

MINUTES
PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2022
VERONA CITY HALL
4:30 PM

1. The meeting was called to order by Chad Kemp at 4:30 p.m.
2. Roll call: Chad Kemp, Heather Reekie, and Phil Hoechst, were present. Also present: City Administrator Adam Sayre, Human Resources Coordinator Mitch Weckerly, Director of Public Works Director Theran Jacobson, Police Chief Bernie Coughlin, Finance Director Brian Lamers, City Clerk Holly Licht, Building Inspector Todd Parkos.
3. Public Comment: There were no comments by the public.
4. Approval of minutes from the November 2, 2021 Personnel Committee meeting. Motion by Reekie, seconded by Hoechst, to approve the minutes of the November 2, 2021 Personnel Committee meeting. Motion carried 3-0.
5. Discussion and Possible Action Re: Amendments to City Administrative Policy #4, Section 3-2, Regarding Hours of Work

Weckerly stated two amendments within Section 3-2 of the policy were being proposed. The first would give departments heads the option to modify the core business hours of their department subject to approval from the City Administrator and provided the needs of the department are being met. Changes to business hours would need to be clearly communicated to the public, City staff, and business partners.

The second proposed amendment would give managers the ability to offer flexible work schedules to staff provided the business needs of the department are being met.

Weckerly stated that some departments would not be able to modify core business hours or offer flexible schedules based on operational needs. Departments that choose to offer modified business hours or flexible schedules would need to create a departmental policy outlining practices and procedures.

Reekie asked if all staff would have the ability to request a flexible schedule.

Weckerly stated that some departments wouldn't have the ability to offer flexible schedules due to business operations. Weckerly added that staff requested to proceed with the proposed amendment understanding that not all departments would be able to offer flexible schedules.

Heather Reekie asked how the City could ensure decisions to approve or deny flexible schedule requests would be handled consistently and fairly.

Weckerly explained departments offering flexible schedules would be required to create a policy outlining the process and procedures pertaining to requesting and working

flexible schedules. Weckerly explained the policy would identify guidelines for handling requests.

Chad Kemp said he supported offering flexibility, when possible, provided schedule changes are clearly communicated and service levels are maintained.

Motion by Kemp, seconded by Hoechst, to approve the amendments to City Administrator Policy #4, Section 3-2 regarding hours of work. Motion carried 3-0

6. Discussion and Possible Action Re: Amendments to City Administrative Policy #4, Sections 3-4 and 3-6 Regarding Vacation and Personal Days.

Weckerly stated there were five proposed amendments within Section 3-4 of the City Personnel Policy. Staff proposed the policy be amended to provide more vacation and/or an additional two days of personal leave to improve recruitment and retention efforts. Staff proposed two vacation schedules as potential options. Weckerly shared that departments heads provided input and recommended increasing either vacation or personal days but not both due to coverage concerns.

Weckerly explained the two vacation options provided more leave upon hire, more leave throughout the progression of the schedule, and more leave at the top of the schedule.

Chad Kemp asked which option staff recommended.

Adam Sayre stated that option two was more employee friendly.

Reekie asked if staff would consider eliminating personal days if a new vacation scheduled was adopted.

Adam Sayre explained the intent of the proposal was not to take anything away from employees.

Weckerly stated the next proposed amendment would reduce the minimum vacation leave increment from one hour to 15 minutes. The current payroll system allows employees to record time in 15-minute increments. Weckerly explained most department heads supported the change and that it would reflect the current practice of most departments. Weckerly added that some department heads were hesitant of changing the policy due to the administrative burden of approving shorter increments of time.

Weckerly stated the next proposed amendment reflected the current City practice of allowing retirement eligible employees to use accrued leave to extend their final day in pay status. Weckerly explained employees often decide to extend their last day in pay status because it allows them to earn more WRS service and extend the time they are on the City insurance. Weckerly explained there could be budget impacts if the City backfilled the position before the last day in pay status. Weckerly added that

recruitments are authorized by the City Administrator and only in rare situations would overlap occur.

Weckerly explained the next policy amendment would give the City Administrator authority offer additional vacation based on prior experience during the negotiation process.

Weckerly stated that candidates are frequently trying to negotiate more vacation when offered positions. This change would give the City Administrator authority to offer additional vacation based on prior experience. Additional vacation leave offered would be within the limits set by the vacation schedule.

Reekie asked if this would apply to department heads or all hires.

Adam Sayre explained that typically, it is the candidates for higher level positions that negotiate vacation.

Weckerly explained staff also discussed the possibility of creating a vacation sabbatical bank. After discussion staff decided against proposing a vacation sabbatical due to potential budget impacts. Additionally, staff expressed concern that implementing a vacation sabbatical bank would incentivize staff not to use vacation or create coverage issues while staff take extended leave.

Motion by Kemp, seconded by Reekie to approve the amendments to Section 3-4 and 3-6 of the personnel policy, option two (2) of the vacation schedule, not including the vacation sabbatical bank or increasing personal leave. Motion carried 3-0.

7. Discussion and Possible Action Re: Amendments to City Administrative Policy #4, Section 3-7, Regarding Sick Leave

Weckerly stated four amendments were being proposed to Section 3-7 of the Personnel Policy.

Weckerly explained under the current policy, new hires begin accruing sick leave upon hire at eight hours per month but aren't eligible to use sick leave until their six-month anniversary. The proposed amendment removes the six-month anniversary requirement so new hires can access accrued sick leave within their first six months of employment. The proposed change was supported by all department heads.

Weckerly stated non-represented employees with ten (10) or more years of service currently receive a sick leave payout of 75% of their sick leave bank into a Post Employment Health Plan upon separation. Represented employees in the Police and Fire Department currently receive a payout of 80% of their sick leave balance into a Post Employment Health Plan. The intent of the proposed amendment is to create equity among employee groups. Increasing the sick leave payout percentage for non-

represented staff to 80% would match the payout received by represented Police and Fire staff. Staff is supportive of this amendment.

Adam Sayre stated there would be a budget impact of approximately \$35,000.

Weckerly stated staff discussed a potential sick leave sabbatical policy. The policy would allow employees who have banked the maximum amount of sick leave to continue earning sick leave beyond the 1080 hour maximum. Employees would have the option to have sick leave accrued beyond 1080 hours paid out with limitations at the end of the calendar year or placed in a deferred compensation account. The intent of the policy would be to increase retention efforts.

Staff decided not to propose the amendment due to concerns the policy could incentivize employees to come to work sick. Additionally, the creation of sick leave sabbatical bank would have a budget impact. The initial budget impact was estimated at \$21,000.

Weckerly explained that staff proposed an amendment to the minimum increment provision of the sick leave policy. Under the current policy employees are required to use sick leave in at least half hour increments. The amended policy would allow staff to use sick leave in 15-minute increments. There was concern from some staff that approving shorter amounts of leave could create an administrative burden. Although there was some hesitancy, a majority of staff supported the change. Additionally, the amendment would align with the current practice of many City departments.

Motion by Kemp, seconded by Reekie to approve the amendments to Section 3-7 of the Personnel Policy not including the sick leave sabbatical. Motion carried 3-0

8. Discussion and Possible Action Re: Volunteer Time Off Policy

Weckerly stated staff discussed a potential volunteer time off policy. The policy would allow City employees to take paid time off with to volunteer for an approved volunteer organization. Staff did not support pursuing the policy further due to concerns that time away could result in coverage issues. Additionally, staff expressed potential procedural concerns identifying eligible organizations.

Adam Sayre added that employees receive three personal days each year which staff could use to volunteer.

No action was taken on this item.

9. Discussion and Possible Action Re: Conversation of Remaining COVID-19 Leave Balances to Sick Leave.

Weckerly explained the Families First Coronavirus Response Act provided full-time general employees with 80 hours of additional paid sick leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. Part-time benefited employees received a pro-rated amount of leave. The leave was initially provided from April 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020. The City extended the leave benefits until June 1, 2021 due to the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic. The leave was placed in a specific COVID Leave bank separate from the traditional sick leave bank. Upon expiration of the leave unused COVID-19 leave balances were transferred to the traditional sick leave account for Police and Fire Department staff. Unused COVID-19 leave balances were not paid out or transferred to the traditional sick leave account for employees in other City departments. Staff is proposing that unused COVID-19 leave be transferred to the traditional sick leave accounts for general full-time employees and part-time benefited employees who have been employed with the City since June 1, 2021. The balance transferred would be subject to the 1080-hour sick leave bank maximum. The proposed change would help maintain internal equity between employees in all departments. The estimated budget impact would be \$56,000.

Sayre explained the City has had several employees miss time due to COVID-19 since the expiration of the COVID-19 leave. Due to the quarantine requirements the employees have had to use several days or even weeks of their own sick time.

Kemp asked how other communities have handled this situation.

Sayre explained the City hadn't researched what was done in other communities, but staff could reach out and bring findings back to the committee.

No action was taken on this item.

10. Discussion and Possible Action Re: Update on active recruitments

Weckerly provided an update on the Director of Planning and Development recruitment. The position was posted on April 20th and the deadline to apply is May 15th. Phone screenings will be conducted after the deadline. In-person interviews will be conducted in approximately late June. Weckerly explained he would reach to the committee to gather availability from those who wanted to participate in the interview process.

Weckerly provided on update on the part-time Administrative Assistant recruitment for the Senior Center. The position was posted on April 1st, and the deadline is May 1st. Interviews will be completed in May.

Weckerly shared that the City is also busy recruiting to fill seasonal recreation staff and that overall, the City is seeing low applicant numbers.

No action was taken on this item

11. Adjournment: Motion by Kemp, seconded by Hoechst to adjourn the meeting at 5:43 pm. Motion carried 3-0.

Mitch Weckerly, Human Resources Coordinator