

Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

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“City Staffing”



Staffing any business or public entity is not an easy process. With 199 full time people employed by the City of Norfolk, every year some of those employees will choose to retire, move out of town because of a spouse transfer or leave for any number of reasons. Despite challenging economic times, the City of Norfolk has not had a declared reduction in force, layoffs or a stated hiring freeze. City of Norfolk Human Resources Director Sheila Schukei works with department heads to carefully evaluate every vacant city employment position before filling the position. This ongoing review process of staffing needs has resulted in the City having less employees in 2012 than in 2004.

“Every time there’s an opening, we consider the functions and needs of that position. This is important because of ever present changes in the various city jobs due to technological advances and ever changing State and Federal requirements of municipalities. Making sure that each job position is necessary and that each employee has the required skills to perform their tasks improves our responsibility to the taxpayers, employee productivity and employee morale,” Schukei

said. Occasionally the duties of a particular job will be absorbed by the existing workforce and a vacant position is not filled.

If it is determined that the position is an integral part of city operations Schukei and the department head will evaluate how best to fill that vacant position. At that time, it will be determined if there is an existing employee who has the skills and interest to fill the position. If there is, a determination will be made as to whether existing employees can be reassigned or promoted, whether the job vacancy creates an opportunity for realignment or reorganization, or whether a new employee needs to be sought.

“We have good employees in Northeast Nebraska who many times have the skills and desire to move to a different position. They may try a job with more responsibilities, a job requiring different skills or even a job with different working hours than what they have been accustomed to,” Schukei said. Employees over the years have moved from police to fire, fire to police, water to street, etc.

Training new employees is costly and time consuming. Schukei said, and that by the time an employee learns all of the skills necessary, it may take 12-18 months of training to be proficient. Some new police and fire employees require from 24-36 months to obtain all of the required and desired training.

“We strive to find a good fit between a job and an employee. We recognize that turnover and the constant retraining of employees reduces productivity. Therefore we seek to properly match employees with their jobs,

provide the training needed and challenge them with meaningful work that is rewarding for the employee. Doing this serves the interest of the city taxpayers and the city employees,” Schukei said.