11, 2018

Page 5

Mayor Rilling said It's a difference of public versus private and your goal is the bottom line, looking to increase revenue, but when we are reorganizing in the public sector, it's to increase the delivery of services or make it more efficient, and to also find the efficiencies that we have not identified yet and right now the way we measure through outcomes and inputs on the annual budget and unfortunately when you look at them, every year they are the same.

Ms. Havrilla introduced herself and said that she is the managing attorney of the Connecticut Legal Services housing unit and said she was at the meeting at the Mayor's office regarding the Fair Housing officer position and it was a productive meeting, and there is an open dialogue but she wants to be clear on behalf of the NAACP that they are not amenable to the city's current proposal. She said it never has been and under the federal consent decree, the city cannot simply go forward without the NAACP's consent. She said the consent decree has been amended a few times and if the party's agree that could happen, but the conversation needs to continue but as it is right now we are not in agreement with the proposed plan and feel that the Fair Housing Officer position would be diluted under the proposed plan.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. IGNERI MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd

Telesco Secretarial Services