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City of Racine, Wisconsin
COMMON COUNCIL

AGENDA BRIEFING MEMORADUM (ABM)

COMMITTEE: Finance & Personnel **LEGISLATION ITEM #:** 782-17

AGENDA DATE:

August 21, 2017

DEPARTMENT:

Prepared By: James M. Palenick, City Administrator

Reviewed By: Dennis Wiser, Mayor

SUBJECT:

November 10th & 11th, 2-day, Work Session Retreat of the Racine Common Council and Mayor, using a professional facilitator at The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

We are proposing that the full Common Council and Mayor hold a 2-day, Work Session Retreat in a quiet, off-site location devoid of distractions, in order that the City's elected officials can focus on important relationships and policy matters in a deliberate and focused manner, utilizing a professional facilitator. To be conducted Friday, November 10th, 2017 beginning at 2:30 p.m. and concluding Saturday, November 11th, 2017 at 3:00 p.m., the event would be hosted, without charge, by the Johnson Foundation at Wingspread – with all costs for lodging, meals, and facilities rental provided as a grant from the Foundation. The City would contract with the professional facilitation firm, Team Works International Inc. (Dennis Cheesebrow, facilitator) of Minneapolis, MN at a total not-to-exceed cost of \$8,150.00.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS:

28 It is of significant value and importance, particularly with a newly-elected Mayor and recently-hired
29 City Administrator, and with multiple high-impact projects and/or issues looming on the near-term
30 horizon, that the Racine City elected officials together, among themselves for the complete Friday
31 session(s) and Saturday-morning session; and, with their senior management staff for the remaining
32 Saturday session(s), work to achieve:

- 33 • A more personal understanding of each other, and thereby greater empathy for divergent
34 perceptions and approaches.
- 35 • A better understanding and definition of the roles and functions of policy-development versus
36 implementation (outcomes vs. process).
- 37 • Better communication, trust and understanding between and among the Common Council as
38 a body; and between the Common Council and Staff.
- 39 • A blueprint for policy-focus and “strategic planning” going forward.

40 A focused, professionally-facilitated retreat will serve to better prepare and equip the City’s top
41 policy-makers and professional managers to jointly make and implement more effective decisions and
42 to better identify and establish the prioritization of scarce resources.

43 This effort has been spear-headed by Alderman Meekma and is further sponsored by Mayor Wisner
44 and Alderman Tate II.

45

46 **BUDGETARY IMPACT:**

47 All costs of facilities rental, lodging and meals will be covered by a grant from the Johnson Foundation
48 at Wingspread. Professional facilitation services will be provided by Team Works International Inc. of
49 Minneapolis, MN at a cost of \$2,500/day plus expenses (2 days of on-site facilitation and one day of
50 preparation and post-event reporting, along with travel expenses). A not-to-exceed budget of
51 \$8,150.00, to be funded from the FY 2017 Contingency account, should be sufficient to provide for all
52 out-of-pocket City expenses.

53

54 **OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES:**

- 55 1.) To schedule and conduct a 2-day, off-site strategic planning Work Session of the Common
56 Council during the days and times, and at the location, as proposed herein.
- 57 2.) To schedule and conduct such a session at a date(s), time(s) and/or location amended from
58 that proposed herein.
- 59 3.) To choose not to conduct a strategic planning Work Session and/or “retreat”.

60

61 **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

62 To schedule and conduct a 2-day, off-site strategic planning Work Session of the Common Council on
63 November 10th and 11th, 2017 at the Johnson Foundation at Wingspread Conference center; and to
64 approve the expenditure of \$8,150.00 from the FY2017 Contingency Account to cover the professional
65 facilitation thereof.

66

67 **ATTACHMENT(S): Letter of Approval from The Johnson Foundation**