



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, December 21, 2004

Council Session

Item G15

#2004-321 - Approving Revisions to the Employee Handbook

Staff Contact: Brenda Sutherland

Council Agenda Memo

From: Brenda Sutherland, Human Resources Director
Meeting: December 21, 2004
Subject: Update to Employee Handbook
Item #'s: G-15
Presenter(s): Brenda Sutherland

Background

The employee handbook was revised in January 2002. Since then there has been one addendum to the handbook that was effective October 6, 2003. This addendum was passed as Resolution 2003-247. The majority of the changes made at that time were housekeeping changes with the exception of one major policy change which was how the City recognized hours worked for the purpose of calculating overtime.

Discussion

The changes that are being presented by administration at this time are both housekeeping and policy changes. The following areas are being recommended for consideration as changes to the current Employee Handbook;

- 1.) Under the section called SCOPE, administration recommends deleting "Community Projects Department" under the departments that are listed as Community Projects is now a division under the Regional Planning Department. Other recommended changes would be to change the City Administrator's Office to *Administration* and the City Attorney's Office to *Legal Department* and to remove the Grand Island/Hall County Health Department as they are now separate and do not fall under the City personnel rules.
- 2.) Administration would like to expand its current harassment policy under the section SEXUAL AND OTHER UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT. The recommendation is to expand the language that deals with retaliation to read as follows; *Retaliation against someone that makes a complaint of harassment is strictly forbidden. An employee that feels that they have been retaliated against for coming forward with a complaint should make their supervisor and the Human Resources office aware of it immediately. Should the Human Resources*

Director be unable to handle the complaint, it should be forwarded to the Legal Department.

- 3.) Under the section WORKER'S COMPENSATION the recommendation is to add the following language; *The City may provide light duty work when possible for a defined period of time for employees that are injured due to a work related situation.*
- 4.) Administration recommends adding what is referred to as a "Safe Harbor" clause to the handbook. It would be under the section COMPENSATION. It would read as follows; *The City uses a payroll cycle that that runs bi-weekly (every two weeks). Any employee that identifies a mistake in their paycheck should contact their supervisor and/or the Human Resources Specialist so that it is brought to their attention for correction. The City makes every effort to correctly process its payroll and prohibits improper deductions. Any such errors will be corrected as they are identified.*
- 5.) The Emergency Management Center has identified a need to expand its residency requirements. The recommended change would be to require employees within this department to reside within a *twenty-five mile radius* of the City of Grand Island. Currently, employees in the department are required to live within the two mile zoning jurisdiction. The current policy is the most restrictive within the different departments and labor contracts. Administration feels that the change would enhance recruiting for this department.
- 6.) Administration is recommending a change in the following two categories – PAID HOLIDAYS and PERSONAL LEAVE DAYS. Administration believes that to better serve the Citizens of Grand Island, that City Hall should remain open on the Arbor Day holiday. Currently Arbor Day is a holiday that is taken by City employees thus closing City Hall. It is recommended that the City do away with Arbor Day and instead give employees an additional annual personal leave day to use instead. This allows our City government offices to be open and also keeps the City in alignment with comparability. The language that would be added under the section PERSONAL LEAVE DAYS would read as follows; *In addition to two personal leave days, the City will provide one annual personal leave day that will be granted at the beginning of the calendar year and must be used by the end of the calendar year. Annual personal leave may not be taken in less than one hour increments.*
- 7.) Under the section DRESS CODE it is recommended that the words *for Cause* be deleted as Fridays are recognized as just a Casual Day.
- 8.) Administration recommends that the tuition reimbursement policy be updated. Currently the policy allows for reimbursement if budget authority exists for base tuition only at Central Community College or University of Nebraska at Kearney rates. In today's world of online education and the lack of presence of

UNK in Grand Island, it is recommended that the current policy be amended as follows; *Reimbursement will be allowed for books and other fees* (this is the policy in the FOP contract). The annual reimbursement that an employee might be eligible if there is budget authority in their department's budget would be as follows; *Less than two years of service: \$600, Two to five years of service: \$1000 and Over five years of service: No limitations.* The current policy requires an employee to be employed at the City for ten years before they reach the no limitations level for reimbursement. It also reimburses at lower amounts for the first three tiers. The current reimbursement rates are \$300, \$600, \$2000 and unlimited. This recommendation would shorten the process and make more funds available a little earlier than they currently are. Administration believes that an educated workforce only benefits the citizens that are served by City Hall. Thus not having to wait as long to finish their education if so desired is a win – win for everyone. Again, there has to be budget authority for tuition reimbursement to be paid out and that is approved by Council every year through the budget process.

- 9.) It is also recommended that vacation and sick leave may be used in half hour increments as opposed to the full hour increment policy that is currently in place. It seems counterproductive to have folks stay away from work longer than they need to because of the hour increment rule. The payroll system will handle this change.
- 10) Lastly, administration recommends adding language in the Employee Handbook for call-back pay. This would provide appropriate compensation for those employees that get called in on the weekend or at night. The proposed language for this would be as follows; *An employee that is called into work from their home will be eligible to receive compensation at the rate of time-and-a-half for the actual hours that they are engaging in work.* This does not cover someone who is asked to stay longer than their normal shift or is an exempt employee. Those hours would be counted towards their hours worked for the week when computing overtime.

Alternatives

It appears that the Council has the following alternatives concerning the issue at hand. The Council may:

1. Move to approve the recommended changes to the Employee Handbook effective January 1, 2005.
2. Refer the issue to a Committee
3. Postpone the issue to future date
4. Take no action on the issue

Recommendation

City Administration recommends that the Council approve the recommended changes to the Employee Handbook effective January 1, 2005.

Sample Motion

Motion to approve recommended changes to the Employee Handbook effective January 1, 2005.

RESOLUTION 2004-321

WHEREAS, on November 6, 2001, by Resolution 3001-314, the City Council of the City of Grand Island approved and adopted the Employee Handbook for the City of Grand Island; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to amend such Employee Handbook pertaining to various housekeeping issues and policy changes; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments are attached hereto as Exhibit "A"; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA, that the amendments to the Employee Handbook identified on Exhibit "A" attached hereto are hereby approved and adopted effective January 1, 2005.

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Adopted by the City Council of the City of Grand Island, Nebraska, December 21, 2004.

RaNae Edwards, City Clerk

Approved as to Form	☐ _____
December 16, 2004	☐ City Attorney

Proposed Amendments to Employee Handbook

- 1.) Under the section called SCOPE, administration recommends deleting “Community Projects Department” under the departments that are listed as Community Projects is now a division under the Regional Planning Department. Other recommended changes would be to change the City Administrator’s Office to *Administration* and the City Attorney’s Office to *Legal Department* and to remove the Grand Island/Hall County Health Department as they are now separate and do not fall under the City personnel rules.
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