

City of Darien
Minutes of the Administrative/Finance Committee
December 16, 2024

Chairwoman/Aldерwoman Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Committee members Leganski and Schauer were present. Also in attendance was Mayor Marchese and Treasurer Coren.

Tuition Reimbursement {Policy Revision}

The committee continued a discussion from its 11-4-24 meeting regarding a revision to the personnel rules-tuition reimbursement. Staff provided answers to several questions from the 11-4-24 meeting. The committee was satisfied with the responses. The committee unanimously approved a motion to approve a revision to the city's personnel policy, Section 22 Education and Training Leave and Reimbursement including

An ordinance amending section 1-7-1 and section 1-7-2 of the Darien city code - creating the position of Director of Finance

Staff advised during this year's council goal setting meeting, Administrator Vana proposed a staff reorganization relating to the city's financial management responsibilities. In part, the recommended change aligns with the strategic issue (**Financial Responsibility**) recently adopted by the city council. The change includes promoting Julie Saenz from the position of Accounting Manager to a newly created position of Finance Director. It also includes creating a part time Accounting Clerk position (estimated at 1000 hours per year) under the supervision of the Finance Director.

The committee reviewed the benefits of this request including:

- Provide stability in the Finance Department by providing growth to retain employees. Without this opportunity, whoever serves as our Accounting Manager would seek career growth as a Finance Director position in another organization
- Increase internal controls
- Provide financial backup by having a second employee able to perform payroll, accounting transactions and journal entrees, etc.
- Allow the Finance Director to accomplish specific goals outlined in our strategic plan and future goals
- Provide a second employee to expand knowledge of financial duties and provide backup to the City Administrator regarding budget and tax levy preparation, ongoing budget management, expenditure approval
- Improve direct supervision of certain office positions and improve coordination among those positions

Staff advised reviewed the ordinance creating the position of director of finance. The committee unanimously recommended approval of the ordinance.

A motion approving the following:

- 1. Incorporating a new full time staff position responsible for special events and business outreach - Director of the Business Alliance and Community Events**
- 2. Creating the Darien Business Alliance**
- 3. Budgeting for a part time employee to help with special events and certain business outreach duties**

Staff advised at the November 20, 2024, City Council goal setting meeting, Mayor Marchese and Administrator Vana proposed the following:

1. Incorporating a new full time staff position responsible for special events and business outreach - Director of the Business Alliance and Community Events.
2. Creating the Darien Business Alliance
3. Budgeting for a part time employee to help with special events and certain business outreach duties.

The committee reviewed the job description for the Director of the Business Alliance and Community Events position. This plan would provide for the city to operate the Darien Business Alliance (DBA). The DBA would resemble a traditional chamber of commerce and similar to the concept discussed at the City Council’s goal setting in 2022. Staff advised this proposal also includes \$5,000 for a PT employee to help with special events and certain business outreach duties. This change would allow the city to have direct oversight of local business engagement such as special business events, communications, and programing. Combining additional duties of special event management also makes sense since the city is more involved in community events such as concerts, Darien Fest, and fall fest. Staff reviewed the revenue and expenses associated with this plan. The city would most likely maintain a number of events that that would generate revenue, or reduce current expenses.

Minutes – November 4, 2024 - The committee unanimously approved the minutes.

Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Approved:

Mary Sullivan, Chairwoman _____

Ted Schauer, Member _____

Gerry Leganski, Member _____