

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING

September 11, 2023

In Attendance:

Members Present: Rick Shew, Chairman, Larry Chapman, Barry Mitchell and Mayor Janet Winkler

Others Present: Town Manager, Jonathan Greer, Assist. Town Manager/Finance Officer, Shana Guy and Town Clerk, Tammy Swanson

Call to Order:

Chairman Rick Shew called the meeting to order.

Discuss Parental Leave Policy:

Shana stated that our current Parental Leave Policy does not allow for any paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child. She presented the Town's current Parental Leave policy and the Proposed Parental Leave Policy.

Current Policy:

Section 20. Parental Leave

Parental leave may be granted to an employee for a period of up to three months for pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion, childbirth, recovery, or adoption. Employees may be granted an extension by the Town Manager when medically necessary. Parental Leave is leave without pay unless the employee uses compensatory time, sick or vacation leave as provided by this policy. A Parental Leave request, including the tentative duration of the leave requested, must be submitted to the Town Manager in advance of the leave.

Sick Leave may be taken during the period of actual disability as certified by the attending physician of the mother, and when care of the disabled mother is required by an immediate family member. Vacation, compensatory time, or leave without pay may be used for other periods of the parental leave, consistent with the provisions of this policy.

Section 21. Leave Without Pay

A full-time employee may be granted a leave of absence without pay for a period of up to twelve months by the Town Manager. The leave may be used for reasons of personal disability, sickness or disability of immediate family members (as defined in Section 12 of this Article), continuation of education, special work that will permit the Town to benefit by the experience gained or the work performed, or for other reasons deemed justified by the Town Manager.

The employee shall apply in writing to the Town Manager for leave. The employee is obligated to return to duty within or at the end of the time determined appropriate by the Town Manager. Upon returning to duty after being on leave without pay, the employee shall be entitled to return to the same position held at the time leave was granted or to one of like classification, seniority, and pay.

If the employee decides not to return to work, the department head shall be notified immediately. Failure to report at the expiration of a leave of absence, unless an extension has been requested and granted shall be considered a resignation.

An employee shall retain all unused vacation and sick leave while on Leave Without Pay. An employee ceases to earn holiday or leave credits on the day leave without pay begins. The employee may continue to be eligible for benefits under the Town's group insurance plans at his or her own expense, subject to any regulation adopted by the Town and the regulations of the insurance carrier. If the Leave Without Pay is for a circumstance that coincides with FMLA or USERRA then the provisions of those policies will apply.

Proposed Policy

Section 20. Parental Leave

The Town of Hudson encourages employees to take time away from work to bond and care for a newborn, newly adopted child, or newly placed child for foster care. **A regular full-time employee who has successfully completed their probation period may request up to six (6) weeks of paid parental leave.** Paid parental leave must be used within 12 months of the date of the qualifying event and used in one continuous, uninterrupted period of leave.

Qualifying events include:

- Birth of a biological child
- Adoption or placement of child under the age of 17 (Adoption of spouse's child is excluded)

Each week of paid parental leave will be compensated at 100% of the employee's regular, straight-time pay and paid bi-weekly on the normal payroll schedule. The amount of paid parental leave may not exceed six (6) weeks in a rolling 12-month period. After paid parental leave has been exhausted, the employee shall use other accrued personal leave before requesting leave without pay for up to an additional six (6) weeks not to exceed 12 weeks of leave total.

In the event of a female employee who herself has given birth and qualifies for short-term disability, paid parental leave will pay 100% of employee's salary during the initial seven (7) day waiting period. Short-term disability pays 60% of employee's wages during eligible periods. The Town will cover the remaining 40% of salary during the covered periods of disability. At the conclusion of any short-term disability leave, the employee shall use accrued personal leave before requesting leave without pay to take up to an additional six (6) weeks of leave not to exceed 12 weeks of leave total.

Comments:

Shana stated that she had contacted other municipalities and governmental entities to get ideas of the types of Parental Leave Policies they provide. The policies ranged anywhere from a 12-week paid leave to a 6-week paid leave, with the 6-week leave being more common.

Jonathan commented that even though the Town's current policy does not allow for any paid leave for childbirth or adoption, an employee still had the option of taking up to 12 weeks off due to the Family Medical Leave Act. Jonathan stated that having a policy in place is a better benefit for our employees, at really no additional cost to the Town – salaries are budgeted and short term/long term disability are already in place.

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Rick commented that having this type of policy in place for the employees is very important, and it is a good way to help our employees at basically no cost. He added that it could also be a good tool for recruitment.

Larry agreed that this is a good policy for our employees, so long as the cost does not affect our taxpayers.

Barry commented that this type of benefit is a very important part of an employee's salary package.

Janet asked if this policy covers husbands/fathers as well.

Shana stated that it is a Parental Leave Policy, and does apply to the husbands/fathers. Shana stated that the Board may want to consider adding a provision that if both the wife and husband work for the Town, they would split the time allowed under the policy.

Jonathan commented that our Personnel Policy as a whole has not been updated for several years, and in the future, we will probably try to review and update the Policy at least every 10 years.

Motion: (Larry Chapman/Barry Mitchell) to approve the updated Parental Leave Policy as presented, and recommend approval to the Board of Commissioners. Unanimously approved.

Update on Potential New Public Works Employee:

Jonathan stated that we are in the final stages of hiring a new employee for Public Works. This young man was originally from this area, but had been living and working in Kansas for a while, which is what has caused a delay in verifying his credentials. He had past experience with the Kansas DOT, and had a Kansas issued CDL license. Jonathan stated that since this employee will be working between Public Works and HUB Station, he, Norman and Addie were all involved with the interview process. Jonathan commented that hopefully, he will be able to start September 27th.

New Officer for Police Department:

Jonathan stated that since one of our SROs is leaving, the Police Department is in the process of hiring a new officer. Chief Blevins is talking with a potential replacement who has experience. This officer will probably be placed in one of the CCC & TI SRO positions.

Adjournment:

Motion: (Larry Chapman/Barry Mitchell) to adjourn the meeting. Unanimously approved.

Tamra T. Swanson, Town Clerk