

Item 25-0407: APD Staffing Study Update

Item 24-0408: Valley Transit Staffing Update

Item 25-0409: Fire Negotiations

Item 25-0419: Recruitment Status Report through 4/17/2025

Human Resources and Information Technology Committee

Wed, Apr 23, 2025 6:30PM

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 31:47

Moving on to item number 25-0407, the APD staffing study update. I assume that's Director Ratchman.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 31:54

District seven. Thank you. So given that we have a new committee, I also brought a number of information items forward. If the committee can recall, last year, we did an RFP to do a staffing study for our police department. We kicked that project off at the end of 2024 I just want to provide an update. I don't have any data to give you other than, like, what's the status of the project.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 32:18

That project has five stages total. We're currently in stage four. We're actually just about finished with stage four. Stage four is to conduct a comparative evaluation of the Appleton police department to identify gaps in service goals versus performance. So right now, there's a draft that's been provided, and then we'll have a final copy from there.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 32:41

The fifth stage is the final report. So, I'm told that that we should anticipate that in about another month, or we can do a review of it. When we met with the Matrix earlier this week—that's the organization doing the study. They will do a presentation to the Council, as well as for what the final report is. It's hard to give any sort of feedback as to what have we found so far. It's only until all five pieces come together that we can really give, like, a recommendation or show as to what the outcomes are. So that's the status of that project.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 33:15

Excellent. Any questions from anybody on the committee?

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 33:18

All right, moving on then to item number 25-0408, the Valley Transit staffing update. Director Ratchman.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 33:25

So, we've talked about Valley Transit quite a bit over the past few years and the difficulty recruiting bus drivers, etc. We've made a lot of changes of Valley Transit. The big one last year was change in the schedule. That reduced the number of drivers from 36 down to 24 drivers, so the extra hours are now staffed with the para transit system, which is through Valley Transit II.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 33:48

Through the past couple years, we've done additional marketing through Red Shoes; that's actually budgeted through Valley Transit. We've offered sign on bonuses, referral bonuses. We didn't have a lot of success with those bonuses, even though the dollar amounts were fairly high. We continue to fill a part time pool of drivers. This is—these are individuals that can fill in when we have gaps in the schedule, and that's really valuable.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 34:14

Right now, the goal for Valley Transit is to have 24 full time drivers. That's a bit of a moving target from the standpoint of, if we had 24 trained, fully available drivers, that would be the perfect number. But we also have new employees who are in training. We might have pending retirements that we're planning for. So that's why in the recruitment status report, you'll see kind of an asterisk that says number that kind of varies depending on what the circumstances are.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 34:44

As of today, we have 24 full time drivers, okay, but several are in training, so you will not see us take the bus driver out there the recruitment status report. We have five part time drivers as well that can fill in.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 35:00

So staffing, from the driver standpoint, is—it's okay. I wouldn't say it's great, because I think great would be full time seasoned drivers who could fill in the schedule wherever needed. Transit also has an open maintenance operation supervisor position. That was on hold for a bit, and we are in the final stages with a candidate. You've heard me say before, those on the committee, I don't get too excited until they start, because things can change. But we are getting to the final stages. We also have a mechanic position open. It's on hold for now. We've been meeting with the union about that position in trying to restructure some things differently. I guess we'll see where those talks go. So, for now, Van—Valley transit is taking a step back from trying to fill that position. So other than that, I think staffing is in an okay place with Valley Transit

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 35:54

Is Mr. McDonald feeling secure in what you're currently experiencing as far as bus drivers, and there's not—they're not really having real struggles with scheduling and that sort of thing. It's just sort of a status quo doing okay?

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 36:09

I think right now, if you were to ask that question, there's still some struggles, because we have a fair amount of new employees who are in training, plus we have a new employee who just started on the 21st which was two days ago. So that's—when you only have 24 full time drivers, that does create strain, and so that's filled by overtime. Sometimes some of our management staff jump in the bus and help out as well.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 36:35

Okay, excellent. Any other questions? Oh, Alder Wolff.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 36:38

Thank you, Chair. Considering where we were—what?—a year ago—right?—I feel like this is a much better place, even with the new employees. So, it looks as if the changes were a good change. And you mentioned over time, are we still looking at the same amount of overtime, or is it far less overtime for those drivers?

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 37:03

I do not have numbers, so I'd have to get those numbers to you. But when we were dealing with 11 drivers down at one point, I mean, the amount of overtime was significant to the point, not just the dollars, but burnout.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 37:16

And it's not there, right? We're not facing that same amount of overtime with their drivers?

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 37:21

Not that I'm aware of.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 37:22

Okay, that's the main focus. So that's also good news as well.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 37:27

Just for full disclosure, there are some drivers that do pick up a fair amount of overtime. They can sign up based on seniority, or they make themselves available. So, there are some drivers who work a fair amount of overtime as well, but some of that by design or choice.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 37:39

Yeah, and that's perfectly fine by me. So, thank you.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 37:43

Any other questions or concerns from the committee? All right—oh Alder Stancil-Martin.

Adrian Stancil-Martin (District 11) 37:50

Alderson Wolff mentioned where we were a year ago. Can you just quickly fill me in on what employment was like a year ago, or what the status of Valley Transit was a year ago?

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 37:58

So, for several years we've had a difficult time trying to fill our vacancies, and part of that is it's a CDL with a passenger endorsement that's required for that job. So, Valley Transit had extended hours that would go until 11 o'clock at night, and then even longer hours on the weekend. So, for quite a long time, we met with the union, actually we met with the management between transit and HR and then, as well as with the union, to talk about what's the biggest issue. What we heard is it's the long hours. And so, what Valley Transit did is they made changes to their schedule so that the larger busses that Valley Transit operates, they operate at reduced hours, and then that is supplemented with what's called para-transit, which is run through a separate organization. Even though it's called Valley Transit II, it's a separate entity from the city of Appleton, and that's run like for a better—lack of a better way to put it, it's almost like an Uber service. So that's how it's supplemented. Does that help?

Adrian Stancil-Martin (District 11) 39:03

Yeah.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 39:04

Okay.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 39:05

Any other questions?

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 39:07

All right, we'll move on then to item number 25-0409, fire negotiations. Director Ratchman.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 39:13

So current contract runs through December 1 of this year. We are entering into negotiations starting on May 6. So, I will keep the committee updated. Any sort of success or contract would come to this committee for review and approval.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 39:27

Excellent. Thank you. Questions?

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 39:30

All right. Last item before item eight is 25-0410, the recruitment status report through April 17, 2025. Any highlights, Director Ratchman?

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 39:42

I think I hit the big one on Valley Transit. Any questions? I'm happy to answer them.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 39:47

Any other questions from anybody here? All right. Thank you very much.