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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

Date: 10/27/2021
To: Mayor and City Council Members
Steve Parker, City Manager
From: Kristy Lehnert, Director of Human Resources
RE: Vacation Buyback – Fire and Police Personnel

In early March 2020 the city and our organization became impacted by Coronavirus 2019 or better known as COVID-19. Our organization quickly adapted to different work environments that included social distancing, masks, temperature checks, flexed schedules, and sporadic staff shortages.

Instead of lay-offs and or furloughs, city staff members teleworked while other city staff members flexed off during their normal work schedules in efforts to maintain a healthy workforce and to meet our city's needs.

Due to the rise of coronavirus cases locally our active firefighter/paramedics, dispatchers, and police officers were unable to flex off or utilize vacation leave. This group of employees continued to serve our community even though we as a city and organization were experiencing our first real pandemic.

Per our database, the number of COVID-19 calls for service from March 1, 2020, through October 25, 2021, handled by our firefighter/paramedics, dispatchers, and police officers are as followed:

Fire/EMS department -1,730 calls
Police department – 1,184 calls
Joint – Both Fire/EMS and Police – 51 calls

Total calls = 2,965

Through their continued efforts to serve our community these two departments now have many amongst their personnel that have high vacation leave balances or personnel that are now maxed out on their vacation leave balance. The federal government created CARES Act Funding in 2020 that allowed police and fire salaries to be reimbursed through the grant. This created an increase in fund balance for the City's General Fund. City staff is proposing to use this fund balance increase to buy back vacation and leave balances now which will be a financial savings for the City. If the City did not approve this leave buyback now, it would be paid out at a future

date or upon the individual leaving the City which would be at a higher pay rate thus creating a financial savings for the City.

Even though we continue to maneuver amongst the COVID -19 pandemic, our organization and community continue to thrive daily with the help of great personnel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To help reduce the high vacation leave balances or maxed out vacation leave balances in the Fire and Police Departments we are recommending that we offer these two departments a one-time buy back option. Please remember that vacation leave is a benefit that is paid out to an employee who separates in good standing.

The following are the stipulations or criteria that must be met to qualify for this one-time buy back option.

1. Fire and Police Department Personnel Only; Administrative staff in both departments are not eligible.
2. Eligible employees need to be employed with the City of Seguin since June 1, 2020, and were unable to flex off during the months of March, April, and May of 2020.
3. Eligible Fire employees are allowed to have a maximum of 96 vacation leave hours to be submitted for buyback; Eligible Police employees are allowed to have a maximum of 80 vacation leave hours to be submitted for buyback.
4. Eligible Fire employees must have a minimum of 60 hours remaining in their vacation leave balance after their buyback selection is made; Eligible Police employees must have a minimum of 40 hours remaining in their vacation leave balance after their buyback selection is made

Staff requests your approval of the above recommendations. Susan will be presenting shortly regarding how this vacation buyback will be funded.

I would be glad to answer any questions you may have regarding these recommendations.