



CITY OF GERMANTOWN TENNESSEE

1930 South Germantown Road • Germantown, Tennessee 38138-2815
Phone (901) 757-7200 Fax (901) 757-7292 www.germantown-tn.gov

Personnel Advisory Commission

Wednesday, June 14, 2017 - 5:30 p.m.

Administrative Conference Room

1930 S. Germantown Road

MEMBERS PRESENT: Claire Shapiro, Chairman; Mark Devine; Sammy Jobe; Ronald Pokrandt; Alderman Dean Massey; Steve Wilensky, HR Director

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mark Holland; David Jackson; Mike Stavropoulos

PRESENT NON MEMBERS: Jeff Beaman, Keith Saunders, Reynold Douglas, Sharon Hailey

Call to Order

Claire Shapiro called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m.

Establishment of a quorum

Four commission members are needed for a quorum. Four members were present.

Consideration of the Minutes

Minutes from the April 27 meeting were accepted as presented.

Updates

Healthplan

Human Resources has no health plan related updates as this time.

Other non-health related benefits

As there have been lots of public questions about the vacation reimbursement policy, representatives from Fire and General Services were invited to explain how the benefit affects departments. This policy, which took effect in 2004, allows employees to be reimbursed for up to 200 vacation hours each fiscal year, but must have a minimum remaining accrual balance of 40 hours.

Assistant Fire Chief Jeff Beaman and Administrative Chief Keith Saunders from the Fire department presented the staffing requirements for their department. Fire policy requires 22 staff on duty each day.

The Germantown Fire Department assigns 25 personnel to each shift leaving 3 slots each shift available for time off, which is impacted by sick, vacation, or long term leave (Worker's Comp/FMLA). If more than 3 employees are off work, the minimum staffing level will be achieved through overtime. The department has found that the ability to sell vacation hours keeps more employees at work and limits the need for overtime, which costs the department approximately \$250 per day per person more because it is paid at time and a half rate rather than straight time. Added downsides to overtime includes employee burnout and fatigue (may be working as much as 48-hours), and team cohesiveness because of variations in team members. The department averages approximately 12,500 unplanned hours of leave each year, which includes sick leave and extended leave for workers comp, illnesses or maternity/paternity leave. The Germantown Fire Department was the 4th department in the state of TN to receive an ISO rating of 1, and a large part of this is based on staffing. They are also held to the NFPA minimum staffing standard. With an average of 12.5 years of service within the department, employees receive an average of approximately 175-200 hours of vacation each year. The 3 time off slots scheduled into each shift equate to approximately 26,280 hours each year, leaving approximately 14,000 hours that if used by employees would have to be covered by employees working overtime. To date this fiscal year, Fire has been reimbursed for 5,983 unused vacation hours for a total value of \$153,212.80. The department calculates that without vacation buyback, in order to remain neutral with vacation time earned/vacation time used, they would need to add another time off slot to each shift.

HR Director, Steve Wilensky, has checked with other nearby communities and the accrual rate for vacation time is standard. Commission members agreed that when employees are promised benefits which are then taken away it negatively affects morale. 62% of total vacation buyback is in Police, Fire and Public Works and General Services, which parallels with the total number of employees in those departments.

Reynold Douglas, director of General Services, also presented that his department along with the Public Works department, are staffed at a bare-bones minimum for required coverage to maintain services. There is no national staffing standard, but overtime is used to maintain level of service expected by customers. Those measures are determined in quarterly surveys. Year to date, General Services, a department of 25 employees, has been reimbursed for approximately 1000 vacation hours at a total value of \$33,000.

Commission members discussed the advantages of keeping the policy including job satisfaction, employee engagement, retention, and keeping the City of Germantown competitive among other nearby municipalities. The Fire Chiefs agreed that the market, particularly for firefighter paramedics is becoming increasingly competitive. Because there is lots of longevity, employees have lots of accruals, but no commission members indicated being in favor of removing the policy for existing employees. Altering the policy for incoming personnel could potentially create management issues. Commission made no recommendations on the policy.

Questions were raised about the inclusion of vacation reimbursement in the calculation of pension benefits in both current pension plans. The HR Director advised that the actuary could be invited to speak at an upcoming meeting, but recommendations on these plans would be outside the scope of the

Personnel Advisory Commission (PAC) and handled instead by the Retirement Personnel Advisory Commission (RPAC).

Adjourn

Commission will not meet in July, but plans to reconvene in August.. The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.