



**Department of Employee Relations**

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TO: City Service Commission

FROM: Laura Sutherland, Human Resources Representative

DATE: November 30, 2007

RE: Milwaukee Waters Works – Water Systems Operator In Charge Positions

This report was previously submitted to your Commission for action at the regular meeting of the City Service Commission of February 7, 2007. It was held at the request of District Council 48, AFSCME, AFL-CIO. Since that time, meetings have been held with representatives of AFSCME regarding a number of items associated with the implementation of these recommendations.

The Milwaukee Water Works and Department of Employee Relations now wish to move forward with this report. It is anticipated that additional meetings will be held with AFSCME to bargain the impact of these recommendations after these positions have been classified and acted upon by the Common Council.

LS:fcw

**JOB EVALUATION REPORT**

City Service Commission Meeting Date: December 4, 2007

Department: Milwaukee Water Works

Incumbents: Jerome Burr, Ricardo Delgado, Anthony Jackson, Robert Mielcarek, Brian Niemann, Lester Schram

Present	Request
Title: Water System Operator in Charge	Title: Water System Operator
Salary: Pay Range 282 (\$44,442- \$50,985)	Pay Range: Not stated
Step: Various	Source: Department
<b>Recommendation:</b>	
Title: Water System Operator	
Pay Range: 288 (\$45,878 - \$54,405)	
<b>Rationale:</b>	
In May of 2006, the Water Works added new field duties to these positions and instituted a new provision requiring current employees to obtain a DNR Water Distribution License. These changes have impacted the level of knowledge and skill required to perform the job. Two of the incumbents who do not yet have the DNR Distribution Operator license would be frozen at their current rates of pay, except for across-the-board pay increases that may be negotiated in collective negotiations, until such time they attain the DNR Distribution Operator license. (The remaining incumbents have attained the DNR Distribution Operator license.)	

**Action Required**

In the Salary Ordinance, under Pay Range 282, delete the title "Water System Operator in Charge 2/" and delete footnote "2/" in its entirety.

Create new Pay Range 288 with the following biweekly rates of pay:

Pay Range 288

Official Rate-Biweekly

1,764.55      1,824.16      1,884.92      1,960.98      2,031.54      2,092.49

Water System Operator 1/

"1/ Jerome Burr shall be frozen at the biweekly pay rate of \$2,031.54 and Robert Mielcarek shall be frozen at the biweekly pay rate of \$1,960.98, except for across-the-board pay increases that may be negotiated in collective negotiations, until such time they obtain the DNR Distribution Operator license. Such employees shall advance to the next higher pay step in Pay Range 288 at least \$10.00 higher than their current rate, the next pay period following their attainment of their DNR Distribution Operator License."

In the Positions Ordinance, under Department of Public Works – Water Works, Plants – South Organization, Howard Control Center, delete six positions of "Water System Operator in Charge" and add six positions of "Water System Operator".

## **Background**

In December of 2005, the Superintendent of the Milwaukee Water Works, Carrie Lewis, submitted a request for a study of the Water System Operator in Charge job classification in her department. The reasons stated for this request were an increase in the knowledge, skills, and abilities and "new duties and responsibilities in the field." In studying this request, initial discussions were held with Laura Daniels, Administration and Projects Manager for the Water Works, and Ms. Lewis. The department provided written documentation regarding the positions in the form of an updated job description and a completed Job Analysis Questionnaire completed by Ms. Lewis.

Job audit interviews were held individually with Jerome Burr and Lester Schram, two of the Water System Operators in Charge, at the Howard Avenue water treatment plant. Discussions included an examination of the electronic monitoring system, examination of logs and work products, and observations of work in progress. Following these discussions, the staff member studying these positions met with John Gavre, Water Plant Manager-South employees' immediate supervisor.

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

Six employees currently work as Water System Operators in Charge at the Howard Avenue water treatment facility. Water System Operators in Charge work rotating shifts in order to cover the system on a 24/7 basis. When on duty, the Water System Operator in charge is the sole person responsible for monitoring water flow and pressure for the entire water system and suburbs.

During an assigned shift, the Water System Operator in Charge must ensure that an adequate supply of potable water is available at the proper pressure throughout Milwaukee's entire water system and suburbs serviced by the Milwaukee Water Works. In order to accomplish this, an Operator in Charge must constantly monitor water flow and pressure at 16 remote locations via an electronic system with the acronym of SCADA. The Water Operator in Charge must not only anticipate and predict water demand throughout a shift but also respond to changes in water pressure and flow, both anticipated and unanticipated. An electrical storm, for example, can cause a water pump fail at a station, thus decreasing water flow in the system. Water main breaks can also have a similar effect. In addition, the position under study must monitor and respond to all security alarms for Water Works facilities.

In order to successfully perform this job, the employee must have up-to-the-minute knowledge of the status of pumps, the amount and location of water in storage, electrical configurations at facilities, the availability of backup power, and other factors. When adverse situations occur, the Water System Operator in charge must act quickly and decisively, increasing or decreasing flow and pressure where warranted, calling in supervisors and personnel for equipment repairs, and communicating with water plant operators, other utilities, businesses, City departments, and others.

Although most of the work performed by Water Systems Operators in Charge could be considered routine in nature, the consequence of error resulting from an inadequate or incorrect response on the part of the employee could be severe. In a worst case scenario, insufficient water pressure in the distribution system could cause backflow and contaminate the City's water supply; damage Water Works' equipment and facilities as well as roadways and buildings; loss of water supply for hospitals, industries, businesses; and the public; or compromised fire protection.

## **Changes in Duties and Responsibilities**

Beginning in May of 2006, the Water Works' added the following new duties, all of which are performed in the field:

- Performing inspections of equipment, machinery, instruments and security at each facility
- Reporting problems with computerized maintenance management program TMA
- Operating equipment at booster stations during emergencies
- Directing or coordinating work groups to repair elements of the system

This change is significant because up to this point in time, all work performed by Water System Operators in charge has been in an office setting.

In addition, the level of responsibility associated with these jobs has increased because of new security systems, more complex electronic monitoring systems, a requirement that Water System Operators in Charge factor energy consumption into their decisions regarding the use of pumps. Finally, the Water Works now requires all of these employees, except two employees grandfathered as the result of discussions with union representatives, to have and maintain a Water Distribution License from the State's Department of Natural Resources.

### Analysis

Although many of the duties and responsibilities associated with this job classification appear to have remained the same, the job analysis indicates that the complexity of the work performed and knowledge required to perform the work and decision-making skills required have increased due to more complex instrumentation and elevated job performance expectations. New certification requirements for employees have been implemented and new field duties have been added to the job.

Water System Operators in Charge who were interviewed indicated that their job classification should be allocated to the same pay range as that of Senior Water Plant Operator in Charge in Pay Range 291. The maximum rate of pay for that job classification is \$58,862 versus a maximum of \$50,985 for Water System Operator in Charge.

A Senior Water Treatment Operator is responsible for all water treatment and production and required records at one of the City's two water treatment facilities during a work shift. This "in charge" Operator typically leads 2 to 10 employees at any given time, including other Water Treatment Plant Operators and Water Chemists, and must analyze data on water quality and plant processes to decide when chemical and filter feed changes are required and respond to any unanticipated events, such equipment failures. The Senior Water Treatment Plant Operator is also responsible for maintaining operating records during a shift, training employees, and promoting a safe work environment.

Considering the level of responsibility exercised by the Senior Water Treatment Operator in Charge and Water System Operator in Charge, the job analysis indicates that the overall level of responsibility exercised by the Senior Water Treatment Operator exceeds that of the Water System Operator in Charge. This is indicated by the Water Treatment Operator's responsibilities as a team leader and the impact an error in judgment would have upon water quality.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

Although the increased complexity of work performed by Water Operators in Charge indicates that an upgrade is appropriate, it does not appear that the level of responsibility exercised by this job classification has risen to the level associated with that of Senior Water Treatment Plant Operator.

It is therefore recommended that the job classification of Water System Operator in Charge be reclassified to Water System Operator, the title requested by the department, in new Pay Range 288 with the following biweekly rates of pay:

#### Pay Range 288

Biweekly	\$1,764.55	\$1,824.16	\$1,884.92	\$1,960.98	\$2,031.54	\$2,092.49
Annual	\$45,878	\$47,428	\$49,008	\$50,985	\$52,820	\$54,405

December 4, 2007

This new Pay Range was created by eliminating the first pay step of the current pay range and adding one additional pay step at the top of the range. As a result, newly hired/promoted Water System Operators will start out at a rate higher than Senior Water Treatment Plant Operators. This seems equitable considering the changes that have taken place in these jobs, and the fact that Water System Operators In Charge are required to work entirely alone from their sixth day on the job. In contrast, Senior Water Treatment Plant Operators are not expected to work alone until after a significant period of time on the job.

Prepared by:



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Laura E. Sutherland, Human Resources Representative

Reviewed by:



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