

TO: Personnel Board
FROM: Michael Lipski, Human Resources
DATE: May 14, 2010
SUBJECT: Theater Technicians-Overture Center

The Overture Center has requested a study of the Theater Technician (TT) classification. The City's classification plan lists a Theater Technician 1 in CG16, Range 13, and a Theater Technician 2 in CG16, Range 15. The Theater Technician 1 class specification was last updated in 1997 and actually lists placement of the classification in Range 11 (This was changed to Range 13 in 2003 as part of the collective bargaining process but the class specification was not updated at that time). The Theater Technician 2 class specification was last updated in 2003, both before the Overture Center opened. In reviewing the existing class specifications for the TT1 and TT2 levels, it is difficult to distinguish differences in the two classifications. In addition, the work of the theater technicians has undergone changes as a result of the more modern Overture Center. During the study, I met with Steve Schroeder, the Overture Center Technical Director and supervisor of the Theater Technicians, as well as each of the 4 theater technicians.

Based on my interviews and discussion of the needs of the Overture Center, I recommend creating a new series of Theater Technician 1-3 at the Overture Center (see attached class specification). It is intended that the TT1 will be an entry-level position in CG16 Range 12 with employees expected to move to the TT2 objective level (16-14) after approximately 2 years at the TT1 level and gaining additional skills. The TT3 level (16-15) will be reserved for high-level technical work in areas such as sound, lighting, or rigging. The creation of TT3 positions will be dependent on the needs of the Overture Center and there may be times where a TT3 position is not needed or filled. It is not anticipated that the TT2 will advance to the TT3 level on a routine basis.

The Overture Center opened in 2004. Prior to this, the City's theater was the Civic Center, a theater that was approximately 80+ years old. The systems in the Civic Center had not been updated in a number of years, especially as the Overture Center was anticipated and being built. When at the Civic Center, the Theater Tech's primary responsibility was to oversee stagehands and coordinate the equipment of traveling shows with Civic Center systems. Approximately 80-85% of the Theater Tech's time was spent on this work. The remainder of the time was spent on maintaining systems and equipment and troubleshooting problems.

When the Overture Center opened, all the systems and equipment were modern. Because of this, responsibility for overseeing stagehands and coordinating equipment of traveling shows, while still a primary responsibility, decreased (approximately 55% of the time) and responsibility for maintaining systems and equipment increased (approximately 45% of the time). In addition, with the updated systems at the Overture Center, it became quickly apparent that the TTs would need to specialize in different areas in order to provide the service needed to keep the new systems current and to meet the needs of the new facility.

There are 4 TTs at the Overture Center. One has primary responsibility for the sound systems, one has primary responsibility for the lighting systems, one has primary responsibility for carpentry needs, and one has primary responsibility for welding and rigging needs as well as primary responsibility for processing the payroll of stagehands. These areas of responsibility are critical to the functioning of the Overture Center.

In addition to the modern systems at the Overture Center, in 2007, stagehands became employees of the City of Madison and a collective-bargaining agreement has been signed regarding their terms and conditions of employment. Whereas in the past, if there was a problem with a stagehand, the Overture Center could just request that the stagehand no longer be referred, now the Overture Center must establish just cause when handling stagehand performance issues. This has increased the complexity of the lead work role that the TTs play relative to the stagehands. The stagehands are like other hourly union employees in other City departments/divisions.

After reviewing the changed duties and responsibilities of the Theater Technicians, I conclude that at the objective TT2 level, the position is equivalent to other positions in Compensation Group 16, Range 14. Notably, positions in the Parks Division such as the Cemetery Operations Leadworker, Parks Construction Leadworker, and Parks Operations Leadworker are responsible for serving as leadworkers over large numbers of lower-level employees, including a large group of hourly employees during the summer months. Duties include (from the Parks Operations Leadworker):

Oversee and participate in the activities of several crews of permanent and/or seasonal/hourly employees engaged in such functions as: grounds maintenance of parks, boulevards and greenways; maintenance of neighborhood ice rinks, shelters, athletic fields and recreational equipment; winter maintenance of sidewalks and drives adjacent to park land; servicing of special events; and performance of preventive maintenance and cleaning of Parks Division fleet equipment.

Prepare daily work plans, communicate assignments to crew members, make daily reports to supervisor and revise plan and assignments as necessary throughout the day.

Enforce departmental and City-wide rules and regulations; report and record employee attendance and adherence to rules and regulations; and follow-up on inappropriate behavior through training or verbal explanation. Monitor the work of crews and employees and report performance problems to supervisor for action. Review time cards for errors or deficiencies.

Evaluate employees on a regular basis and provide feedback to both employees and the supervisor. Provide input concerning the completion of probationary/trial periods and the retention and/or re-employment of seasonal/hourly employees.

This compares favorably with the Theater Technician (TT2) responsibility to

Coordinate and/or perform the set up/tear down of all Overture Center-owned theatrical staging, audio/visual, closed circuit, theatrical sound and lighting, and electrical equipment to be used for events at the Overture Center, including working at heights from aerial trucks, lifts, and ladders. Oversee the integration of rented or client-supplied theatrical sets and equipment with existing systems to provide the best overall product for the client.

Coordinate and oversee the activities of assigned stagehands. Ensure that all safety regulations and work rules are followed. Provide training, consultation, and direction to stage staff. Review

work of stagehands for conformance with qualitative standards and provide feedback to both employees and the supervisor. Advise supervisor on staff performance and other issues.

Complete daily work orders, time sheets, and billing information, including the inclusion of work performed by other staff. Participate in the development of appropriate recordkeeping and billing systems, procedures and rates. Maintain records and prepare necessary reports.

Process payroll for stagehand union employees and integrate Overture Center stagehand payroll program with the City of Madison payroll program. Verify payroll for accuracy and compliance with labor agreements.

In addition, the Monona Terrace AV Technician is in range 14 and has similar responsibilities. The Monona Terrace AV Technician oversees stagehand employees at Monona Terrace who assist with room set-up and audio and lighting for large events at the convention center. While the Monona Terrace AV Technicians have a higher degree of computer networking responsibility, this is offset by the TTs specialization in their specific areas of responsibility, such as lighting systems, sound systems, welding, carpentry, and rigging systems. In addition, the TTs deal with larger groups of stagehands on a more frequent basis than the Monona Terrace AV Techs. Finally, both positions require a similar level of education and training.

When looking at other positions in range 13, where the Theater Technicians currently are placed, it is apparent that the objective level of the new Theater Technician series is expected to work at a higher level than other positions in range 13. Specifically, the recently updated class specification for a Maintenance Mechanic 1 (MM1) includes a number of duties and responsibilities that are similar in nature to the Theater Technician. However, the TT is expected to perform work at a higher level than the MM 1. For example, the MM1 is expected to perform welding, torch work, and carpentry. However, this work is in connection with maintaining HVAC systems and installing windows or shelves. The welding work of the TT includes fabricating from scratch different units for storing cables and lighting fixtures. Similarly, the carpentry work is finished carpentry, including building podiums and portable bars that match the internal décor of the Overture Center. The MM1 also has responsibility to “assist in developing short and long-term goals for the maintenance section which includes projecting equipment replacement/repair before operational problems develop.” The TTs have similar responsibility except that they do not assist but rather are responsible for maintenance of the theater systems and equipment. The MM1 also assists in keeping inventory and recommends purchases of parts, equipment and other items. Again, the TT is responsible for purchasing parts and equipment. Based on these examples, it is apparent that the TT has more responsibility than this range 13 position. Similarly, other positions in range 13 may require a similar degree of technical knowledge, such as the Maintenance Painter, Sign Painter, and Parks Equipment Mechanic 1, those positions aren’t also asked to be leadworkers over a large group of employees.

Based on the above, it is appropriate to place the TT2 position in range 14. The TT1 is being placed 2 ranges lower than the TT2 for training purposes. This is similar to other classifications that have a 2 range separation from the entry level to the objective level, such as the Assessment Technician 1 (16-08) and 2 (16-10), the Engineering Aide 1 (16-11) and 2 (16-13), and professional classifications such as Accountant 1, HR Analyst1, Planner 1 (all at 18-06) and the 2 levels (at 18-08).

The Overture Center recommends, and I agree, that a TT3 classification be created to reflect work being done at a higher, more specialized level. It is not expected that all TTs would be able to move to the higher TT3 level; rather it would be reserved for employees doing highly specialized work and the needs of the department to have that work done internally. For instance, the Overture Center may require someone to perform specialized work on the internal sound systems and this work is expected to be at a higher level than the TT2 would be expected to perform. It is possible that the work could be subcontracted but if the Overture Center could save money by filling a permanent position, it would be worthwhile to create a TT3 position to be filled. I recommend placement of the TT3 level at range 15, one range higher than the TT2. This is comparable to the Maintenance Mechanic 2, which is independently expected to perform high level maintenance work on HVAC and other specialized systems.

As mentioned above, the Overture Center currently has 4 Theater Technicians. All of the TTs have been there since approximately 2005 and meet the minimum requirements of the TT2 level. Therefore, I recommend placement of three of the Theater Technicians, D. Pickell (#3410), J. Frautschy (#3931), and F. Schneeberger (#3666) at the Theater Technician 2 level. However, I recommend placement of B. Anderson (#4017) at the Theater Technician 3 level. Mr. Anderson is in charge of the sound systems at the Overture Center and all the sound systems are computerized. In recent years, Mr. Anderson has completely reconfigured the sound systems in the Capital Playhouse and designed a sound system to work in the Overture Center lobby. It is estimated that if the lobby sound system work were subcontracted, it would have cost the Overture Center \$30,000 more than having Mr. Anderson do the work. This specialized sound work requires Mr. Anderson to do programming in C++ to upgrade the systems. He has a specialized background in sound systems, having designed systems for external clients such as the Kohl Center, Oakland Coliseum, and Lambeau Field prior to working at the Overture Center. The Overture Center has continued to use this specialized knowledge and expertise in having Mr. Anderson continually upgrade the sound systems in the various theaters. This is the type of work contemplated by the higher Theater Technician 3 classification and I therefore recommend Mr. Anderson be placed at this level.

We have prepared the necessary Resolutions to implement these recommendations.

Attachments

Compensation Group/Range	2009 Annual Minimum (Step 1)*	2009 Annual Maximum (Step 5)	2009 Annual Maximum +12% longevity
16/12	43,817	48,609	54,444
16/14	46,213	52,019	58,266
16/15	47,347	53,571	60,008

*The 2009 salaries are listed. The salary schedule for 2010 is not approved but salaries will be adjusted to reflect any change at that time.

cc: Tom Carto-Overture Center Director
 Steve Schroeder-Technical Director
 Mike Deiters-Labor Relations Manager
 Employees (D. Pickell, J. Frautschy, B. Anderson, F. Schneeberger)