



CITY OF WAUWATOSA

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MINUTES • AUGUST 1, 2017

Regular Meeting

Common Council Chambers

7:00 PM

7725 West North Avenue, Wauwatosa, WI 53213

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ITEMS

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
James Moldenhauer	Alderman	Present	
Kathleen Causier	Alderman	Present	
Craig Wilson	Alderman	Present	
John Dubinski	Alderman	Present	
Tim Hanson	Alderman	Absent	
Dennis McBride	Alderman	Present	
Bobby Pantuso	Alderman	Present	
Joel Tilleson	Alderman	Present	
Cheryl Berdan	Alderman	Present	
Jason Wilke	Alderman	Present	
Matthew Stippich	Alderman	Present	
Jason Kofroth	Alderman	Present	
Michael Walsh	Alderman	Excused	
Allison Byrne	Alderman	Present	
Nancy Welch	Alderman	Present	
Kelly Rifelj	Alderman	Excused	
James Archambo	City Administrator	Present	

2. Review of City Administrator goals: Success in Communications by the end of 2017

Mr. Archambo's presentation focused on the City Administrator's goal to implement and support the Common Council's policy decision to create an administrative communications function. He noted that initial efforts culminated in the recent hiring of Communication Manager Melissa Weiss. This position implements and maintains the public policy adopted by the elected body; it does not create policy. A critical task with the hiring of Ms. Weiss is prioritizing what duties and responsibilities this position will carry out, since the position cannot do everything.

The recently-completed communications audit identified several areas of immediate need: the usability of both the current website and the city newsletter, development of a social media strategy, distribution of a consistent Administrator briefing communication, streamlining the Executive Summary of the 2018 proposed budget, and development of a communications strategic plan.

Several divergent comments were exchanged among Committee members and Mr. Archambo about their visions for the duties of this position. Some suggestions were made that this position ought to be very involved in the crafting of public messages following citywide events. After the recent car-jackings, for example, Common Council members were not given any informative, consistent 'talking points' to address residents' concerns and questions. Shouldn't that position have been involved in the messaging? Council members should be able to expect information within 24-48 hours.

Mr. Archambo stated that, in the case of the example above, the 'originating' department provides the facts surrounding a situation. With the car-jackings, the Police Department has its own public information officer

who disseminates critical information. ‘Originating’ departments that do not have such a position would likely rely on the Communications Manager to assist in crafting a message; it is not a primary duty of the position, however. *How* to craft effective messages quickly and accurately is part of the strategic communications strategy under development. It is an issue of expectations vs. rational parameters.

Committee members suggested that the Communications Manager ought to coordinate with the Police Department’s information officer so there are not two points from which information is released. There seem to be two communication centers at times - the Police Department and City Hall. There should not be. Committee members acknowledged, though, that the Police Department is unique to the extent that it has a public information officer and other departments do not.

The Committee also encouraged that greater access to agendas and minutes be made on the portal. (Currently some documents are posted on the website, whereas others are posted on the meeting portal.)

No action was taken; information only.

Carla A. Ledesma, CMC, City Clerk

City Administrator 2017 Goals

Success in Communications by the end of 2017

In 2017 the City of Wauwatosa Common Council made a policy decision to critically focus on communications efforts through the creation of a Communications Manager. The structure of the position as adopted is within the Administrative Services Budget and reporting to the City Administrator. There are numerous undefined and subtle aspects to this position. Not the least of these, though answered in the budget discussion in part, is that the Communications Manager is not to serve any individual political purposes or elected official but rather serve the City as an entity and in its collective interest.

After a thorough recruitment process, Melissa Weiss joined our team in this role in mid-April and will be working in a number of key areas to enhance communications in 2017. It is my intent to facilitate success by providing prioritization, organizational latitude and authority, and supervision to enable strategic focus undiluted by tactical requests.

1. One of the main initiatives is creation of a new city website. This project is being led by Information Systems with key input from the Communications Manager on how to leverage our online presence into a more engaging and robust communications vehicle for the City. The goal for 2017 is to hire a company to design the website for a 2018 go live date yet to be determined.
2. Another key measure of success for the Communications Manager is the creation of a new, more visually appealing citizen newsletter. The strategic communications intent of this document will also be shifted towards sharing critical updates on larger projects, such as planning efforts underway. The goal for 2017 will be to issue two editions of the newly revitalized citizen newsletter.
3. For a few years we have had City of Wauwatosa social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter, but they have lacked followers and impact. A 2017 communications goal is to create a strategic communications strategy for these accounts to increase followers and also to improve on the content shared with the public through these vehicles. This work is well underway with an increase of 7% to our Facebook followers in the month since Melissa Weiss started. We should expect to see steady and consistent growth in this area through the end of the year.
4. In the past, we have made efforts to provide some means of communicating administrative initiatives related to projects or areas of focus likely of interest to elected officials and staff. This has always failed for lack of consistency due to the commitment of resources, notably time. Over the course of this year we intend to provide not less than a monthly Administrative Briefing highlighting topics that either the intended audience will want to know or should know. We will be looking to feedback in writing as well as by 'open rate' to judge the usefulness of this effort.

5. In cooperation with the Finance Department and Administration we will be streamlining the executive summary in the budget utilizing this portion of the budget document as a strategic communication vehicle with the public.
6. The final item of import that indicates success in 2017 is the development of a communications strategic plan. All Wauwatosa stakeholders have desires to improve communications and suggestions of starting points for this work. The Communications Manager will streamline these visions into a communications strategy to guide and focus our efforts for 2018 and beyond.

Out of all the initiatives that the City has undertaken over the past several years, the policy to create a Communications Manager function under Administration has both the most beneficial potential impact, if successful, yet the most divergent opinions as to what success may look like and therefore risk of failure. These are perhaps seemingly simple, limited goals, yet the intent is to do what I can to effectuate implementation of this significant policy decision of the Common Council. I think focusing on these areas will offer the most consistent sense of success and aid in bridging divergent opinions. Over time we will be able to leverage the successes of 2017 into more innovative communications strategies for Wauwatosa.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR GOAL(S)

Implement and Support the Common Council Policy
Decision to Create an Administrative Communications
Function

TWO DISTINCT PURPOSES

- 1 Context of the Communications Function
- 2 Content of the Activities within the Communications Function

Context of the Communications Function

- This function relates to the Dichotomy of Public Policy and Public Administration
 - *On the one end is the establishment of public policy*
 - *On the other is the implementation and maintenance of adopted public policy*
- 1887 Woodrow Wilson
 - *“Who shall make law and what shall it be?” (Public Policy)*
 - *“How should the law be administered?” (Public Administration)*
- Why does context matter?
 - *Nearly 50 year history of our organizational structure*
 - *To the extent possible ALL staff should avoid questions of policy not established yet promote openly policy once adopted*
 - *Communications Function serves the collective interest the elected body not any individual elected official or policy objective*

Content of the Activities within the Communications Function

- New City Website
 - *Live by the end of 2018 Q1*
- New City Newsletter
 - *Reformat and Reconsider Content*
- Communications Strategy for Social Media
 - *Significant increase in posts and followers*
- Consistent Administrative Briefing
 - *Not less than monthly through the end of 2017*
- Streamline the Executive Summary of the 2018 Budget
 - *Intended to provide improved public understanding of the document*
- Development of a Communications Strategic Plan
 - *2018 Q1 develop a comprehensive plan for utilization of various media for specific messaging*