

DATE: October 5, 2017

TO: Marina Horta-Gallegos, Human Resources Officer

FROM: Patty J. Howard, Human Resources Project Advisor

RE: Position Study – Building Permit Specialist, Community Development Department

## Background

As a part of the FY 2016/17 mid-year budget process, the City Council approved the reclassification of one (1) Building Permit Specialist position to the position of Community Development Administrative Supervisor, pending the completion of a classification study. The study was to determine whether the duties and responsibilities of the studied position are accurately reflected in the current job specification for Building Permit Specialist and if not, to recommend whether 1) the current specification should be updated, 2) the position should be reclassified to another current City classification, or 3) a new classification should be created to reflect the duties and responsibilities of the position.

The classification of Building Permit Specialist was established in February 1994 and has been updated a number of times since its inception. The main purpose of the classification is to process building permit applications, calculate fees, and issue permits; provide information to the public regarding applicable building codes, ordinances, and state and federal laws; and perform plan check review for minor plans.

The study incumbent has held the position of Building Permit Specialist for the eleven (11) years. When hired, she was assigned a majority of the job functions of the position. However, in discussions with the Community Development Director and Permit Center Manager/Chief Building Official, RGS found that the incumbent was assigned the administration of the City's building permit processing system in lieu of obtaining the required certification as a Plans Examiner by the International Code Council (ICC).

## Recommendations

- Adopt a new classification and job specification (draft specification attached) of Permit Center Coordinator.
- Set the salary for Permit Center Coordinator equal to the City's classification of Police Records Coordinator.
- Amend the City's allocation list to add one full-time equivalent allocation of Permit Center Coordinator.
- Reclassify one (1.0) FTE of Building Permit Specialist to Permit Center Coordinator.

## Methodology Used

The methodology employed in conducting this study was as follows:

- Reviewed and analyzed the Position Description Questionnaire, the current classification specification and other related specifications and documents.
- Conducted phone interviews with the incumbent's direct supervisor, Permit Center Manager/Chief Building Official, Joseph DeSante and Megan Hunter, Director of Community Development to confirm all submitted documentation, and to review all duties and responsibilities of the position.
- Conducted phone interview with study incumbent for clarification of information from the PDQ and to obtain additional, pertinent information regarding the duties and responsibilities of the position.
- Analyzed the scope and complexity of the responsibilities and tasks performed, and the skills, knowledge and abilities required,
- Developed Findings and Recommendations based on the analysis of the above information.
- Developed a draft proposed new job classification specification and salary recommendation for Permit Center Coordinator.

## Findings

It was found that the incumbent spends approximately thirty seven percent (37%) of her time in the oversight and supervision of the City's permit center. This includes directly supervising the permit center staff; creating permit center policies and procedures; resolving issues of disgruntled customers; and participating fully in intra- and inter-departmental management meetings.

The incumbent spends an additional thirty six percent (36%) of her time overseeing and handling the most complex issues encountered by the permit center. This includes managing the permit process for all subdivisions and large projects; reviewing all routing on plan reviews and timelines, approving all emergency permit requests and temporary certificates of occupancy; managing the record storage systems in accordance with applicable record retention guidelines; and ensuring the daily balance of the cash drawer including the approval or denial of all refund requests.

The incumbent also spends approximately fifteen percent (15%) of her time functioning as the City's permit processing system administrator. As the administrator of this system, she has the highest security level granted and assigns all user names and passwords. She is solely responsible for creating specialized reports, forms, letters, and other documents for all City departments that utilize the system. She is also responsible for ensuring City wide training of all City users. This includes creating training material, providing both one on one and group training sessions, and providing on-going support to end users as needed.

The remainder of the incumbent's time is spent providing various technical and administrative support services to the unit. The incumbent provides administrative assistance to the manager and department head, fills in for subordinate staff as needed, and manages the purchase of office equipment and supplies.

## Analysis

### The Current Job Classification

The class specification for Building Permit Specialist describes a classification that provides technical support in the areas of permit processing and plan checking. The definition for the classification states:

*Responsible for processing building permit applications, calculating fees, issuing permits and reviewing minor construction plans for Code compliance and completeness. Provide the public with information regarding building codes, applicable State and Federal laws and related ordinances.*

Similarly, the duties outlined for the Building Permit Specialist focus on the same technical functions found in the definition of this classification. The duties are listed as follows:

- *Assist in processing construction plans for commercial, industrial and residential projects.*
- *Calculate fees and issue permits for all construction work requiring a permit.*
- *Review plans to establishing valuation and computing plan check, permit and various other fees.*
- *Explain and interpret codes, ordinances, and procedures for contractors, architects, engineers, property owners, developers and the general public.*
- *Maintain various records related to permits and inspection.*
- *May perform plan check of minor construction work.*
- *May make occasional field inspections to obtain information relative to permit applications.*
- *Use computer and data processing equipment for storage and retrieval of pertinent records.*
- *Route plans to the Plan Check Review Section.*
- *Receive and schedule inspection requests via telephone and at the counter.*
- *Coordinate final inspection clearance from all departments and determine that all fees have been paid prior to permit issuance.*
- *Notify applicants when plan check corrections are needed or when permits are ready to be issued.*
- *Receive, log and process code violation and sub-standard housing complaints from the public.*
- *Promote and maintain safety in the work place.*
- *Supervise front counter staff.*

While the incumbent performs many of these duties, they are often performed in the absence of subordinate staff. However, this job specification does not reflect many of the other duties and responsibilities of the studied position. There is no mention in this definition or in the duty statements of the Building Permit Specialist of providing oversight for the functions of the permit center; handling the most complex issues of the permit center; acting as administrator for the permit center processing system; or providing highly responsible administrative support to the assigned manager. While supervision of staff is listed within the duty statements for the Building Permit Specialist, it is listed as the last specific duty. This normally denotes a duty of lesser importance to the overall function of the classification than the other duties listed, which is not the case for the studied position.

The studied position is performing duties outside of the current classification of Building Permit Specialist and the classification specification no longer reflects the scope of responsibilities assigned to the studied position. Simply updating the current job classification specification of Building Permit Specialist by adding duties such as providing oversight for the functions of the permit center; handling the most complex issues of the permit center; acting as administrator for the permit center processing system; or providing highly responsible administrative support to the assigned manager would fundamentally change the nature of the Building Permit Specialist classification for all incumbents and is not the most appropriate resolution.

### **Other Classifications Reviewed**

RGS reviewed the City's classification plan and the following classifications: Community Development Administrative Supervisor, Public Works Administrative Supervisor, and Police Records Coordinator. The results from the review is provided below.

In the mid-year budget process, the department requested the studied position be reclassified to Community Development Administrative Supervisor. An analysis of this classification was conducted as well as an analysis of the classification of Public Works Administrative Supervisor to assess any similarities in assigned duties, responsibilities, requirements, and classification titling.

#### *Community Development Administrative Supervisor*

This classification was originally created to provide administrative support to the Housing Division of the Community Development Department. In 2014, the incumbent was promoted to the position of Planning Manager and the Community Development Administrative Supervisor position was left vacant.

While assigned to the Housing Division of the Department, this classification was responsible for preparing and monitoring department, division, CDBG, HOME and other HUD grant budgets; preparing and writing draft contracts, agreements, grants, ordinances and other documents; managing assigned departmental grants, contracts, programs, projects and activities in accordance with applicable policies, processes, rules and regulations; overseeing, monitoring, and evaluating programs and activities funded with division resources; preparing progress reports and performing periodic reviews on assigned projects, as needed; conducting surveys and prepare proposals to meet established goals and objectives, including financial, staffing and organizational requirements; reviewing proposed legislation or regulatory changes and preparing recommendations; and providing official supervision of assigned staff. The minimum qualifications for this classification includes the equivalent of a Bachelor's Degree and four (4) years of relevant experience.

The department level contract and grant administration responsibilities and program oversight for oversight and analysis of multiple grant and department programs are of a significantly broader scope than the section or division level oversight of the Permit Center and the administrative support duties performed by the studied position. The administrative assistance to the manager and department head, filling in for subordinate staff as needed, and managing the purchase of office equipment and supplies are less complex than the Community Development Administrative Supervisor classification's duties of

overseeing, monitoring, and evaluating division programs and activities; conducting surveys and prepare proposals to meet established goals and objectives, including financial, staffing and organizational requirements; and reviewing proposed legislation or regulatory changes and preparing recommendations. Therefore, RGS finds that this classification is not the most appropriate match to the studied position.

#### Public Works Administrative Supervisor

The Public Works department has two (2) Public Works Administrative Supervisor positions. One position reports to the Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer and provides administrative support to multiple engineering programs including Water Waste and Engineering, Transportation Engineering, and Engineering and Development. The second position reports to the Superintendent of Maintenance Services and provides administrative support to multiple maintenance programs including Parks and Forestry, Street Maintenance, Fleet, and Facilities.

These positions are responsible for day to day oversight of the administrative operations of the assigned division; assisting in the preparation, development and administration of the annual operating budgets for their respective programs; preparing and writing draft contracts, agreements, grants, and other technical documents; managing assigned departmental proposals, grants, contracts, programs, projects and/or activities in accordance with applicable policies, processes, rules and regulations; and providing official supervision of assigned staff. The minimum qualifications for this classification includes the equivalent of a Bachelor's Degree and four (4) years of relevant experience.

The analysis shows the above classifications have a broader span of responsibility than the studied position. The above classifications have responsibility for overseeing the administrative functions of a complete division or for multiple programs within their assigned divisions. These classifications also have extensive responsibility for preparing and monitoring the budgets, agreements, and grants for their multiple assigned programs. Conversely, the study position provides administrative support for one single section/program – the permit center. According to the PDQ and interviews with the incumbent, this position is not assigned the responsibility of preparing or monitoring agreements, grants, or contracts. Additionally, the study position has only a peripherally role in the budget process for the permit center. Therefore, RGS finds that this classification is not the most appropriate match to the studied position.

#### Police Records Coordinator

This position reports to the Police Services Manager and is responsible for overseeing the comprehensive records section of the City's Police Department including the full supervision of assigned staff. In addition, responsibilities of this classification include: Ensuring the proper indexing, filing, and managing of arrest and fingerprint records, warrants, police reports, and related documents in accordance with departmental standards and legal requirements; responding to inquiries from outside law enforcement and related agency representatives as appropriate; working with other governmental agencies in the implementation of new, modified, or automated systems and procedures; authorizing the purchase of office supplies and equipment; planning and coordinating the implementation of new

informational or data systems; developing, preparing and writing special studies and reports for the records section; overseeing the section's revenue intake and processing from the issuance of police reports, permits, and related financial transactions. While the minimum qualifications include the completion of college coursework, no formal degree and/or certificate is required.

While the study position is not assigned these specific duties, the duties assigned are similar in scope and responsibility. The Police Records Coordinator oversees a single section/program (the Records Section) within the Police Department; the study incumbent oversees a single section/program within the Community Development Department (the Permit Center). Both classifications are responsible for the appropriate processing and maintenance of critical records, permits, and other documents for the assigned section/program; both manage the automated systems utilized within their respective section/program; both are required to interact with representatives of outside agencies; both are responsible for the official supervision of assigned staff; and both provide highly responsible administrative support to their assigned manager and section/program.

#### **Determination of Appropriate Classification**

Because of the cited similarities, RGS reviewed the class specification for the Police Records Coordinator to determine whether it could be modified so that one broader classification could be utilized to reflect the functions of the positions in the Police and Community Development Departments. A broad classification (one used to describe multiple positions) may be appropriate when the duties, knowledges, skills, and qualifications of the positions are similar enough to 1) recruit qualified candidates; 2) evaluate work performance; and 3) establishing training goals through the use of a single classification. The use of broad classifications is often used for entry level positions (Office Assistant, Administrative Clerk) that do not require specific knowledge and skills related to the department to which they're assigned.

Neither the Police Records Coordinator or the studied positions are entry level positions. Each requires the incumbents to possess in-depth knowledge of their respective areas of responsibilities. For example, the Police Records Coordinator is required to have knowledge of the criminal justice system; the management of facilities that operate on a 24-hour daily staffing schedule; and the legal requirements related to the Custodian of Records. The studied position requires the incumbent to have extensive knowledge of the building permit application process; related building codes, ordinances, and laws; and the requirements for approving emergency inspection requests.

Currently, the minimum qualification for Police Records Coordinator includes four (4) years of experience in a law enforcement agency. This requirement has been established to assist the City in recruiting and retaining qualified individuals. However, this same requirement would not ensure the recruitment and retention of qualified individuals for the studied position in the Community Development Department. Therefore, RGS recommends a new classification of Permit Center Coordinator be created to reflect the functions of the position in the Community Development Department.

### **Proposed Salary for New Classification**

As a part of this study, RGS has recommended the creation of one new classification of Permit Center Coordinator. When recommending a new classification, it is customary to provide a corresponding salary recommendation. RGS typically recommends salary placement for a new classification based on match classifications in comparator entities. However, it is a compensation best practice to set salary at the Journey level. As the Permit Center Coordinator is not a Journey level classification, but a supervisory one, it is more appropriate to set the salary based on internal equity.

In order to determine what is internally equitable among classifications, RGS conducted an analysis based on factors similar to those used to determine the appropriate classification designation. Those factors include knowledge required, scope and level of responsibility, span of control, and reporting relationship within its assigned department. RGS reviewed various City classifications including Marketing & Development Coordinator, Technical Services Coordinator, and Police Records Coordinator.

RGS found that the Police Records Coordinator was most similar to that of the recommended Permit Center Coordinator. Assignments in both classifications require knowledge and skill obtained through multiple years of experience; both oversee a single program within their respective department; both provide full supervision of assigned staff; both are required to interact with representatives of outside agencies; and both report directly to a department manager.

Based on this analysis, RGS recommends aligning the top monthly salary for Permit Center Coordinator to that of Police Records Coordinator at \$7,219 top monthly rate for both current and ongoing salary administration. This will result in a 41.5% differential between the Permit Center Coordinator and the Permit Center Clerk and a 33.3% differential between the Permit Center Coordinator and the Permit Center Manager/Chief Building Official, both of which are consistent with the pay differentials of similarly situated classifications within the City's compensation plan.

### **Conclusion**

The current job classification of Building Permit Specialist no longer reflects the responsibilities assigned to the studied position and to simply add them to the current job classification would change the nature of the classification for all other incumbents. Additionally, a review of the City's classification plan revealed that no current classification reflects the current functions of the studied position nor can any current classification be modified to reflect these functions without jeopardizing the City's recruitment and retention efforts. Therefore, the reclassification of the studied position to the newly created classification of Permit Center Coordinator and the establishment of the corresponding salary is warranted to reflect the functions of this position is warranted.

### **Recommendation**

- Adopt a new classification and job specification (draft specification attached) of Permit Center Coordinator.

## Building Permit Specialist

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