

**Evanston City Council
Closed Session Minutes
Aldermanic Library
Saturday, May 6, 2006**

PRESENT: Aldermen Rainey, Wollin, Jean-Baptiste, Wynne, Bernstein,
Holmes, Moran, and Tisdahl

ABSENT: Alderman Hansen

STAFF: Julia Carroll

PRESIDING: Mayor Lorraine H. Morton

START: 9:10 a.m.

The Closed Session was held for the purpose of conducting an evaluation of the City Manager, Personnel --exception to the open meetings act -- 5 ILCS 120/1 (c)(1). Mayor Morton stated all information presented was confidential. All documents including minutes of this meeting would be kept in the Mayor's office.

Alderman Rainey praised Aldermen Holmes and Wollin for doing an excellent job of putting together the evaluation form and saving the City money.

Mayor Morton tabulated the points to give an overview. There was no average above 4.2. There were 28 responses in 3 to 3.9 (meets expectations) and 10 responses between 4 and 4.2. Roughly 1/3 were in the "exceeds expectations" and 2/3 responses were in the "meets expectations." There were 88 zeroes. (They could not answer all the questions.)

Alderman Wollin noted that most mentioned strategic planning was valuable, the process was good and it gave them direction on where they want to go; suggested without Julia's leadership and initiative the plan would not have happened.

Alderman Moran said responses from various departments are uneven. Some he can call, tell them he has a problem and they respond in a timely way. Others never respond even after being asked three or four times. He has little time to repeatedly call. He asked if an employee does not get back to him, who do they get back to. Alderman Holmes noted when she sends a request in she copies the manager and assistant manager. Alderman Moran said that Ms. Carroll always calls him back He thought the administration of the last manager was lax and departments did whatever they wanted. Seven years of that has rendered large parts of the organization ineffective so Ms. Carroll has to start ratcheting things up. Alderman Rainey stated that Ms. Carroll's responses to her are excellent but staff responses are the same as in the past. She mentioned the difficulty of calling the Civic Center when she had a problem that needed immediate attention. The phone at the reception desk 328-2100 has a recording. She doesn't mind that but cannot get a hold of somebody to ask for an extension. Alderman Wynne said she had had good responses and

then things fell off. When she sends a message now she e-mails everybody who might have an interest. She has constituents that she is going to meet with but does not have enough information to help them. Alderman Moran actually had somebody ask him "why do you want to talk to someone." He would have fired that employee. Alderman Wynne suggested the idea of calling in and not being able to get a person should be noted and in what areas of the City; did not think the manager would hear what aldermen hear.

Alderman Bernstein noted that Ms. Carroll wants all to call her about matters of concern and he does that unless he has a good relationship with a department head. He wondered about the aldermanic request forms and if he should follow up. Alderman Wynne wondered if what was there, was her response. He was not aware they had a new sanitation director. Alderman Jean-Baptiste thought the problem was more structural than individual. Council really does not have staff and not only must respond but has plans. In the beginning his requests were dropped without a response. He thought until something was done it stays on the list; did not think the assistants to the city manager who are supposed to be aldermanic staff are familiar with the city; did not think they had adequate staff and did not know their priorities. They need somebody who is committed to their work so they can be more effective. Alderman Holmes sends in requests and many are not put on the list but she thought they were getting caught up again. Alderman Moran has given up on using the aldermanic request form. Alderman Wynne gets attention by stating the problem will result in a lawsuit; mentioned that somebody cut off a parking meter three inches above the sidewalk creating an obvious hazard.

Mayor Morton has experienced telephone problems since 1993; keeps a log of all calls she receives; has a record of many complaints. Often she calls a department and nobody answers. Staff who yell back or act inappropriately to constituents has decreased. She read from the City Code, "the City Manager shall have the power to hire all City employees, subject to applicable provisions of Civil Service laws at such compensation as authorized by the City Council."

Mayor Morton suggested that Council ask Ms. Carroll to speak more with her staff. The manager has gone out into the community a lot since coming and that was good. However she thought she has to learn what each department is doing in order to give proper supervision. It seemed to her that the manager should spend some time with the new superintendent of sanitation; thought that the manager talks to the department directors rather than the superintendents. She predicted that most problems with this manager will be in administration. Mayor Morton noted that most staff have not been evaluated. Ms. Carroll's job is to make changes. If the manager goes into a department, she can see what needs to be done and she has the guts to make changes. Council members should know the job descriptions of Assistants to the City Manager. Dar is the Aldermanic/Mayoral secretary. There are many internal factors that need to be shaped up. Employees at the Civic Center need a new structure.

Alderman Rainey noted the manager did not bring anybody with her. Alderman Holmes said one goal might be to get a handle on the strengths and weaknesses of staff. Aldermen Rainey and Moran said that the manager is working on that but Rainey did not think it

was happening fast enough. She heard that when something happens, the manager comes on really strong, and then pulls back. Alderman Jean-Baptiste said she needs to delegate to somebody and find a way to make sure her directives are followed. Alderman Moran said this would be tough for her to do because all the alliances here are horizontal and not vertical. It is critical for her success to establish vertical alliances. Alderman Wynne suggested the manager needs the equivalent of a vice principal. Alderman Rainey thought that the manager had adopted Gavin for that. Several said, if true, that was a bad choice. Alderman Bernstein said in dealing with Judy Aiello over the years that she has been the consummate good soldier; has served every manager well. It is incumbent for the manager to take the assistant city manager and make her, her person. Ms. Aiello is established and could be her liaison. Alderman Holmes said perhaps Judy could say to buddies, "it's over." Alderman Jean-Baptiste said that Judy Aiello's duties may not have changed since Ms. Carroll came. Alderman Wynne suggested they ask Ms. Carroll who in the organization could play this role. In sending someone of stature Mayor Morton said they need to speak with one voice. Alderman Bernstein thought that the manager had done an excellent job in reaching out to the community because this is a complex community with many players she has done a great job communicating with Council. He has heard that she comes down with this fear thing and wrath, and then backs off. She needs to learn to play well with others in the organization. Mayor Morton said there is a question about her administrative style.

On giving stars to Ms. Carroll for outreach, Alderman Jean-Baptiste, recalled that she did not come from a diverse community; suggested that her sensitivity needs to be increased. Mayor Morton noted interracial couples at the City were the only two people mentioned by the manager and what was behind that.

Alderman Wollin suggested the legal department needed to be strengthened There was discussion that Jane Grover, a local attorney, was told not to apply for an opening in the Law Department. Aldermen want to know who does the actual hiring. Alderman Holmes did not think the negotiations with labor unions were strong enough from the City perspective. Alderman Jean-Baptiste suggested that hiring is not transparent.

Alderman Wynne noted several years ago they talked about hiring additional people for the City Manager's office; thought that Jane Grover would be a change agent and change the tone of the legal department. She asked what support Ms. Carroll needs from Council to make changes. Alderman Rainey noted that some staff are afraid of being fired. Alderman Jean-Baptiste said they don't want to create a big uproar. Alderman Wynne noted they don't get a good work product when people are terrified. People should know how they are doing and if they are afraid it could be because they have not been meeting expectations. There should be a tone of meeting goals and expectations and those who work hard should be rewarded. Nothing promotes mediocrity more than not praising good ideas. Alderman Holmes commented that at the Civic Center you see a lot of people walking in the halls. There is no way there can be that many people in the halls. People should be at their desk or out in the field. Alderman Moran related going to the athletic club to work out at 7:00 a.m. There was a police officer in uniform helping a person work out. Many said that was inappropriate. Alderman Bernstein said it is all

unsubstantiated rumor. He has heard that people don't want to work for Ms. Carroll. There is no head in the zoning division. He attributed not hiring a zoning director to the consultant analysis of the development process and perhaps Ms. Carroll will change the whole structure. It may not be so easy to find people. Alderman Bernstein talks to rank and file employees. Alderman Jean-Baptiste said there should be an evaluation of every department. People are moving like it is a one horse town. She needs to look at that, but he does not want a massacre. Alderman Wollin said that planning and development is important and vital to the City's moving forward and they have to get that straight.

Mayor Morton noted that all are in favor of Ms. Carroll and want her to shape up the City. They recognize they have problems and that she has come to a problem City. The aldermen wish to have division heads and above formally introduced at City Council meetings and the new employee to say a few words.

Mayor Morton noted there are concerns about customer service, staff responses are late, and minutes are late, weekly response sheets are not being done in a timely manner or at all. Ms. Carroll needs a better handle on staff's strengths and weaknesses. There are some concerns about her administrative style; Human Resources has not required evaluations and hiring is not transparent; There were names mentioned in the manager's report; the introduction of Suzette Eggleston; and Ms. Carroll is responsive to aldermen. She has done a good job with outreach to the community. When she gets materials from staff a good job of organizing the material is done. They want her to focus more on in-house activity and learn to play well with others. Alderman Moran said the message to her is that they are looking for valid, vigorous objective reviewing of employees. Mayor Morton noted they have not asked her how she set up her administrative staff.

Mayor Morton read from page 2 of Julia's own evaluation, where she wrote, she feels like sometimes the council is overreaching into administrative areas." I am a competent professional who can meet your needs if I understand clearly what the consensus of the majority of Council wants. However it is difficult to get consensus from the staff when they get mixed messages from various aldermen in administration." That needed to be cleared up. Alderman Moran said there must be a coherent administration of the City. She's the chief operating officer and communicates direction to staff. If an alderman calls up, says that is garbage, this is the direction. Alderman Wynne said some of this goes back to not having faith in the staff. Alderman Rainey wanted to know what that was about. The reason why they meddle, is because following the process does not produce results according to Wynne. Alderman Moran said it gets more tenuous when conflicting messages are sent regarding policy. Alderman Bernstein said Ms. Carroll was frustrated by the Mather where conflicting messages were sent to staff from aldermen. In his first conference with her she expressed concern about aldermen micromanaging. He suggested somebody had to because former Manager Crum was not up to it. He said to her "show them she is the CEO," because he did not want to work 50 hours a week for the Council. He would just as soon come in and ratify the staff's recommendation. Alderman Jean-Baptiste noted his job is legislative, but has to respond to daily requests from his ward. There are a lot of issues and they are the point people. It would be great to have staff be responsive to that. The reality is he does not give mixed messages to anybody. The

manager insisted they go through her assistants. He thought that the alderman request system was not responsive. Alderman Wollin said every manager from Joel Asprooth to Julia Carroll said they wanted the system of aldermanic requests. Alderman Bernstein said it worked with Michael Guttman. He got the job done before the question was asked.

Alderman Moran said they have to start earlier on the budget and important for the city manager to vet with Council before releasing the budget on January 1. He thought she had worked hard on giving them options, but they were the wrong options. She should have vetted the document; and when making major policy suggestions, she needs to talk to people before putting them in a budget document; had missed the ball on several things. They started the whole process with a g-r-r-r-r-r. Alderman Wynne suggested they re-establish the budget policy committee and start in July. They discussed the Mental Health Board cut. Alderman Rainey said Council needs to give direction to the manager. She saw hints in her self evaluation of things to come about outsourcing; mentioned fleet services and a whole list which they needed to talk about. Alderman Wynne suggested putting it all on the table. Alderman Rainey thought there were areas that needed to be outsourced but a conversation has to be held.

Mayor Morton suggested Council receive a report on revenues received, but they get only expenditures. She has asked repeatedly for that. Alderman Rainey stated they needed to mention the report about taxes from Cook County Housing Authority.

Alderman Rainey watches housing inspectors at administrative hearings with pages of sticky notes on them. She asked how they could work like that and what about using hand-held computers. The employee told her they could not get training.

Mayor Morton said they needed to set up another time to set up goals. Several people had to leave before noon.

Alderman Holmes asked if Ms. Carroll has an overall plan for reorganizing the city? There were many suggestions made by Ms. Carroll in her remarks. Mayor Morton said that some of Ms. Carroll's goals are in keeping with Council goals and would be discussed at a separate meeting.

At this time Ms. Carroll was present.

Mayor Morton stated they had a good session extolling her virtues and noting areas that need improvement all in the spirit to make sure her tenure here is successful. They acknowledge her strengths, illuminated some areas that need improvement and other areas that she may not be aware of. All feel she has the strength to carry out what needs to be done. She hoped Ms. Carroll understood the spirit of this. Everybody is in her corner.

Council is well aware of things that need to be straightened out. It was pointed out she came here without any staff and even so had accomplished many things. They wanted to

share their concerns with the idea that when they set goals they will become priority items.

Mayor Morton said when the scores were tabulated (88 items people could not respond to) and did not find that a fault in the design, but it was because she has not been here long enough and to keep that in mind. Some things are not within her control. They wanted to discuss things within her control.

Aldermen expressed great satisfaction with the way she has responded to them and in a timely fashion; pleased she has spent this first year doing a great deal of outreach to the community and want to discuss the future and her time. She has changed a lot of things; added a cover sheet so they don't have to read everything. She has good skills in organizing the packets. The one thing consistent with her administration and the prior one is problems with telephones being answered. People call and nobody answers. It is a serious problem for the community and a bad thing for city hall when citizens call and get no answer. When aldermen call, due to a lack of time, they don't want to be on the phone a long time. She asked if this was dealt with.

Ms. Carroll had met with Bill Stafford and emphasized that people on the main line need to be available to answer the phone at all times. One thing they found by testing the phones is a system problem. They have worked with Malone Kwakye. This came to her attention about two weeks ago and they don't know if this has been an intermittent problem or if people are not doing their job. Every time she has a complaint from an alderman they have checked it out and found a problem. She will continue to work on that; suggested that perhaps an expert needed to be brought in. and that staff is not capable of dealing with this. Ms. Carroll stated another issue is when she calls a department sometimes the director is legitimately in a meeting. but a secretary or someone should be there to answer the phone. She has had that conversation and will have it again. One initiative is to have better customer service and the phone is often the first contact people have. Alderman Moran said there may be a system problem, but this has been going on for a long time. There is a culture that has crept in that people don't answer the phone. Frequently he calls a department and gets voice mail. He has seen a little improvement. Occasionally they get gatekeepers for a department and they seem almost exasperated that he is calling. Whoever calls should be treated politely and given the sense that this person is to field their call. He has had people when he asked for Bob, say, "what do you want to know or why do you want to talk to Bob." That is an inappropriate response. There is a culture of not being friendly and receptive.

Alderman Wynne asked what she was seeing with customer response cards. Ms. Carroll said the responses have been good and positive and are based upon face to face activity. They have a stack and will share them with Council. She related staff is trying to measure customer service satisfaction. She gets frustrated because she goes someplace looking for so and so because she too cannot get through. Ms. Carroll pointed out it is how you ask the question and suggested that training was needed.

Mayor Morton asked how she gets the message out about how to answer the telephone. Ms. Carroll said they have had discussions at the department head meeting and the manager's meeting which is about 90 people the next level down. She has not personally met with every person who answers the phone. She said if it means she has to meet with secretaries she will do that. She will continue to work on this; thought it was employee attitude and the need for training. Alderman Rainey had tried to get through the day before and when she cannot take it anymore she calls the manager's office and has somebody go to that department; would not mind getting a rude employee. Aldermen Rainey, Wynne and Ms. Carroll discussed problems with answering the phones and staffing at the reception desk.

Mayor Morton said that phones should be responded to between 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.. Her rule is it can happen a second time, but the third time that employee would be out the door. It has improved. The manager should be told when they have a problem getting through.

Mayor Morton reported that some minutes are very late from commissions, boards and committees. If a committee is meeting, the Council needs a copy of the minutes. Ms. Carroll asked whether the minutes should be given out before approved. Council wants a sense of what happened.

Mayor Morton said she does not get information on what new is coming to the City. When the developer comes in, she and all aldermen should know about it. She is at a loss when somebody says something is going on. Alderman Wynne suggested when a zoning analysis is done, a list of that information would be helpful. There was discussion of the process when somebody wants to build in Evanston. Ms. Carroll felt that aldermen need to know of anything happening in their ward. Alderman Wynne wanted a list, number of stories, units, address. Ms. Carroll said a list would be made available.

Council members and Ms. Carroll discussed the system of aldermanic requests and that responsiveness is lacking. Mayor Morton asked if there is a job description for the two administrators. It would be helpful to know what part of their job description and how much time they allot to aldermanic business. Ms. Carroll responded that it is based upon the number of requests received. Their job is to deal with aldermanic requests and see that departments respond. Alderman Wynne finds things on the list and it is the only time she knows that something happened to her request; asked for an e-mail back telling her what was done. She sends in as much information as she can about the constituent and wants them called. People call her and tell her they had no response. Many things have fallen through the cracks. Alderman Wynne is put in the position of apologizing over and over. She knows that people have tickler systems on their computers; call, then call again in two weeks. She wants a tickler system on her computer; has to bird dog every request.

Alderman Wollin said some never get back to them. Ms. Carroll said they need to let her know if they are having a problem. Alderman Rainey thought some requests are translated incorrectly. Alderman Moran said a lot of time he is not called back and on the sheet, the request was not quite what he called in about. The request is changed into

something other than what he wanted. When nobody calls to check he does not have unlimited amounts of time to call back. He asked that they do more in outreach mode and ask if they have covered what was asked for. He said it is little things that have been carried for six months. He has never been called for anything. Alderman Moran has changed his work and goes to the departments and asks for help. Some respond and some don't. He thought there is unanimity among Council members that there needs to be more verticality in lines of authority, both up and down the organization. People need to be deployed so they can effectively respond to the needs of citizens and Council. Some do a great job, always call back the same or next day. Some people he calls four or five times and never gets a response. Ms. Carroll asked for the people that do not respond. Alderman Moran would provide that in a meeting with her. Organizationally more work needs to be done. Managers need to be on the same page with each other and the city manager needs to be on the page too so they know where they are going. Under the tenure of the last city manager, people were left to do what they wanted to do and some residue of that needs to be scrubbed out of the system. He knew she is doing things to do that. It is hard work. They look to her for more progress.

Mayor Morton said that Council would like her to focus more in-house.

Alderman Wollin asked Ms. Carroll if she had somebody under her that she could rely on. Somebody to whom she could delegate. Ms. Carroll said she does not have anybody and felt she needed another person who could step in and handle some of these things. Ms. Aiello works mostly on economic development. There is a lot work to do with human resources, organizational development as a culture, management programs and organizational problems. Right now there are not the right players. She has had a great deal of resistance. It has been a struggle to get some attitudes changed. As she wrote in her comments, staff said they were good enough instead of wanting to be the best. That is the attitude that has to be overcome that goes all the way to the top.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste noted there are eight people in the manager's office. He is fighting to get money for youth. People may be stuck in their ways, but ultimately they will need deliverables, and if they cannot deliver, that needs to be rectified. She has to bring in people who will do what needs to be done. Alderman Rainey said they have talked about all those people in that space. What is going on? Ms. Carroll would put together a report on what all people do. Alderman Wynne said they were not talking about secretaries. All identified issues that aldermen see, and Ms. Carroll has identified problems within the administration. Some have coasted for a long time and not asked to meet a standard. Alderman Wollin suggested they get a vice principal to translate to staff. Ms. Carroll said to make a change in an organization you need somebody who has not been part of the culture. There is a click that goes to lunch together. She dealt with a lot of this in their evaluations and had some frank discussions with staff. Their perception of their performance is out of whack. If she got rid of some people today it would cost. There are two people, if she had support of Council to get out would be best for the organization; does not see them making changes. These are over 50 people. She was not afraid to let them go but did not want to put people out of work and have people saying there is a big shakeup at city hall. Alderman Holmes asked were there others that needed

to go. Ms. Carroll said yes, but the organization could not handle making more changes than two or three at a time. There are two that need to be moved on and out of here. They tell her they will do whatever she asks. That is not her job. As leader of the department they must come up with ideas. She works on the big picture needs and the community. If they are going to terminate people there must be a valid record. There were no evaluations. Those are some of the problems she inherited.

Alderman Moran was pleased with her work and asked her to take anything he said as constructive criticism but had to leave.

Alderman Wynne said the issue is her staff and finding a person to be a deputy manager, promote higher standards and change the corporate culture. Mayor Morton asked Ms. Carroll to get a better handle on staff strengths and weaknesses. There was a question about her administrative style. What is the hiring policy of City. There was concern that Human Resources is not transparent. There is a feeling that fear tactics are used by the manager in dealing with staff. The new head of sanitation should have been introduced to the Council and brought to the podium to make a few comments. In the past new managers were introduced at the Council. One discussion they had was who really hires people. Ms. Carroll stated her policy is to interview any manager before they are hired A committee interviews applicants.

What is the manager's new organizational structure. They wanted a report on getting taxes from Cook county. Ms. Carroll stated the City has been getting the payments; wanted to discuss goals and budget policy.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste urged that Ms. Carroll continue to interact with the community and look at the problems they have that come from diversity. . She would like to meet with each of them; wanted to know more about administrative style and fear tactics. She does not want that but wants people to change. They wanted to know about Council members micro managing.

The next meeting date would be determined by telephone survey by the Aldermanic Secretary.

There being no further business to come before Council, at 12:10 p.m., Mayor Morton asked for a motion to adjourn and the Council so moved.

Mary P. Morris,
City Clerk