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WESTFIELD CITY CLERK

## **Personnel Action Committee**

Minutes for 02/04/2021

6:00PM via Zoom per the Governor due to the Pandemic

Committee Members – Ralph Figy (present), Richard Sullivan (present) and Cindy Harris, Chair (present)

We have 8 items on the Agenda.

### **Agenda Item #1:**

*The appointment of Peter Cowles, 18 Egleston Road, as a member of the Public Safety Communications Commission, for a term to expire the first Monday of February, 2024, replacing Hipolito Nunez, who wished not to be reappointed.*

Voted 3-0 to recommend that appointment.

### Discussion:

This position is taking Captain Nunez's spot. First, the City is very grateful for Captain Nunez's service. He helped create the Dispatch Center with Lenore Bernashe, IT Department Head. He also wanted to recognize Nina Barszcz for the outstanding job she is doing leading the center. And wanted to recognize Ms. Bernashe and her staff for all their help with the Center and credits her leadership and staff with helping with the success.

Our City thanks Mr. Nunez for his kind words for others and his dedication to our City. Truly, an outstanding individual.

Mr. Cowles has 15 years of experience in municipal dispatching and brings to the position the viewpoint of a person experienced in a job of a Public Safety Communicator.

For years, Mr. Cowles was a dispatcher for the Holyoke Police Department and Westfield Police Dept. He is totally familiar with all that is involved with this job. He is proficient in all Technology Systems and is a Committee member of Spectrum Management and committee member for Public Safety IT Security including 911 Enhancement. He also is on the Western Mass. Radio Interoperability Committee which addresses the needs within the Commonwealth, including municipality needs, provides guidance to MEMA and supports National Homeland Security Guidelines used by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). As most of the Council and many Citizens know, he was instrumental in the Babe Ruth International Softball World Series, and currently is Executive Producer responsible for streaming and broadcasting the series.

Currently, we all know Mr. Cowles is crucial in his role of Westfield's Media Specialist with responsibilities that involves every department of the City and Community Groups – a more than 12 hour a day job. Previous to that, he was an IT Communications Specialist for Westfield with involvement in all technologies throughout the City including the start-up of this Dispatch Center.

There will be no compensation, and we thank Mr. Cowles for offering to help our City. A disclosure statement accepted by the State Ethics Office was approved.

Councilors, any comments, or you may make them at the full Council Meeting – or a motion to Vote. Motion to Vote for appointment – Councilor Figy, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Sullivan.

By Individual Vote:

Cindy Harris, Chair – Yes

Ralph Figy – Yes

Richard Sullivan – Yes

Councilor Sullivan stated that he agreed and reinforced all that was stated on Captain Nunez and Peter Cowles. Councilor Figy also stated he agreed.

**Agenda Item #2:**

*The reappointment of John Niedzielski, 28 Heritage Lane, as a member of the Water Commission for a term to expire the first Monday of February, 2024.*

Voted 3-0 to recommend that appointment.

Discussion:

First appointed April, 2019 to replace Matt Barnes who resigned from this Commission because he was hired as the City's Treasurer/Collector. Mr. Niedzielski's impeccable background remains an asset to the Water Commission.

Because this is such an important Commission for our City, I will read the minutes from when he was appointed to assure our Citizens of his expertise (a copy of the minutes are attached.)

(Read Niedzielski's section from the 4/22/2019 minutes.)

Councilors, any comments or you may make them at the Full Council Meeting – or a motion to vote. Councilor Figy extends his thanks to John. Motion to recommend reappointment by Councilor Figy. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Sullivan.

By Individual Vote:

Cindy Harris, Chair – Yes

Ralph Figy – Yes

Richard Sullivan – Yes

**Agenda Item #3:**

*The reappointment of Thomas H. Pereira, 150 Hillside Road, as a member of the Board of Public Works for a term to expire the first Monday of February, 2024.*

Voted 3-0 to recommend that appointment.

Discussion:

Mr. Pereira was first appointed in April 2016, and reappointed March 2018 at which time Mayor Brian Sullivan and the Director of Public Works both recommended his reappointment.

He takes the position seriously and has participated in, along with the other board members, various important decisions regarding a varied range of concerns over those years. He would like to

continue on this Board and Mayor Humason asks for his reappointment.

His ability to interact with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures, and his creative problem solving ability to resolve situations quickly, is an asset. He has a B.S. in Regional Planning, and has been involved in education and competitive coaching. He has taught many grades, English and Science for many, which included differently abled students. His coaching background includes College Level.

Mr. Pereira communicates extremely well with the public, and the Public Works Dept., and has a manner which represents our City in the best possible way.

Councilors, any comments or you may make them at the Full Council Meeting – or a motion to vote. Motion to recommend for appointment by Councilor Figy. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Sullivan.

By Individual Vote:

Cindy Harris, Chair – Yes

Ralph Figy – Yes

Richard Sullivan – Yes

**Agenda Item #4:**

*The reappointment of Sara Unger, 24 Kane Brothers Circle, as a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission, Ward 1, for a term to expire the first Monday of February, 2024.*

Voted 3-0 to recommend that appointment.

Discussion:

A great asset to the Commission, Ms. Unger was appointed in 2006 and reappointed many times since then. Her roles here have included being Secretary, many subcommittees including budget and land use, the Hampton Ponds/Playground Revitalization, Signage, Facilities, and proudly serves as our Ward 1 representative.

She is a Social Worker for 30+ years for the Commonwealth of Mass. Dealing with many difficult situations of abuse and neglect of children, has a B.S. in Social Work, and has been very involved over the years in the Westfield Public School System activities such as PTO and Fundraising for many events. She has Co-Chaired Arts and Music Festivals.

Westfield is fortunate to have her continued involvement on this Commission with her historical knowledge of this Commission's endeavors.

Councilors, any comments or you may make them at the Full Council Meeting – or a motion to vote. Motion to approve the reappointment by Councilor Figy. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Sullivan.

By Individual Vote:

Cindy Harris, Chair – Yes

Ralph Figy – Yes

Richard Sullivan – Yes

**Agenda Item #5:**

*The reappointment of Michael Tirrell, 36 Darby Drive, as a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission, Ward 5, for a term to expire the first Monday of February, 2024.*

Voted 3-0 to recommend that appointment.

Discussion:

First appointed in January 2017 to replace Martin Nunez then appointed for a full term in January 2018, he is an integral part of this commission representing Ward 5.

Reviewing his background – he is employed by NBC Universal as Director of Data Services, has coached various Westfield Sports teams over 10+ years so is familiar with the City’s parks and gives insight to the Commission on the use and maintenance of Westfield’s facilities, has served on the Westfield School Committee, and served as the Website Administrator and Board Member for Westfield Little League. When first appointed, Councilor Onyski stated Mr. Tirrell is great for the position and Councilor Figy stated that he was glad to see Mr. Tirrell again in public service.

Mr. Tirrell is well-known in the sports arena in Westfield and thus his familiarity with Parks and Recreation activities benefits this commission.

Councilors, any comments or you may make them at the Full Council Meeting – or a motion to vote. Motion to approve the reappointment by Councilor Figy. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Sullivan.

By Individual Vote:

- Cindy Harris, Chair – Yes
- Ralph Figy – Yes
- Richard Sullivan – Yes

**Agenda Item #6:**

*The reappointment of Douglas Morash, 9 Gloria Drive, as a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission, Ward 6, for a term to expire the first Monday of February, 2024.*

Voted 3-0 to recommend that appointment.

Discussion:

Mr. Morash was appointed in February 2018 and at that time Councilor Onyski, our Ward 6 Councilor, stated that Mr. Morash would do a great job as our Commission’s Ward 6 representative – and indeed, Mr. Morash is an important member of this Commission.

He is employed by Marsh and McLennan Agency in Worcester as a Retirement Services Consultant. Previously, he had worked for Mass Mutual. He has extensive experience in that industry and has received many awards for Excellence in his field. In the past, he has been involved in being a United Way Coordinator, in the Reading Aloud Volunteer program in schools, in Junior Achievement in mentoring, and is looking forward to continuing on this Commission to serve his Community.

All his children have taken part in many Parks and Rec programs and he has helped out in many

areas with those programs and he has helped out in many areas with those programs. He states he truly appreciates what the Parks and Rec Department does for our City, providing quality programs for our Citizens at an affordable cost.

He wants to continue on this Commission and is honored to continue to represent Ward 6.

Councilors, any comments or you may make them at the Full Council Meeting – or a motion to vote. Motion to approve the reappointment by Councilor Sullivan. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Figy.

By Individual Vote:

Cindy Harris, Chair – Yes

Richard Sullivan – Yes

Ralph Figy – Yes

**Agenda Item #7:**

*The reappointment of Grace Sullivan, 684 Holyoke Road, as a member of the Board of Assessors, for a term to expire the first Monday of February, 2024.*

Voted 3-0 to recommend that appointment.

Discussion:

Ms. Sullivan has been on the Board of Assessors for over 30 years and is the Chair of this Board. She has a vast knowledge of all circumstances and aspects of assessing properties, which benefits our City. She has been a realtor for 40+ years and understands the real estate market and values. Her historical knowledge is invaluable to this Board. She has worked with and helped a large portion of Westfield's population.

City Assessor Robin Johnson, as in the past, highly recommends Ms. Sullivan's reappointment and states that she is a valuable member of the Board and has been involved in all assessing situations and acts fairly and legally on all issues.

Our City is fortunate to have Ms. Sullivan want to continue on this Board and we thank her for her outstanding service to our City on a Board which sometimes deals with extremely sensitive situations with high emotions.

Councilors, any comments or you may make them at the Full Council Meeting – or a motion to vote. Councilor Sullivan stated that he had appointed Grace Sullivan when he was Mayor, that we are fortunate to have her for all these years, and it's an honor to approve her this evening. Councilor Figy commended her service. Motion to approve the reappointment by Councilor Sullivan. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Figy.

By Individual Vote:

Cindy Harris, Chair – Yes

Richard Sullivan – Yes

Ralph Figy – Yes

**Agenda Item #8:**

*Residence requirements for City employment, including Westfield Public Schools and Westfield Gas and Electric, defer to Law Department and be removed from Committee.*

Voted 3-0 to recommend that appointment.

Discussion:

The Law Department's Atty. Fitzgerald has written a lengthy response to this motion, citing legal framework and reasons for the unattainability of such requirement. All Councilors received the response. A copy of that response will be attached to the minutes of this meeting.

The Committee defers to the City's Law Department, and a motion to remove this item from Committee would be appreciated.

Motion to remove without action by Councilor Sullivan. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Figy.

By Individual Vote:

Cindy Harris, Chair – Yes

Richard Sullivan – Yes

Ralph Figy – Yes

Motion made by Councilor Figy to approve minutes of this meeting. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Sullivan.

The minutes approved on a 3-0 vote.

By Individual Vote:

Cindy Harris, Chair – Yes

Richard Sullivan – Yes

Ralph Figy – Yes

Councilor Sullivan noted Councilors Onyski and Mello were on Zoom meeting.

Motion to adjourn made.

By Individual Vote:

Cindy Harris, Chair – Yes

Ralph Figy – Yes

Richard Sullivan – Yes

Minutes submitted by Cindy Harris, Chair 2/5/2021