



Office of Mayor Lori M. Stone
City of Warren
One City Square - Suite 215
Warren, MI 48093

Contact:
Warren Communications
586-258-2000
ccayton@cityofwarren.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mayor Stone's Response to City Council Business Item 12b Treasurer's Office Position

Warren, MI (Oct. 15, 2025) - In response to the discussion at the Warren City Council meeting on October 14, 2025, regarding a position within the Treasurer's Office, I want to reiterate my position as Mayor of Warren. The role of Treasurer Manager must be filled through an internal posting process, not through reclassification. Adhering to established procedures is essential to uphold the City Charter, Civil Service rules, and union agreements. Defending the Civil Service process is critical to ensuring that the City of Warren's hiring practices remain fair, transparent, and legally sound.

Under civil service rules, there is a clear distinction between a reclassification and a new classification:

- A reclassification occurs when a job's duties evolve gradually over time while the core responsibilities remain the same. It usually involves minor adjustments to pay or title and reflects natural changes in how the work is performed.
- A new classification is created when a position's responsibilities are significantly expanded, its title is changed to reflect a higher level of authority, or its compensation is materially increased. When those conditions are met, the position is no longer considered the same job - and the law requires that it be posted publicly and filled through a competitive process.

These safeguards are essential to prevent favoritism, ensure that all qualified candidates have an equal opportunity to apply, and protect the city from potential legal and financial liability. Posting positions also uphold the merit-based system that governs employment in public service - a system designed to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly and hiring decisions are based on qualifications, not politics.

My priority as Mayor is to uphold those principles and ensure city employees receive equal opportunity. Had Treasurer Lorie Barnwell posted the position Monday, October 6th as was advised to be the proper process, the Treasurer's office position would have already been filled. The reason this position has taken longer than a week to fill is Treasurer Lorie Barnwell's insistence that she should be able to reclass an employee directly into the position and insisting that if it is not done her way, she would bring a lawsuit. My administration is committed to ensuring the City of Warren follows civil service process.

Media Background: Civil Service Process - Reclassification vs. New Classification (Legal-Safe FAQ)

Q: What is this dispute about?

This disagreement is not about politics - it's about following the City of Warren's civil service requirements. The Treasurer's Office proposed significant changes to an existing position, including new responsibilities, a new title, and a substantial increase in compensation. Under civil service law, that changes the status of the position and triggers specific legal steps before it can be filled.

Q: What's the difference between a reclassification and a new classification?

- A **reclassification** happens when a job evolves naturally over time - for example, when technology changes or the scope of work shifts slightly - but the **core duties remain the same**. Reclassifications often come with small adjustments to pay or title but do not fundamentally change the job.
 - A **new classification** occurs when the position is significantly changed - such as by adding new responsibilities, changing the title to reflect higher authority, or substantially increasing the salary. In those cases, the position is treated as a new job under civil service law.
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Q: Why does it matter which one it is?

Because the law is clear: **new classifications must be publicly posted and filled through a competitive process**. This ensures that all qualified candidates - including current employees - have an equal opportunity to apply. It's one of the strongest safeguards against favoritism and ensures that taxpayer-funded positions are filled based on merit.

Q: Why is the Mayor insisting on posting this position?

The Mayor's responsibility is to ensure the city complies with civil service law and avoids potential legal or financial risk. Bypassing the competitive process when it's required could lead to grievances, lawsuits, or appeals - all of which could cost taxpayers money. Posting the job isn't about personalities or politics; it's about following the rules that apply to every department and every position.

Q: Can the current employee still be considered?

Absolutely. Posting the position simply ensures that the process is fair and open. The current employee can apply and compete for the job alongside other qualified candidates. If they apply, they will be considered under the same objective criteria as all other applicants.