

Office of the City Attorney

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March 22, 2006

CITY OF RACINE

MAR 22 2006

FINANCE

MEMO TO: FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

FROM: DANIEL P. WRIGHT, City Attorney 

SUBJECT: 1) Claim of Michael & Edith Minasian, 3329 No. Main St.;
2) HR Director communication requesting downgrade of positions

I will be on vacation out of state through March 28 and will miss the March 27 committee meeting. The following 2 items require my input:

- 1) The claim of Minasian's arose from a sewer backup into their basement, resulting in costs of \$541. Investigation by the City disclosed that the claimants' sewer was not hooked up to the sewer main in No. Main St., as indicated on the City's plumbing records, but was instead connected to a sewer line running through the rear of the lots fronting on No. Main St. and Chatham St. The Utility inspected that main and found that a stick had made its way into the sewer line and obstructed the flow. Utility records show that the sewer line had been cleaned on August 20, 2003, and per City policy was due for its next cleaning in August 2006. Based on the City's lack of prior notice that a sewer blockage existed, and that the sewer had been cleaned per the City policy, I recommend that the claim be denied.
- 2) The HR Director requested the position of Deputy City Attorney and two other positions be downgraded from GR-18 to GR-17. Although initially the result of this change did not seem objectionable since it would not be likely to affect the actual salary of an employee in that position, the reduction in grade is objectionable based on the resultant lessening of the position's importance. The Deputy City Attorney is responsible for significant and substantial legal work of the City, advising and representing Administrative Managers as well as elected officials and other employees. This position requires the respect of those people as well as adversary attorneys and the public, which would be diluted with a reduction in grade. The position was upgraded to its current status in 1998 in recognition of its significance and consistent with a personnel study, and it should be maintained as GR-18.

dpw

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