



General Manager
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TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Karl R. Amylon, General Manager

DATE: February 25, 2021

RE: **Request to Hire Lineman Apprentice**

As indicated in the attached memorandum from Human Resources Director Marie Miller, the Electric Division has requested to hire a Lineman Apprentice in lieu of filling a vacant Journeyman Lineman position. Although a Journeyman Lineman candidate was hired this month, KPU in recent years has found it difficult to recruit for open Journeyman Lineman positions.

While I have no objection to hiring a Lineman Apprentice, IBEW has taken the position that the City cannot limit the recruitment to local Ketchikan candidates. Should the recruitment process result in the top candidate being a non-Ketchikan resident, KPU would be obligated to hire that individual for a period of twelve months. If the individual were not selected, the recruitment process would start again.

The City invests considerable time and financial resources in hiring and having an employee go through the Apprentice Program. When a non-local Lineman Apprentice turns out, there is no guarantee the employee will remain in Ketchikan and KPU could potentially lose its investment. Local candidates have a demonstrated record of remaining with KPU.

KPU is not obligated to hire an apprentice and can continue recruiting for Journeyman Lineman candidates. My office would appreciate any guidance the City Council may wish to offer on this issue.

A motion has been prepared for City Council consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the City Council direct the General Manager to take such action regarding recruitment of Journeyman Linemen or Journeyman Linemen Apprentices for the Electric Division as determined appropriate by the City Council.

Recommended Motion: I move the City Council direct the General Manager to take such action regarding recruitment of Journeyman Linemen or Journeyman Linemen Apprentices for the Electric Division as determined appropriate by the City Council.



HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Karl R. Amylon, City/General Manager

FROM: Marie K. Miller, Human Resources Manager

DATE: February 23, 2021

RE: **Hiring of the Lineman Apprentice**

The Electric Division has requested to hire a Lineman Apprentice instead of a Journeyman Lineman. The current Lineman Apprentice is on his eighth and final 1,000 hours of his apprenticeship and will obtain Journeyman Lineman status around the end of May or beginning of June 2021. When the Apprentice completes his final 1,000 hours and becomes a Journeyman Lineman the Electric division will have a total of six (6) Journeyman Lineman out of eight (8) budgeted positions. If the City were to hire a Lineman Apprentice that would leave one Journeyman Lineman position vacant.

In the past, we have worked with the local IBEW office when advertising for a Lineman Apprentice. Currently, IBEW requires that we work with the Alaska Joint Electrical Apprenticeship and Training Trust (AJEATT) out of Anchorage to fill the Apprentice position.

When the City worked with the local IBEW office we were successful in obtaining applications from local candidates, and I believe we required candidates to apply in-person at the local IBEW Hall. Since the AJEATT office in Anchorage will be taking applications the applicants will be applying online. In addition, AJEATT stated that they could not limit applications to Ketchikan residents. Candidates who meet the below requirements will be able to apply and will have to be interviewed according to AJEATT requirements. The interview committee, which will be comprised of an equal representation of KPU Management and local IBEW members, will score each interview question asked. The candidate who receives the highest score will be ranked #1. If the City wants to hire an Apprentice, we would be required to hire the number one candidate. The candidates' scores will remain on an active one-year hiring list, and after one-year the City can repeat the process if they want to accept new applicants and consider other local candidates.

The AJEATT's application requirements are:

- Must be 18 years of age at the time of interview
- Possess a valid AK Driver's License
- Have a High School Diploma, GED Certificate or higher degree
- Provide High School transcripts.
- Completed 2 semesters of Algebra with a grade of C or better, one post high school algebra course with a passing grade, the NJATC Online Tech Math Course, or the Work Keys Placement test at any State of Alaska Job Center with a score of 6 or higher
- Pay a \$25.00 application fee

Staff's primary concern with moving forward with hiring an Apprentice is that AJEATT will not allow the City to apply a local hiring preference. The City Council has historically endorsed KPU apprenticeship programs with the understanding that local candidates would be selected and local residents would benefit from these workforce development opportunities. Staff remains concerned that hiring a non-local Apprentice candidate carries a certain amount of risk in that once the Apprentice has reached Journeyman Lineman status they will return to their home community elsewhere in Alaska.

Given AJEATT's process, there is no guarantee that the City will be able to hire a local Lineman Apprentice. The City can opt to forgo hiring an Apprentice if the number one candidate is not local, but this decision will delay hiring an Apprentice and puts the utility at a disadvantage when it comes to becoming fully staffed with trained employees. At this time direction is needed on how to proceed with the hiring of a Lineman Apprentice under the AJEATT program.

Staff has no concern moving forward with the hire of a Water System Operator Apprentice/Trainee as IBEW does not have an official Apprenticeship program for this position, the City would be able to hire using our standard hiring practices.