



City of CHARLOTTE

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Lewis and City Council Members

FROM: Gregg Guetschow, City Manager

SUBJECT: Waiver of Anti-Nepotism Policy

DATE: February 8, 2019

Council members are aware that, since mid-March 2018, we have taken a number of steps to restructure the manner in which the City manages its finances. Those steps have included contracting for services and eliminating, at least temporarily, two full-time positions while we have been implementing new software solutions. As head of a newly combined department, a significant amount of additional work has been taken on by Clerk/Treasurer Ginger Terpstra. Some of this was anticipated which led to our planning for and undertaking the use of some part-time labor in the department. The conversion of payroll processing has not proceeded quite as smoothly as we had expected which has required the investment of additional time.

Two additional circumstances have led me to conclude that some additional assistance is required. First, Charlotte Public Schools has scheduled a special election for May on a proposal to issue bonds. This election will also be the first for which no-reason absentee voting will be available. Second, the time line for implementing finance software conversions has been accelerated to early March. While this is helpful from a budget preparation standpoint, the work associated with this implementation will fall during the time when the office will be gearing up for the May election.

After discussing these challenges with the City Clerk, I have concluded that some additional temporary assistance is required at least through the end of May. I have identified an individual whose hiring would address this need but to do so would violate the City's anti-nepotism policy as she is closely related to Ms. Terpstra.

Unlike other cities in which I have worked, Charlotte does not have anti-nepotism provisions in either its Charter or Code of Ordinances. The City's personnel policy includes language, however, that prohibits the hiring of an individual if the result would be that a relative of that individual would be his or her supervisor. This provision has not been enforced for limited, part-time assistance in the past. I am asking Council to consider waiving the restriction in this case.

I favor anti-nepotism provisions as a matter of principle in that they avoid an appearance of favoritism that can undermine the credibility of the work that we do. The reason for setting aside my principles at this time has much to do with the need to act quickly to resolve an issue and the availability of an individual who could start soon. Our recent past experience in hiring for permanent positions is not encouraging as the low unemployment rate reflects a very tight labor market. In addition, a conventional hiring process would impose an additional burden on the very office where I am seeking to ease burdens. Finally, the time required to complete our typical recruitment and hiring process does not lend itself to addressing this urgent need.

You will find elsewhere in the agenda packet a resolution authorizing the temporary waiver of the City's anti-nepotism policy.