

**City of Buffalo Living Wage Commission Quarterly Meeting Minutes**  
**May 14, 2019, 8:30am**

Commissioners Present: Erin Hatton, Bob Mahoney, Kelly Dodd, Penny Selmonsky, Bernadette Giles

Others Present: Sam Magavern, Anna Serwta, Anna Blatto, Rosemary Taber

1. Website Updates

- Left message to City Hall for getting City's website to live-link to new [LWC website](#)
  - Anna B. will reach out again
- Similar to old website: has all official policies as well as the law itself, history, documents for employees, grievance relief/confidentiality, employers, quarterly report form, hearing documentation, good sources of information, etc.
  - Meeting minutes will continue to be uploaded
- May look into password protected pages for the future for internal commission content
- Also, may add "who we are" pages to describe who is on the commission

2. Raising the Rate

- Meetings with elected officials went well
- Sam had a late meeting with Joel Feroletto, who seemed enthusiastic. He was willing to introduce it, so Sam followed-up.
  - Plan to introduce it at the next Council meeting with Rivera (May 28)
  - Will find out progress regarding support throughout the Common Council in the next few days
- Timeline may be for July 1, 2020; we're at \$15.38 this year, and it'll go up a few percentage points next year
  - May be tricky to do this year because the budget's already been passed
- Kelly: notes #5 provision about employees making less than \$12 an hour and wonders where/how this would apply
  - Penny suggests covered employers must notify all their employees of the information in #5
  - Going forward, we can pay closer attention to the #5 provision
- Bernadette and Erin inquire about a standard notice and seeing if there's a template or template sign
  - Sam: we can research that and put something on the website and send it to all employees. We can also investigate state vs. federal (EIC/ETIC) and forms and send these to Councilmembers Feroletto and Rivera

3. Employer Update

- Anna B got emails and contacts from everyone on LWC
- Still missing one report due January 2018 (Back 2 Basics) and have received a decent amount for last quarter (due April 2018) so far; still reaching out to those we haven't received
- The Molly World called two weeks ago asking about an exemption for summer (apparently are using Mayor's Summer Youth, who may qualify)
  - Sam says the Mayor's summer program would qualify
- Bob expresses concern – would they be using the Mayor's summer youth programs instead of, or in addition to, hiring employees?
  - Erin wonders who's ultimately paying them

- Sam informs the group the mayor's summer youth program is just a job program. They do a little extra work for them, but many are just for private companies that make arrangement
    - Erin: it seems weird that a corporation would hire people through this program without promise of future employment
    - Bernadette would like more information about where the summer youth are being placed, how the placement works, etc.
  - Erin brings up the possibility of using exempted youth instead of living wage workers, but if the exemption is changed, kids still need jobs so we wouldn't want to experience the perverse effects
    - Anna S or Anna B will write a memo on the mayor's summer youth program and send a report to the group
  - Sam notes there are exempt seasonal employees at Olmsted Parks and at the Zoo
4. County Living Wage Updates
- The Community Justice Clinic at UB Law (run by Nicole Hallett) is working with PPG to explore different worker rights and legislative possibilities, particularly for Erie County, focusing on paid sick leave, fair scheduling, and living wage
    - Examining drafted legislation and different areas which have done similar thing
    - For paid sick leave, there may be a commission and suggestions made
    - For living wage, the county hasn't gotten lucky but our partners in organized labor are interested
  - Law Clinic did a series of meetings with labor leaders; Sam met on May 13 with the Center for Economic Justice's Poor People's Campaign Committee who are interested in taking this up as an issue and being a community organizing lead around it
  - If we move forward with it, it would be modeled after the City's law so the two could be as compatible as possible
  - Would be for County employees and those who contract with the County
    - No exemption for seasonal employees unless they're employed by a nonprofit
  - Erin: would work fare be counted?
    - Penny: they're working for their pre-existence grant
    - Sam: in other cities and counties, I've never heard of a living wage law applying to work fare
    - Erin: I remember them being exempted specifically in the law
    - Sam: the city law doesn't have it because the city doesn't run a workfare program
  - Pushback with some people on the Poverty Commission was the city contracts with a lot of non-profits
    - Kelly notes the challenge that nonprofits must get funding to pay their workers and their funding hasn't risen at all
    - Erin notes in the City law, there's a non-profit exemption, but the concern is in a potential County law
    - Sam notes some living wage laws exclude all nonprofits and some have phased in nonprofits over a few years to give them time to adjust

5. Anything else?

- Kelly brings up Mayor's Summer Youth again, mentioning Councilmember Fontana asking how those affected under 21 or under 18 would benefit since they don't have families
- Bernadette: let's not forget, qualifications included in our income guidelines include many struggling families; just because they're children doesn't mean they haven't been given the responsibility of some adults
- Sam states that Councilmembers Fontana and Scanlon were responding not to summer youth but the idea of raising the living wage in general
  - However, general response is City's living wage law doesn't apply to many youth anyways, because jobs like recycling collecting, EMTs, and even parking lot security tend to be filled by people who are over 21, so there won't be a negative impact on youth seeking employment

**Next meeting (date changed): Monday, August 26; 8:30am**