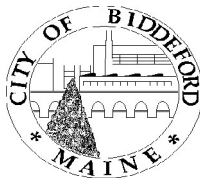


City of Biddeford
Personnel Committee
February 21, 2023 4:00 PM 205 Main Street

Status:

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Acceptance of Minutes**
 - 2.1. Acceptance of Minutes
[01.24.2023 Minutes.docx](#)
- 3. Discussion**
 - 3.1. Community Inclusion Position
[DEI Coord Brief 2-21-23.docx](#)
 - 3.2. Workers Comp Cost Improvement Plan
[MOD rate safety plan 2-2023.docx](#)
- 4. Other Business**
- 5. Adjourn**



PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday January 24, 2023
Human Resources Department

4 PM

Minutes

ITEM 1 Call to order

Chair Councilor Norman Belanger called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM with Councilors Doris Ortiz, present, Councilor Scott Whiting present. Councilor William Emhiser present. Also present were Jim Bennett, City Manager, Diana DePaolo, Director of Human Resources and Lynn Abbott, Human Resource Specialist.

Minutes from 12-20-22 were accepted unanimously.

Discussion

3.1 Social Work Nonunion Position
Social Worker Brief 1.0.docx

3.2 Revenue Analyst Position
Revenue Analyst Brief 2.1.docx

3.3 Lead Paint Program Administrator positions
HUD Positions Brief 3.0.docx
Compensation Appendices-edits.pdf

3.4 Retention Plan
Recruit-Retain Plan 2023.docx

Councilor Belanger made a Motion to approve

All in favor, passed unanimously

Motion to adjourn 4:30pm, unanimous

Personnel Committee Members:

Councilor Norman Belanger, Chair
Councilor William Emhiser
Councilor Scott Whiting



Personnel Committee

Meeting Date: February 21, 2023
Meeting Time: 4pm
Agenda Item No: 3.1
Item Description: Community and Inclusion Position Title Change
Submitted by: Diana DePaolo, Human Resources Director

Supporting Information/Documentation:

Key Terms:

N/A

Executive Summary:

The City created a Community Outreach and Inclusion Specialist position, which was filled in January of 2022. After evaluating the position for a year, we see value in shifting it to a DEI Coordinator position.

Detailed Review:

In January of 2022, the City filled its new "Community and Inclusion Specialist" position. Additionally, in 2022, the City became committed to performing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work from both a community and employer based perspective.

Over the course of the year, it became evident that this new DEI work would entail a big commitment from staff in terms of time and training if we really want to move the needle forward on this initiative. Much of this work was being shifted to the new position as the need grew.

The employee who was in this Community and Inclusion role gave notice and worked his last day recently. As always, we took a look at the position to determine if we were maximizing its usefulness to the City. In doing so, it became apparent that the DEI work this position was doing was the most critical and needed to be the position's focus.

To this end, we recommend a change in title to "DEI Coordinator". Westbrook and Lewiston have a similar position, and Portland just started advertising for this position as well. Additionally, the external DEI committee recently discussed and endorsed a DEI based staff position. Due to the personnel based nature of the new position, it is recommended that

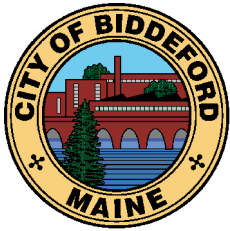
this staff person report to the HR Director. We recommend keeping the position as a level 11.

Funding Source:

N/A; no impact on budget

Staff Recommendation:

Assign this position the title of DEI Specialist under the Human Resources Department and leave its position on the wage scale at a level 11



City of Biddeford

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MEMO

To: Personnel Committee
From: Human Resources
Subject: Workers Compensation cost reduction
Date: February 21, 2023

The Human Resources Department has been working to review our Workers Compensation costs and find ways to reduce these costs. Below is a summary, followed by a detailed explanation, of the plan we will implement over the course of 2023 to provide a cost savings related to Workers Compensation.

Workers Comp Incentive Program **Will create a 10% savings over last invoice (\$95, 936 approximately)**

- Documented slip-trip-fall, lifting/back safety and office ergonomic policies across the City; presenting draft versions of policies to you today
- City hall EOP and fire extinguisher training day (this accounts for 5%) savings-completed by mid-March
- Review and edit as necessary Return to Work and Light Duty protocols across the City and create written incident review policy by end of March
- Finish full upload of all training, medical, application documents to Docuphase by end of April
- Complete full audit of individual training records

Proactively Reduce Mod Rate (current 1.35)

- Bring in a consultant to review Peer Support and CISM programs at FD; provide training to Officers to identify PTSD and what to do if they are observing mental stress in employees as well as preventative measures
- Ergonomic reviews and improvements
- Provide app with immediate 24/7 access to counseling at no cost to employee

The plan to reduce worker's compensation costs is broken into two parts. Part one focuses on something rare in the safety world, and that is clearly defined steps that will immediately reduce our workers comp bill. Successfully completing these steps will result in a 10% discount on our total bill. The discount program is a set of tiers with certain benchmarks that once we achieve them we qualify for that tier. Currently we do not qualify for tier one so no discount was given for this past year (2022).

Tier one will be achieved by mid-April at the latest. We will successfully reach this tier once City Hall holds a training to review fire extinguisher training as well as a review of our emergency operating procedures. The training will be scheduled once the real winter weather has passed so that we can run a drill without having our employees freeze or slip on ice. Tier one grants us a 5% savings on our bill.

Tier two requires that certain policies be adopted. The policies needed are a Slip Trip Fall Policy, a Lifting and Back Safety Policy and an Office Ergonomic Policy. I have included samples of these policies that are ready to be implemented upon approval. The only one on the books for City Hall is an Office Ergo Policy which I would like to replace with the one I drafted. Once implemented employees will be tasked to review them on NEOGOV. This will be rolled out at the end of the previously mentioned training day along with a sexual harassment refresher course. Supervisors will be assigned the longer course made specifically for supervisors.

I am currently in the process of getting these policies or the equivalent from Fire, Police and Public Works. It is currently their belief that they have these implemented already, I will just be checking to make sure. If a policy is to be found lacking in one of the aforementioned departments then it shall be adopted as quickly as possible.

The rest of tier two is holding and documenting safety committee meetings (accomplished), Conducting incident review (accomplished), using preferred providers (accomplished), then making sure facility and equipment self-inspections are completed/documented. The documentation is a soft confirm with an audit scheduled for some time after March for each dept. to confirm. Implementation of these policies will take our discount up to 7.5% off the total bill.

Tier 3 is where a lot of the leg work will take place. I am currently working with all departments to get employee training into DocuPhase. The plan is to have all active employees training records uploaded by the end of April. Once uploaded they will be audited. Upon completion of the audit I will turn my focus back to getting these documents in for previous employees, since we are required to keep most records for 6 years after employment with some records needing to be held longer.

We have a Wellness Program up and running. Currently, we put out a newsletter each month with some recorded webinars, a podcast and then a related challenge for the city. As it stands there is not much participation, but every email that gets sent out seems to get one or two more responses than the last, so I am cautiously optimistic. We have some plans for outings and activities that should increase participation in the program over the course of 2023. Currently they are Bring Your Kid to Work Day (4/27), intramural sports teams, blocking off an hour and a half of the Community Center gym after work for city employees, decorating the firehouse for

the holidays again, kayak trips and a farmer's market voucher program. The goal is to keep pushing these out until they become the norm, and it is rarer to not participate than it is to participate.

Tier three also requires a written incident review policy. Nonunion Departments will need this to be implemented as well. Once again I will attach the one I have drafted. Incident review policies for Fire, Police and Public Works will be mostly handled internally by department with the help of me when needed. If one of their policies is found to be lacking, then we will quickly resolve that issue.

Accomplishing tier three will give us the full 10% discount, approximately \$95,000. I expect this tier to be reached by September. Any leftover time after getting documents loaded into DocuPhase will be spent auditing the information that we have so that we know we are putting out best foot forward when it comes time for their decision.

The second part to reducing the workers comp bill is much more proactive; it is behind the scenes money and resources being allocated appropriately so that problems do not arise in the first place. It is important to note with these approaches results will not be immediate and incidents can still occur even after implementing an A+ safety program.

The largest contributor to the mod rate is the Fire Department. They currently make up 43% of incurred expenses over the past three years. With a large portion of that stemming from mental stress claims. With mental stress claims compensable by workers comp for first responders, it must be a priority to make sure our first responders have access to as many resources as possible. A single claim for mental health can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Since we cannot stop traumatizing calls from happening, we have to take a proactive approach.

We are currently in discussions with a Doctor of Behavioral Health that specializes in the mental health of first responders. We would like to use her services as a resource to review our FD and PD Peer Support Groups' protocols and operating procedures, get both Peer Support Teams all caught up on training, train officers on how to recognize mental health warning signs among their crew and then review our process for critical incidents. We are currently working hand in hand with the Fire Department to get this rolling out.

In the same ballpark of mental health in the workplace, we are currently test running a wellness app. This will provide employees with a number of perks including access to a counselor, yearly meeting with a financial advisor, a home screen/dashboard to advertise wellness challenges, discount shopping services, wellness classes etc. The app has provided us with the following information:

“LifeWorks has many clients that fit into all categories of a first responder, and we are familiar with the unique circumstances of working as a first responder. All of our care access center staff, regardless of roles, are trained on the unique circumstances of working as a first responder and all of our counsellors are master's level clinicians with extensive training and experience.

We also make available to our clinical professionals a number of online training resources that have been created by and delivered by first responders. This includes police, paramedic and helicopter paramedics/pilots. All of our counsellors receive this training during their on-boarding process before being allowed to support our clients. In addition, many of our clinical supervisors and clinical managers are trained in vicarious trauma, ensuring that front-line counsellors are able to effectively manage the work we do.”

While mental health is a large chunk of our worker’s comp cost, it is important that other potential injuries don’t get ignored. A single ergonomic injury, like a sprain, costs an average of \$33,000. That is just in direct costs. It is estimated that the indirect cost of an injury can be up to five times larger.

After our first VDT training in November I performed multiple workplace assessments around the office. Five out of the six workstations I assessed could have used a new piece of equipment in order to get them to work in a neutral position. Equipment I’d recommend after the assessment was one new desk and four new chairs. Keep in mind this was just from the people who opted into having their workstation assessed.

The area I see the most potential harm in is for the city clerks. They are constantly making dramatic reaches for their cash drawers, printers and staplers. The adjustable workstation does not allow for writing as there is no locking mechanism on the sit stand function so it goes underutilized. An injury in this department is highly likely and I believe the only thing keeping us from having a couple on the books already is the high turnover associated with the position. I would like to apply for The Ed Macdonald Safety Enhancement grant Program in order to help remedy this problem. Upon approval we can get three grand to help out with replacing the desk.

The work itself would need to be done over a long weekend, Friday – Monday, so that it doesn’t disrupt normal business operations. The plan is get rid of the current counter that is there. Talking with our Maintenance employee, it will just be a matter of lifting up the COVID wall that was built, then sliding the desk/counter out. We will replace this with essentially a wall. Behind the wall we will have adjustable desks (roughly \$800). An example of such is shown below



Another small adjustable table should flank them perpendicular. Here is where we can store the cash drawer and printer. These usually run around \$200 dollars per table.

There are upfront costs that will go into this project but it will result in a significant decrease to the risk of an ergonomic injury and should help increase our employee retention for that position.

Finally, it is important to note that the school and city are on the same workers compensation policy. Another avenue to explore further is to consider separating out those policies. This will be discussed with MMA and all sides of the issue examined to evaluate pros and cons. There is a potential for cost savings and we will gather more information regarding this potential change. As it stands, one particularly bad claim could drive costs up for both entities whereas separate policies would prevent that from happening.