

CITY OF FAIRHOPE

Personnel Board Meeting
5:30 p.m. – April 27th, 2023
161 N Section Street
Fairhope, AL 36532

Present were:

Members: Genie Frazier; Terry Ullrich; Jake O'Neil; Mayor Sherry Sullivan; HR Manager Cory Pierce; Water Treatment Manager Tim Manuel; City Treasurer Kim Creech; Safety Coordinator Donnie Grice

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Minutes of the March 16th, 2023, meeting were approved as presented.

Genie Frazier requested an update on the last disciplinary hearing. Witness participation was discussed. Cory Pierce gave a heads up that there will be one or two new disciplinary hearings within the next week.

Mayor Sherry Sullivan asked for the Board's input on a proposed retirement policy regarding paying out sick leave pay. 960 hours is currently allowed to be cashed out. The Mayor proposes the option to cash out or transfer to a service credit. This added option provided this policy would give employees greater flexibility to retire early due to illness. Terry Ullrich gave his personal experience of being paid up to 200 hours of leave and anything beyond that was required to be applied to his retirement, noting the hours could not be used to qualify for retirement. Kim Creech discussed liability with different scenarios of vacation accrual. Genie stated, in her personal experience, that she's only ever had sick pay that expired year to year and explained how the company she currently works for does flexible PTO with nonaccrual taking the liability off their books. Tim Manuel discussed different scenarios within his department to consider.

Kim spoke on how the City's benefits compare to other municipalities' benefits giving examples of different scenarios from both public and private sectors. Mayor Sullivan emphasized the importance of this factor as it pertains to being competitive with employee recruitment and retention. Cory stated he planned to bring this topic up for discussion in June and July when reviewing the budget.

Donnie Grice shared good news that workers comp expenses have dropped drastically since the City switched to Millennium. From January 1st to May 1st 2022, the City had \$111,376.55 in

workers' comp payouts. For that same time period in 2023 the City had \$13,998.46 in workers' comp payouts. The City recently got a workers' comp rate drop as a result. He attributes this to accountability and a good working relationship with Millennium. Cory also cited Donnie's outreach to different departments as a reason for the difference, as well as the Mayor's support. Genie emphasized the importance of employees getting home safe every night. Jake and Genie both offered big congratulations for the progress and hard work in this area. Cory added that the safety handbook is contributory and that it's been a true collaboration.

Cory discussed the handbook committee and expressed a desire to have our policies closely mirror the Alabama State Code, because any disciplinary procedure needs to fall within that code. He informed the Board that they have reached out to the City's insurance broker, and our insurance representative is going through the handbook, reviewing it, and making updates for the City. Cory will be meeting with them soon and welcomes the help they're willing to provide. The scheduling of the next Board meeting was briefly raised and discussed. Cory informed the Board that concerns over non-compliance with HIPAA has been raised and is being promptly addressed including working with IT to add greater encryption to transmissions and enforcing chain of custody with protected information. Work with Symbol Clinic is through their secure portal and is considered completely safe. Cory stated they formed a compliance team, including himself, Kathryn, the Benefits Coordinator, and Lisa, the City Clerk. They plan to add one more person to the team named Jennifer. Cory discussed the exciting development with the internship program with Baldwin Utilities. Two incoming senior high school students will get the opportunity to intern. They will hold a signing day and bring city swag to the lucky students being awarded the internships. The internship is a summer program that will run from June to August. Jake and Genie both expressed their gratitude for the good news and thanks for the good work Cory is doing.

Final thoughts were provided by the Board.

A motion was made, and a second to adjourn.

With gratitude,

Jake O'Neil, Secretary
Personnel Board