

Personnel Action Committee

Minutes for meeting date 6/21/2023 Meeting at City Hall, Council Chambers - 5:00 PM

Committee Members - Chair Cindy Harris (present), Councilor Ralph Figy (present) and Councilor James Adams (present).

The Law Department has requested that we ask if anyone is audio/video recording or livestreaming the meeting - None.

Submitting the appointment of Erik Valdes, Esq. of 58 Fern Street, Florence, to the position of Assistant City Solicitor for a term of three years from the date of appointment.

Atty. Reed and Atty. Valdes are attending this meeting. Atty. Reed has interviewed Atty. Valdes and discussed with him the questions and situations necessary in regards to his potential employment in the City's Law Department.

Atty. Valades' experience in many courts for diverse legal situations will be an asset to the Law Department because of his wide range of experience and his ability to quickly understand new situations. He is fluent in Spanish and French, as well as English and can add Haitian Creole to his extensive language repertoire.

His background includes knowledge of laws regarding bankruptcy, real estate closings, civil litigation and title searches. He had his own Law Firm for many years and has experience in the business world of Consulting in the private industry involving international development of IT Systems.

The following correspondence from Atty. Shanna Reed, First Assistant City Solicitor in our City's Law Dept. explains why she recommends Atty. Valdes for appointment to our Law Department.

This letter will be attached to the Personnel Action Committee Minutes for the 6/21/2023 meeting.

[Chair reads letter out loud].

Mayor McCabe also asks the Council to approve and appoint Atty. Valdes to this position. The letter of 6/15/2023 is also attached – all Councilors have previously received this. All Councilors have previously reviewed Atty. Valdes' resume.

Chair: Atty. Valdes, I'm sure Atty. Reed has explained to you the process going forward in regards to potential appointment. Do you want to add any comments to this narrative?

Atty. Valdes replied that he is excited at the prospect of working here. He states he likes challenges and feels this job is right up my alley "in that the job is not just one but many different areas of Law and he feels that he is good at adjusting to the situations and is eager to get started".

Chair: Atty. Reed, your correspondence explains why you believe Atty. Valdes will be an asset to the Law Department. It is thorough and will be presented to the Full Council as it is written. Do you want to add anything or can we proceed. Atty. Reed replies that after 15 years there are still items that come across my desk that are new, and I feel that with Atty. Valdes' broad base of experience and knowledge, he will be very helpful to the Department.

Chair: Councilors, (To City Councilors Figy and Adams on the Personnel Action Committee) any comments or you may make them at the full Council Meeting or Motion.

Councilor Adams states, I'd like to ask a question to Atty. Valdes. Have you ever worked for a Municipality?

Atty. Valdes replied, this would be the first time.

Councilor Adams asked, why did you look for this job instead of another private sector job.

Atty. Valdes replied, it seemed like a good fit, and after meeting with the attorneys in the Law Department, I am even more sure that it is so. All my generalized work over the years will be used in this job. It's the kind of workflow that I'm very familiar with. I've done a lot with many things going on at the same time. I'm comfortable with these types of situations where things change constantly.

Councilor Adams stated thanks, great answer.

Motion made by Councilor Figy to recommend the appointment of Atty. Valdes to the position of Assistant City Solicitor, 2nd by Councilor Adams.

All in favor – Harris – yes, Figy – yes, Adams - yes
Motion passes on a 3-0 vote.

Chair: This appointment will be presented at the next Council Meeting 7/6/2023 to the Full Council for a vote.

Atty. Reed stated she and Atty. Valdes will be at that meeting.

Chair: We'll see you then (Both Attys then left the meeting)

Chair: The minutes for this meeting will be as stated and given to the City Clerk tomorrow 6/22/2023.

Motion to approve minutes for 6/21/2023 made by Councilor Figy, 2nd by Councilor Adams.

All in favor – Harris – yes, Figy – yes, Adams - yes
Motion passes on a 3-0 vote.

Motion to adjourn made by Councilor Figy, 2nd by Councilor Adams.

All in favor – Harris – yes, Figy – yes, Adams - yes
Motion passes on a 3-0 vote.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

Submitted by Cindy Harris, Chair 6/22/2023



City of Westfield, Massachusetts
Office of the City Solicitor
59 Court Street
Westfield, Massachusetts 01085

Tel: (413) 572-6260
Fax: (413) 568-6745

June 14, 2023

Cindy Harris
Chair, Personnel Action Committee
City of Westfield
59 Court Street
Westfield, MA 01085

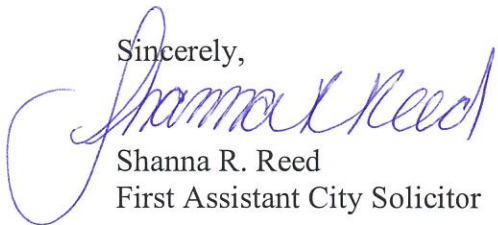
Dear Councilor Harris,

Please accept this letter as a recommendation for the appointment of Erik Valdes, Esq. to the position of Assistant City Solicitor for a term of three years.

Attorney Valdes has worked in several small law firms over the years that provided him with a broad practice base. During the interview process he was able to delve into some of the types of cases that have come across his desk during that time including real estate, bankruptcy, probate cases, and a plethora of civil and criminal litigation. He has a wide range of experience in private practice that I feel would lend itself to being able to manage a municipal caseload. He is familiar with the various courts and tribunals that this office appears before, and his ability to handle a variety of different types of cases will be immediately beneficial to the law department.

In speaking with his references, they were all quick to highlight Attorney Valdes' ability to rapidly shift gears, multi-task and to become well-versed in areas of the law which he had previously not encountered. Erik's skill set will translate well to the needs of the law department and will assist us in being able to respond to the legal needs of the City.

Sincerely,


Shanna R. Reed
First Assistant City Solicitor



City of Westfield
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR


59 Court Street Suite 200
Westfield, MA 01085
413-572-6201
Mayor Michael A. McCabe

June 15, 2023

City Council
Westfield, Massachusetts 01085

Attention: Kaitlyn Bruce
City Clerk

Councilors:

This letter is a request for your consideration and approval to appoint Attorney Erik Valdes as Assistant City Solicitor for a term of three years from the date of appointment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Michael A. McCabe
Mayor



City of Westfield, Massachusetts
Office of the City Solicitor
59 Court Street
Westfield, Massachusetts 01085

Tel: (413) 572-6260
Fax: (413) 568-6745

June 12, 2023

Hon. Michael McCabe
Mayor
City of Westfield
59 Court Street
Westfield, MA 01085

Dear Mayor McCabe,

Please accept this letter as a recommendation for the appointment of Erik Valdes, Esq. to the position of Assistant City Solicitor for a term of three years.

Attorney Valdes has a wide range of experience in private practice that I feel would lend itself to being able to manage a municipal caseload. He is familiar with the various courts and tribunals that this office appears before and his ability to handle a variety of different types of cases will be immediately helpful. A copy of his resume is attached for review.

I respectfully request that you send his name to the City Council for confirmation. I would be happy to provide further information to yourself or the City Council.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shanna R. Reed".

Shanna R. Reed
First Assistant City Solicitor

Enc. (1)