

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 21, 2025

Approved

1. Call to Order

Chair Louise Howson called to order the Personnel Committee meeting on Thursday, August 21, 2025 at 2:01 PM.

2. Roll Call

Present: Chair Howson and member Kurt Harff

Staff: Village Administrator Julie Schmelzer and Administrative Assistant Sarah Bertges

3. Approve Agenda

Howson noted that the agenda had been amended to reflect the correct meeting time of 2:00 PM rather than the originally posted incorrect time.

Motion by Harff, seconded by Howson, to approve the amended agenda. Motion carried – all ayes.

4. Approve Minutes: June 4, 2025

Harff commented that while he noticed some minor clerical errors in the minutes, he did not find them significant enough to address. Howson agreed that she looks for substantive errors rather than minor issues.

Motion by Harff, seconded by Howson, to approve the minutes from the June 4, 2025, meeting.

Motion carried – all ayes.

5. Comments, Correspondence and Concerns from the Public

Howson stated she was not aware of any public comments or correspondence.

6. Discussion/Action Items

a. Supervisor Contracts

Schmelzer presented the revised draft supervisor contract template that had been reviewed at the previous meeting. She explained that she had cleaned up the document so it could be easily tailored for each position by entering the appropriate person and position details. The draft contract had been shared with department heads for review. Schmelzer raised the question of whether to offer contracts to key employees beyond department heads, specifically mentioning Gannik, who no longer wants to be a department head, and the Village Clerk position. She noted these positions would leave the village "in a pickle" if they departed suddenly. The committee discussed the key provisions of the contract: 30-day notice requirement from employees, six-month protection period during board transitions, \$25 monthly phone stipend, and 12 months of continuation of benefits if terminated by the village. Howson observed, "there's no downside" to the contracts and agreed that both the clerk and Gannik should be eligible. The committee discussed changing the title from "Supervisor Contracts" to be more specific about including the Financial Specialist and Village Clerk positions.

Motion by Howson, seconded by Harff, to approve the supervisor contracts with modifications to specifically include Financial Specialist and Village Clerk positions, and forward to the Village Board.

Motion carried – all ayes.

b. Job Descriptions

Schmelzer presented three job description revisions:

- 1
2 **i. Administrative Assistant/Deputy Treasurer:** Schmelzer explained the background -
3 Sarah has bookkeeping skills and the village needs proper segregation of duties. The
4 plan is to appoint Sarah as Deputy Treasurer once she's comfortable in her current
5 role, hopefully by fall, to help Gannik with year-end processes. The job description
6 showed the position split as 40% Administrative, 30% Deputy Treasurer, and 30%
7 Parks. Howson asked about the flexibility of these percentages for budgeting
8 purposes, and Schmelzer confirmed they could be adjusted annually based on actual
9 workload, similar to how wastewater positions are allocated.

10
11 *Motion by Howson, seconded by Harff, to accept the changes to the job description*
12 *for Administrative Assistant/Deputy Treasurer. Motion carried – all ayes.*
13

- 14 **ii. Financial Specialist/Village Treasurer:** Schmelzer presented Gannik's request to
15 move from a salaried department head position to an hourly non-exempt position.
16 She explained Gannik is concerned about being blamed for others' financial decisions,
17 and the impact it can have on his career, citing last year's budget process, and, having
18 to meet with trustees for situations he feels are not related to finance. The work
19 would remain largely the same, but without supervisory responsibilities or
20 accountability for final work products. Some duties would transfer to the new Deputy
21 Treasurer. Harff questioned whether hourly status might lead to less productivity;
22 Schmelzer explained that Vlad would be eligible for overtime if needed, but tries to
23 maintain a work-life balance due to having a young daughter. She paraphrased Vlad's
24 position: "I want to go to work. I want to do my job...I want to be left alone and go
25 home at the end of the day." The committee agreed to make the change effective the
26 next pay period, as Vlad was concerned about being blamed for budget issues.
27 Schmelzer added she would revise the title to follow the same format as the previous
28 job description approved, putting the "Treasurer" title second.

29
30 *Motion by Howson, seconded by Harff, to approve the revised job description for*
31 *Village Financial Specialist/Village Treasurer. Motion carried – all ayes.*
32

- 33 **iii. Village Administrator:** Schmelzer initiated a lengthy discussion about the future
34 administrator position, noting her planned retirement in early 2026, and the need to
35 start thinking about the next administrator. She emphasized the need for decisions to
36 be made about the roles they would fulfill. She stressed the village needs to make
37 decisions about whether to maintain the current structure combining
38 administrator/zoning administrator/community development/HR roles or to separate
39 some functions.

40
41 The discussion covered several key points:

- 42
43
 - 44 ● Since she is retiring in early 2026
 - 45 ● The complexity of Sister Bay's zoning code and the overwhelming nature of the
 - 46 combined role
 - 47 ● The challenge of being both administrator and zoning enforcer, with Schmelzer
 - 48 noting "you have people in the community that hate Julie Schmelzer because I
 - 49 have to say no"
 - 50 ● The need for budgeting knowledge in the next administrator, though not
 - necessarily at Gannik's expert level

- The difficulty of switching from the Caselle financial software system
- The ongoing HR responsibilities that likely need to stay with the administrator albeit more benefit work should be sent to the HR Consultant

Howson suggested the job description go to the Board as members would want to weigh in on the structure. The committee agreed to forward it for Board consideration.

c. Compensation Schedule Revision: Administrative Assistant/Deputy Treasurer

Schmelzer presented the compensation schedule showing the Administrative Assistant/Deputy Treasurer position would be compensated at the same level as a Deputy Clerk. The Financial Specialist position would remain at \$78,000 annually but converted to an hourly rate.

Motion by Howson, seconded by Harff, to accept the compensation schedule revision for Administrative Assistant/Deputy Treasurer and Financial Specialist/Village Treasurer. Motion carried – all ayes.

d. Village Clerk Update, Potential for Outsourcing, & Employee Compensation

Schmelzer reported on the Village Clerk recruitment, noting they had advertised locally on Destination Door County's job site, and the League of Wisconsin Municipalities job board for three weeks so far. One promising candidate worked in the university system, which Schmelzer noted could be "your second-best option" after an experienced clerk due to familiarity with government processes, statutes, and boards. A new application had arrived from someone with public administration education, but Schmelzer expressed concern they might be seeking an administrator position and leave quickly and may be better suited for her position. Howson brought up the Board's discussion about outsourcing the clerk's duties and asked Schmelzer to consider speaking with a firm that specializes in municipal work. Schmelzer expressed concerns about outsourcing and if staff still has to do work for the outsourced clerk, why not just hire someone to do all the work. The committee discussed the training required for the clerk's position, with Schmelzer explaining that if staff trains an interim clerk, why not just hire a long-term clerk right away, and provided examples of the specific processes that must be learned on the job. She emphasized these processes vary by municipality and someone would need to learn Sister Bay's specific systems. Howson said she had found a company that could help with Schmelzer's transition, and they can help find an interim clerk too, explaining an interim clerk could help with Schmelzer's workload, and asked Schmelzer if she'd be willing to speak with the firm about helping with clerk duties. Schmelzer explained 'its worth a conversation to find out what they can help with'. Howson agreed to connect Schmelzer with the outsourcing firm representative she had spoken with to explore options while continuing with interviews of promising candidates.

The committee then discussed compensating employees covering the clerk duties. When duties were previously divided amongst three employees, each received \$500 monthly for four months. With only two employees now covering, the recommendation was \$750 per month per employee.

Motion by Howson, seconded by Harff, to approve interim compensation of \$750 per month for employees covering clerk duties, retroactive to August 5, 2025, until 30 days after the hire of a new clerk. Motion carried – all ayes.

e. Personnel Handbook Revisions: Harassment Reporting & Payment in Lieu of Benefits

Schmelzer explained that the handbook had always provided 50% payment in lieu of benefits for employees who don't take village insurance, but the handbook never specified whether it was 50% of

1 a single or family plan. The village has always paid 50% of single plan cost. The revision would clarify
2 this in writing.

3
4 Schmelzer also presented revisions prompted by recent incidents where a member of the public
5 harassed an employee. While the handbook states the public cannot harass employees, it lacked
6 procedures for addressing violations. The proposed revisions would:

- 7
- 8 ● Add timely reporting requirements
- 9 ● Give supervisors authority to take action against harassers
- 10 ● Create Type 1 (documentation only) and Type 2 (seeking disciplinary action) complaint
- 11 categories
- 12 ● Clarify investigation procedures and remedial actions
- 13

14 The committee discussed department head Dave Lienau's feedback, including concerns about timely
15 reporting requirements and whether employees could work out complaints with supervisors. Howson
16 strongly opposed allowing employees to work out harassment complaints with their supervisor if the
17 supervisor was the accused party, stating it would lead to intimidation and job security concerns.
18 Schmelzer explained that it wouldn't be allowed, and Lienau was referring to outside harassment. The
19 committee agreed that all incidents should be documented, with the complaining employee
20 determining whether it's Type 1 or Type 2, and supervisors deciding when Type 1 complaints warrant
21 investigation. They noted special considerations would be needed for minor employees, with
22 Schmelzer agreeing to consult legal counsel on requirements.

23
24 *Schmelzer will revise the policy based on feedback and bring it back to the committee after department*
25 *head review.*

26 27 **f. CPI Update**

28 Schmelzer provided an informational update on the CPI (Consumer Price Index) adjustment that had
29 been shared with the Finance Committee. No changes were made from the Personnel Committee's
30 previous recommendation.

31
32 *No action was required as this was for information only.*

33 34 **7. Executive Session**

35 **a. Adjourn**

36 Adjourn into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stats. §19.85(c) to consider employment, promotion,
37 compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental
38 body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility: Village Administrator Annual Performance Review
39 due Sept. 1st.

40
41 *At 3:23 PM, the committee entered closed session to conduct the Village Administrator's annual*
42 *performance review due September 1, 2025.*

43 44 **b. Reconvene into Open Session**

45 *Motion by Harff to reconvene into open session at 4:47 pm seconded by Howson. Roll call vote:*
46 *Motion carried – all ayes*

47 48 **c. Motion or Action, as Appropriate**

49 *Motion by Howson to refer the Administrator 2025 evaluation summary to the Village Board, second*
50 *by Harff: Motion carried – all ayes*

8. Matters to be Placed on a Future Agenda or Referred to a Committee, Official or Employee

- **Personnel Handbook**

- The harassment reporting section of the personnel handbook will be revisited for final input before adoption.
- Committee confirmed that all employees had signed the most recent handbook earlier in the year; however, amendments will require re-acknowledgment.

- **Administrator Search & Succession Planning**

- Committee engaged in extended discussion regarding long-term succession planning for the Village Administrator position, anticipating potential retirement in early 2026.
- Members agreed it is important to begin developing a clear process now.

Key Discussion Points:

- **Search Firms:** IPA (Independent Public Advisors) discussed as strong option; additional firms such as Kevin Brunner & Associates or Carlson Dettmann also noted. At least two firms should be interviewed. Firms with poor reputations will not be considered.
- **Process & Timeline:** Village Board to review updated job description Sept. 16. Once approved, Personnel Committee should recommend recruitment process, including advertising and candidate outreach. A contingency plan should be in place for immediate action.
- **Budget Considerations:** Estimated cost approx. \$50,000. Funds likely in general fund, but exact allocation must be verified. Members discussed flat fees vs. percentage contracts and provisions if a candidate is not hired before Administrator departure.
- **Examples & References:** Sturgeon Bay's use of IPA noted. Committee will reach out to other municipalities for feedback.

Action Steps:

- Schmelzer to send Howson the names and contact information for two reputable firms.
- Howson will contact IPA and at least one additional firm to gather information and schedule interviews.
- Committee expressed interest in interviewing firms directly via Zoom.
- Personnel Committee will present a written recommendation to the Village Board outlining administrator recruitment firms considered, process, and costs.

9. Next Meeting Date:

The next meeting was scheduled for September 10, 2025, at 2:00 PM. Zoom option only.

10. Adjourn

At 5:02 pm a motion was made by Harff, seconded by Howson to adjourn. Motion carried – all ayes.

Respectfully submitted by Sarah Bertges, Administrative Assistant