

TO: Common Council

FROM: Brad Wirtz  
Human Resources Director

DATE: February 8, 2011

SUBJECT: Finance Department

Dean Brasser, the City's Comptroller, is retiring in June, 2011. When he announced his retirement, Dean indicated to me a concern about the current classification title and the connotation it has in the financial field. Specifically, Dean indicated that traditionally, a Comptroller is responsible for an Accounting function. This is a narrow focus, compared to the overall activities of the City's Comptroller Office. The City's Comptroller Office has responsibility not just for accounting, but for fiscal management, budgeting, internal audit, risk management, financial services (e.g., managing the assets and liabilities of various City funds, providing financial advisory service to enterprise operations, etc.), purchasing, payroll, financial analysis of economic development proposals, and debt management. Dean said that in the industry, a position such as his would be more appropriately titled "Finance Director." Dean suggested that otherwise qualified candidates would pass over a job announcement with the Comptroller title thinking the position had a different focus than the actual job.

Upon receiving this information, Human Resources staff researched different cities and their organization. This research confirmed that in most cases, cities similar in size to Madison have a Finance Department with a Finance Director leading the department.<sup>1</sup> These Finance Departments generally included a similar range of functions and responsibilities as those found in the City's Comptroller Office. Because of Dean's concerns and the research, I recommended retitling the City Comptroller classification to Finance Director and recommended renaming the Comptroller's Office to the Finance Department. These titles more accurately reflect the role of the position and the department within the City's overall structure. The title change to Finance Director does not affect the compensation group or range of the position; it remains in CG21, Range 23. I raised the issues with the Mayor's Office and received approval to make the changes. Based on this, the ordinances are being revised to reflect the new classification and department name. As the position is not a civil service position, these changes only need to be approved via Common Council action in order to go into effect.

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<sup>1</sup> Cities with this organizational structure include Davenport, IA; Cincinnati; Des Moines; Little Rock; St. Paul; Lincoln, NE; and Omaha.