



Agenda Item Summary

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Submitted By

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Agenda Item Title

Review and Recommend Process for Talent Development in the Public Works Department

Overview

The Water and Sewer Superintendent position has been vacant for over a year. Staff would like to review the factors which have contributed to the extended vacancy as well as discuss several innovative methods to fill this position.

Anticipated Future Actions/Commitments

Staff is seeking input from the RIG Committee in advance of making a recommendation to the Village Board.

Report

The Human Resources Department advertised the Superintendent position in American Public Works publications, various state organizational sites, and nationwide. After the expiration of four (4) posting dates; we were unsuccessful in filling the position. Executive Recruiters state this is a national issue; the field of certified/experienced water and sewer personnel is shrinking yet in high demand. In 2013, the Water & Sewer Superintendent earning \$83,865 left for a similar position at another community for \$96,000. That employee now earns \$116,000 and is in a pay range of \$90,390-\$124,446. In 2015, the successor Water & Sewer Superintendent earning \$84,462 left for a similar but more responsible position at another community for \$125,000. The current pay range for the Water & Sewer Superintendent position in Oak Park is \$75,000-\$103,500 (Grade 11PM). Due to an organizational change, the most recent Water & Sewer Superintendent (promoted to that position in 2016) has been reassigned. The position has been vacant since June 2018. To supplement organizational needs, the Village currently has a contractual agreement with Mr. James Eggen, a contractor with Eggen Consulting Group, Inc. and he is assisting with the duties of this vacant position. The Village Board previously approved an agreement with Mr. Eggen for \$80,000 and should be effective, based on hours of work through September 2019. This assistance is supported through the savings of salaries from the vacant Superintendent position.

There is immense competition for a talented public works workforce and therefore communities across the county are trying new approaches. Options staff would like to discuss with the Committee include the following programs which have been implemented in some communities including:

- "Work-Life Benefits" (Attachment A) in their hiring package; giving more flextime, ability to work from home, car allowance and tuition reimbursement.

- Other communities are getting employees excited about developing their own talent through classes, videos and coaching (Attachment B) “Talent Development”.
- Cities have partnered up with a local Community College to create a future for their public works department (Attachment C) “Kansas City Metro Chapter and Johnson County Community College Work Together for a Brighter Future”.
- In addition to finding new talent, the Village may need to investigate an “in-house” mentoring program as our workforce approach the retirement age so we don’t lose valuable history (Attachment D) “Supporting an Aging Government Workforce with Mentoring and Off Boarding”.
- Finally, with the current low unemployment rates several positions within the organization will become a challenge to fill; we are reviewing the trends (Attachment E) “State and Local Government Workforce: 2018 Data and 10 Year Trends”.

Typical responsibilities of the Water and Sewer Superintendent include, but are not limited to: plan and coordinate the day-to-day operations of the Water and Sewer Division (a total of 12.5 FTE’s are budgeted for this Division) including the assignment of personnel duties, equipment, and materials; the maintenance operation and repair of the Village water pumping, storage and distribution systems and maintenance repair of the combined sanitary/storm sewer system, management of the Operation and Capital Water & Sewer fund budgets. Provide highly responsible staff support and assistance to the Director of Public Works and the entire public works department management team. This position is subject to 24-hour availability, 7 days per week, including weekends and holidays.

The Experience and Training Guidelines:

Minimum of five years of increasingly responsible supervisory or management experience in a public-sector water and/or sewer department. AND

Training: Possession of a Bachelor’s Degree from an accredited college or university with major coursework in civil engineering, roadway construction or related field. Completion of sixty hours of professional education courses, seminars and certification programs provided by the American Public Works Association, American Water Works Association or similar professional organizations regarding public utilities operations, management, and water and sewer systems construction, maintenance and repair may substitute for the Associates degree. A Master’s degree is preferred. AND

License/Certification:

Possession of, class “CDL” Illinois Driver’s License.

Possession of, or ability to obtain, a Class “C” Illinois Water Operator’s License within six months of the hire date.

Working Conditions:

Work primarily conducted in an office environment with occasional work in inclement weather; exposure to smoke, fumes or dust. Work in tight or confined spaces. Work with hazardous material; shaking, rocking and/or vibrating equipment and loud noise. Work at heights above and depths below ground; and contact with water and other liquids.

Alternatives

Make no change to the current Public Works Department organizational chart and utilize the same process in HR to hire a Superintendent with a more competitive salary.