



PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING

December 17th, 2024

Council Chambers

4 PM

Meeting Minutes

ITEM 1 Call to Order

Chair Councilor William Emheiser called the meeting to order at 4:00PM with Councilor Norman Belanger present in person and Councilor Scott Whiting present via zoom. Councilor Doris Ortiz was excused. Also present were Diana DePaolo (Director of Human Resources), Shelly Gibson (Deputy Director of Human Resources), and Daniel Hammond (Safety & Training Coordinator).

ITEM 2 Approval of Minutes

Councilor Belanger made a motion to approve the minutes from November 19, 2024. Councilor Whiting seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

ITEM 3 Discussion

3.a Employee Development Plans

Diana gave background to how the City's nonunion employees have moved away from performance evaluations and instead to a reciprocal process of employee development plans. This has been a practice in place but has not been replaced within the nonunion policies. Councilor Whiting asked if this program was mandatory or optional and it was shared that while this process is in its second year of implementation, the goal is for employee development plans (EDP's) to be used annually for all nonunion employees. Councilor Belanger asked if the City has removed merit-based performance plans/guidelines and inquired about how the City plans to assess and improve performance if there is a major deficiency.

Diana shared the City's progressive discipline process which is a part of the disciplinary component of nonunion policies. This includes, but is not limited to: counseling, additional training, or supervisions and verbal cautions. The City also does performance review plans, a documented process that provides, in writing, details about why the process has been initiated, and includes a detailed plan with steps and goals for how an employee can successfully improve their performance and responsibilities. Councilor Belanger commented that in the coming year, it would be worth revisiting merit-based performance(s), and how they are measured and awarded in a consistent, objective way. Diana agreed.

Councilor Belanger made a motion to approve the addition of EDP's to the nonunion policies and the removal of performance evaluations; Councilor Whiting seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Referral Bonus Policy

Diana commented that the language for this policy has been edited and updated to match current practice, as well as to remove some of the barriers in the process. Councilor Belanger recommended the actual start date for an employee be clarified so there isn't any confusion (it is typically the first day of orientation, but regardless, will be the first day of work with the City). Listing this in the policy will help identify when it must be known that a referral is taking place. Councilors Belanger and Emheiser expressed concerns that when a candidate is moving through the process, they – or another staff member – could take advantage of the process (and subsequent money) by trying to get in on the bonus later in the process. Council Emheiser made a motion to amend the order by keeping the original language and adding in “or at the discretion of the Director of Human Resources, prior to the hire date (first day worked).” Council Belanger seconded the motion, the motion was approved unanimously.

The motion to approve the policy as amended was approved unanimously.

3.b Maine Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML)

This language, as explained by Diana, is the updated policy as outlined by the state, and would be beneficial to have in the nonunion policies (similar to FMLA). Employees will then have a place to go for documentation and data about MPFML. If included in the nonunion policies after this date, it will need to be revisited and updated on/before June 30th, 2025 given the latest approval from the Council to cover the full 1%. When asked, Diana responded that the proposed language was not verbatim from the law.

Councilor Belanger inquired if the City actually needs to include this in its policies at this early date. There was consensus that there does not seem to be a need yet, until the state has further clarification and finalized language. Diana did share that, in terms of the City's responsibility and requirements to notify staff (by law) of these changes – that has all been completed.

Councilor Belanger made a motion to table the order, Councilor Whiting seconded the motion, the motion was approved unanimously.

3.c Vacation & Sick Time Donation Policy

Diana talked about how the previous policy precluded anyone from receiving sick/vacation donations from colleagues when they are also qualifying for short term disability (STD). STD is something an employee already pays for and uses after their vacation and sick time have been exhausted (and it typically kicks in around 90 days after the employee has had to be out for leave). STD is a minimal amount of money per week and employees are typically also struggling financially during this time (there are 2 current employees for which this is the case). A lot of employees want to help their colleagues, when possible. The amount transfers hour-for-hour across employees within the same bargaining unit.

Hours not used will go into a collective bank of excess, rather than trying to split them and give back equally among everyone that donated. For context, when Councilor Whiting asked how frequently this is an issue, Diana mentioned it has only come up three times in the past 6 years.

Councilor Belanger recommended amending ‘Eligibility, Section 2’ to name nonunion also as a ‘bargaining’ unit. With this amendment, Councilor Belanger made a motion to approve the policy change, Councilor Whiting seconded the motion; the motion was approved unanimously.

ITEM 4 Other Business

ITEM 5 Adjourn

Councilor Belanger motion to adjourn at 4:53 PM, Councilor Whiting seconded the motion; the motion was approved unanimously.

Personnel Committee Members:

Councilor William Emhiser, Chair
Councilor Norman Belanger
Councilor Doris Ortiz
Councilor Scott Whiting