

November 1, 2011

To: Budget Committee

From: Peter Harris, Central Staff

Re: Consolidating the Administrative Staffs of the Civil Service Commission and the Public Safety Civil Service Commission (Tab 145)

## **Introduction**

The 2012 Proposed Budget combines the staffs of the Civil Service Commission and the Public Safety Civil Service Commission to save \$51,000. This requires amending the Municipal Code per C.B. 117308, as described in the green sheet under this same tab. This memo summarizes the proposed change.

### **What are the roles of the two commissions?**

Here is the proposed budget's description of the Civil Service Commission (CSC):

“The Civil Service Commission serves as a quasi-judicial body providing fair and impartial hearings of alleged violations of the City’s personnel system. Employees may file appeals with the Commission regarding all final disciplinary actions and alleged violations of the Personnel Ordinance, as well as related rules and policies. The Commission may issue orders to remedy violations and may also make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council regarding the administration of the personnel system.

“In addition, the Commission investigates allegations of political patronage to ensure the City’s hiring practices are established and carried out in accordance with the merit principles set forth in the City Charter. The Commission conducts public hearings on personnel related issues and may propose changes to Personnel rules, policies, and laws to the Mayor and City Council.” (2012 Proposed Budget, page 545)

There are three Civil Service Commissioners, one selected by the Mayor, one by the Council and one by City employees other than firefighters and police officers. For more detail, see SMC 4.04.250.

Here is the description of the Public Safety Civil Service Commission (PSCSC):

“The mission and purpose of the Public Safety Civil Service Commission is to implement, administer, and direct a civil service system for sworn personnel of the Seattle Police Department and uniformed personnel of the Seattle Fire Department. The Commission provides sworn police and uniformed fire employees with a quasi-judicial process for hearings on appeals concerning disciplinary actions, examination and testing, and other related issues.” (2012 Proposed Budget, page 389)

There are three commissioners here as well, one appointed by the Mayor, one by the Council and one by firefighters and police officers. For more detail, see SMC 4.08.

### **What would the staff consolidation do?**

Currently the CSC has a 0.8 FTE Executive Director and a 1.0 FTE Administrative Staff Assistant, and the PSCSC has a 1.0 FTE Executive Director. Under the proposed budget, the commissions would jointly appoint a single 1.0 FTE Executive Director who would be supported by 1.6 FTE staff assistants. This would save \$51,019, due to the lower salaries of staff assistants than Executive Directors and the reduction of overall staffing by 0.2 FTE. (The proposed budget says it saves \$67,000, but this is an error that will be corrected in the errata.)

This is accomplished in two steps. First, the proposed budget combines the previously separate budgets for the two commissions, which include the cost of the administrative positions and commissioners' stipends. Second, C.B. 117308 amends the Municipal Code to consolidate the staffs.

The purpose of consolidating staff and combining these two budgets is solely to save money by increasing the efficiency of administrative support to the two commissions. This change does not alter the responsibility, authority, constitution, duties or scope of either commission. The fiscal note to C.B. 117308 describes the rationale in more detail.

### **Is there an issue?**

So far as I am aware, no one is arguing that 2.6 FTE could not accomplish the administrative work of the two commissions. The City Budget Office (CBO) has stated its willingness to reconsider the staffing level in future budgets should the commissions find it insufficient. The concerns recently expressed by CSC appear to be about communication among CBO, PSCSC and itself in the year over which the proposal was developed, and may reflect concerns about whether the two commissions can effectively share administrative support.

### **What are the alternatives?**

The only apparent alternative is to continue the status quo. This would require adding \$51,000 General Subfund and unwinding the combination of the two budgets. There would be no need to pass C.B. 117308.