



## **NORTH TEXAS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT**

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### **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 13, 2021**

In accordance with the COVID-19 public health threat and the related March 16, 2020, action by the Office of the Governor, temporarily suspending certain provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, NTMWD will hold its meeting by telephonic conference call.

In lieu of physical attendance of the meeting, the public may teleconference in to the Personnel Committee meeting by calling toll free (1) (844)-621-3956 and entering the following access code: 928 587 040. Members of the public wishing to make public comment during the meeting should follow the instructions for on-line registration listed under Item II. below no later than the start time of the meeting. The meeting will be recorded and the audio recording will be available on the NTMWD website after the meeting.

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Chip Imrie called the meeting of the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD) Personnel Committee to order at approximately 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 13, 2021.

Chairman Imrie provided general instructions. Personnel Committee members present at roll call included Chairman Chip Imrie, Directors Terry Sam Anderson, Brenda Jean Patrick, Ron Kelley, Jack May, and Marlo Obera. Director Joe Joplin arrived at approximately 2:00 p.m. Director Joe Farmer was absent. A quorum of the Personnel Committee was present via teleconference.

Members of the Executive Committee were present as well as other Board members. Sheila Gladstone and Lauren Kalisek with Lloyd Gosselink Rochelle & Townsend, P.C. were also present via teleconference. Interim Executive Director Rodney Rhoades along with other members of the NTMWD management team were in attendance.

#### **II. PUBLIC COMMENTS (FOR TELECONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS ONLY)**

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON-LINE REGISTRATION:** Prior to the start of the Personnel Committee meeting, members of the public wishing to provide public comment must submit via email to [PublicRelations.Info@ntmwd.com](mailto:PublicRelations.Info@ntmwd.com) their first and last name, organization, comment topic, mailing address and email address. During the public comment portion of the meeting, speakers will be recognized by name and asked to provide their comments. The time limit is five (5) minutes per speaker, not to exceed a total of thirty (30) minutes for all speakers. The Committee may not discuss these items,

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but may respond with factual or policy information. Public comment is provided for committee meetings held by teleconference during the COVID-19 health threat to confirm the opportunity for two-way communication with the public during the meeting.

There were no public comment requests.

III. OPENING REMARKS

- A. Chairman/Interim Executive Director/Committee Champion Status Report concerning legislation and regulatory matters, budgets, current projects and ongoing programs of the District

Brian Brooks, Interim Assistant Deputy advised that this is his first meeting as Interim Champion for the Personnel Committee. He advised that Collin County is currently in the process of scheduling NTMWD employees to receive the COVID vaccine.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

- A. Consider approval of Personnel Committee meeting minutes – November 4, 2020

Upon a motion by Director Brenda Jean Patrick and a second by Director Jack May, the Personnel Committee voted unanimously to approve the Personnel Committee minutes for November 4, 2020.

- B. Consider amendment to Personnel Policy Manual related to situational and core telework for eligible employees.

Brian Brooks advised that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused the District to experiment with telework for the employees. Having done so successfully, staff would like to propose a policy that would allow telework to continue under certain circumstances.

David Kelly, Government Relations Advisor presented this item. He advised that early into the pandemic staff began reviewing opportunities to learn lessons and make improvements from the pandemic experience. He advised that the District has not seen a reduction in productivity, performance or coordination during the pandemic with employees working remotely.

Mr. Kelly stated that a Telework Policy would provide benefits to the District by:

- Codifying expectations of teleworkers and establishing accountability for performance
- Allowing/requiring employees to work in various conditions and not expend leave
- Space management

He advised teleworking provides benefits to employees by:

- Providing work life balance
- Allowing employees to work uninterrupted on tasks and projects

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Mr. Kelly explained that under the proposal there would be two types of telework outlined as follows:

Situational Telework

- Occurs on an occasional, non-routine basis. May be used when:
  - 1) The regular worksite is closed due emergency situations.
  - 2) An employee is recovering from an injury or illness.
  - 3) As a result of special work assignments and travel, and includes "unscheduled telework," which refers to telework that occurs on day(s) a teleworker was not scheduled in advance to telework.

Core Telework - Also known as "regular telework":

- Occurs on a routine and recurring basis on one or more days per pay period.
  - 1) Will occur no more than two days per week and four days per pay period.
  - 2) If an employee has an ongoing situation that requires or can be accommodated by increased telework, this must be approved by a Deputy Director.

Mr. Kelly reviewed the following regarding eligibility:

- All employees occupying telework eligible positions will be required to have a situational telework agreement.
- Core telework participation is not an employee entitlement or right.
- A determination of eligibility is made toward both the position and the employee holding the position.
- Employees are eligible for core telework if they occupy a telework-eligible position, have completed their first 6 months of employment successfully and have demonstrated work habits suited to telework, as determined by their supervisor and line management.
- Employees are not eligible if they are under a Performance Improvement Plan.
- Special circumstances particular to an employee or the duties of their position may limit an employee's ability to telework on either a temporary or permanent basis.

Mr. Kelly reviewed the expectations of teleworkers. He advised that performance standards will remain the same as those who do not telework, and the NTMWD Personnel Policies remain effective while they are on duty regardless of their worksite. Teleworkers must be available to their coworkers, supervisors, customers and other stakeholders just as if they were at their official worksite. Mr. Kelly further advised that work hours will align with the District's core hours, and that telework is not a substitute for sick leave. Teleworkers in positions with emergency response duties must be able to report to the emergency operations center or other emergency response location within two hours of being notified that an emergency situation exists.

Mr. Kelly noted that staff's recommendation is to begin such a program after COVID-19 is over and employees are back to normal working conditions.

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Interim Executive Director Rodney Rhoades advised that this proposal is one result of the lessons learned as a result of the pandemic. He advised that the employees have been effective working from home, and this is a conservative first step that can later have the flexibility to expand if desired.

Chairman Imrie advised that he is familiar with working from home and noted that for some people, productivity is higher doing so. Director Patrick spoke in support of the program and advised that others in the water industry will be watching to see how this is being done in a productive way. She commended the leadership for taking this initiative. In response to a Director's question, Interim Executive Director Rhoades advised that the majority of key personnel have laptops, and some have been allowed to take their office computer monitors home as well.

Upon a motion by Director Ron Kelley and a second by Director Brenda Jean Patrick, the Personnel Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval to the Board of Directors.

Mr. Kelly advised that the draft language will be presented to the Policy Committee in February and if approved, will be presented to the full Board of Directors in February.

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Discuss potential changes to the District's Complaint Resolution Process

Interim Executive Director Rhoades provided some background on the District's policies, adding that periodically staff reviews them for possible recommended changes.

Brian Brooks advised that he has discussed the current employee complaint procedure with staff and some directors and as a result, some changes are being considered. Human Resources Manager Shannon Sauceman reviewed the current process, and it was noted the process could take as long as three months to resolve. Mr. Rhoades expressed that in his opinion that is too long. In response to a Director's comment, Mr. Rhoades explained that steps will be taken in regard to confidentiality. Attorney Sheila Gladstone noted that in order to ensure complete confidentiality an outside attorney-investigator may need to be consulted to handle the complaint.

Mr. Brooks reviewed the proposed changes to the policy. He advised that the process should start with written complaints going to Human Resources (HR) rather than immediate supervisors as it is now. HR would determine who the complaint should go to next or whether HR needs to provide oversight. This will help streamline the process. Mr. Brooks also advised that increased emphasis on the avoidance of any retribution will be included. An appeals process will be included as well as a process for third party mediation/dispute resolution within Personnel Policies.

In response to a Director's concern, Mr. Rhoades advised that every effort will be made to make sure employees are comfortable with the process and advised that

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a Personnel Advisory Team consisting of staff from all levels will be implemented. Employees will have an opportunity to review and provide input on the proposed changes to the policy.

Mr. Brooks advised that other matters being explored or implemented include:

- Administration Organizational Study
- HR Customer Satisfaction survey
- Implementation of a new suggestion “box” to include a tracking system
- Implementation of a new annual climate survey with potential for more in-depth analysis
- Development of a Personnel Advisory Team
- Refresher training on Personnel Policies

Several Committee Members spoke in favor of hiring outside consultants to accomplish some of the goals as discussed. In response to a Director’s question, Mr. Rhoades advised that even though a permanent Executive Director is not in place he and the staff want to move forward with implementing these policy changes.

- B. Opportunity for Committee members to provide feedback on Personnel Committee meeting

Director Brenda Jean Patrick complimented Brian Brooks on the presentation.

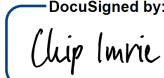
- C. Opportunity for Committee members to request potential future agenda items  
**(No substantive discussion of items will take place at this time)**

There were no future potential agenda items requested.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:21 p.m. The next meeting of the Personnel Committee will be called by the Chairman with proper notification to all members.

APPROVED:

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CHIP IMRIE  
Chairman