

CITY OF ALPENA

STANDARD OPERATING POLICY

SUBJECT: Inquiries from Prospective or Subsequent Employers

SOP No: 5

Date Issued: 5-5-88

Effective Date: 5-5-88

Revised Date: 7-18-96

Copies to: Mayor, Council Members, and All Department Heads

PURPOSE:

To establish and clarify proper action in responding to requests for information about present or past City employees, including requests for recommendation for employment or appointment.

City employees expose themselves as individuals, as well as the City and its taxpayers, to significant liability risk when he or she provides information or opinion about a past or current City employee to an inquiring potential or subsequent employer or lender. When followed, this policy will provide all legally "releasable" information in a manner that will minimize liability exposure of the City, its employees, and its taxpayers.

STATEMENT OF POLICY:

1. For the purpose of this policy, the term "employee" shall refer to any person who is either in the employ of the City or who, in the past, was in the employ of the City. This shall also include part-time and co-op (student) employees as well as volunteers. Related inquiries subject to this policy may be related to either prospective employment, pending mortgage/loan application, application for insurance, and other purposes which may require information contained in an employee's employment record as maintained by the City of Alpena.
2. If asked to provide information or comment about a current or past City employee, an employee should not provide any information or comment about a past or present employee either officially, "off-the-record," unofficially, or otherwise. Instead, the inquirer should be referred to the personnel department: either Jan Canode or Peter Parker. As an explanation to the inquirer, the employee should state that it is "City Policy" only to provide restricted information according to a set procedure approved by the City's labor attorney.

3. All requests for employee-related information shall be forwarded to and processed by the personnel department: either Jan Canode or Peter Parker.
4. The personnel office will respond only to written requests for information; phone call requests will not be accepted. Written requests shall specifically state the information desired of the City. Information provided shall be limited to the facts of employment as documented by City records: dates of employment; position held; and, if requested, wage information. Additional information may be provided only if an originally signed Release of Information by the subject employee accompanies the request for information.
5. Any requests for information that require photocopying and other than brief attention shall be subject to a processing fee of the value of staff time and materials involved times 120%. A minimum processing charge shall be \$10. Payment shall be received before the information is released.
6. The contents of the City's personnel file regarding an employee, past or present, may be reviewed by the employee upon giving reasonable notice to the personnel department. File contents may be copied at the employee's cost and provided to him/her; however, the employee may not remove any item from his/her file without approval of the City Manager and signature of an appropriate receipt.

The City will comply with other provisions of the Privacy Act as are appropriate and the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

7. Official court-ordered requests for information will be honored upon consultation with the City's respective legal counsel.
8. The City intends to process and maintain personnel records, and the contents therein, in a competent, proper, and professional manner; therefore, any actions contrary to those described herein shall be subject to discipline up to and including discharge.

Peter Parker, City Manager