

Hamilton County Commissioner's Court

Unemployment and Personnel Workshop
Thursday, January 29, 2015
10:00 A.M.



Hamilton County Commissioner's Court met in an Unemployment and Personnel Workshop on January 29, 2015 at 10:00 A.M. with the following members present: County Judge Mark Tynes, Commissioners Johnny Wagner, Keith Allen Curry, Lloyd Huggins and Dickie Clary.

Tynes called the meeting to order.

Texas Association of Counties, Human Resource Consultant Michele Arseneau and Customer Service Representative Elizabeth Sutherland gave a presentation to the court and the elected officials regarding "Unemployment and the Documentation Process". Upon completion of this presentation there was time for the participants to ask questions.

A motion was made by Wagner and seconded by Clary to recess at 11:12 until 11:30 A.M. The motion carried unanimously.

Reconvening the court began the review of the Hamilton County Personnel Policy. Tynes presented several items of consideration that he brought to the attention of the group:

1. Job Description in each department; for each employee
2. Federal Laws to consider-Retaliation number one reason for law suits
3. "At will" county an automatic unemployment issue
4. Written evaluations provided (Bewley said these were a waste of time-busy work)

Consistency, autonomy of each office is an issue. There are liability issues.

5. Treat all fairly and equally
6. Stand by policies
7. Consistency in enforcement
8. Accurate evaluations

When policy changes occur the employees need to be notified and a new employee acknowledgement needs to be signed and returned to Human Resource.

We need to look at the policy in relation to the Affordable Health Care Act.

A motion was made by Wagner and seconded by Clary to recess at 12:05 P.M. and reconvene at 1:00 P.M. The motion carried unanimously.

The court reconvened at 1:00 P.M. with all members present except for Commissioner Huggins who had another appointment to attend.

Clary wanted to review things that he had concerns about in the policy beginning with the following:

Section 2.01 Vacation Policy: (7) Vacation shall NOT be accrued while an employee is on leave without pay.

Clary stated that he believes that this should apply to the sick leave pool as well and it should include sick leave and holidays as well as the vacation time as stated.

Section 2.02 Sick Leave Policy: (4) Sick leave shall NOT be accrued while an employee is on leave without pay.

Clary stated that he believes that this should apply to the sick leave pool as well and it should include vacation leave and holidays as well as the sick leave time as stated.

Section 2.02 Sick Leave Policy: (7) After three (3) consecutive days of sick leave, a certificate from the employee's physician, MAY BE required by the elected official, attesting to the employee's inability to work. The employee must furnish this documentation upon request when returning to work, in order to be eligible to receive this benefit

Language needs to be consistent in this item we may need to change to SHALL BE.

Section 2.03 Personnel Leave Policy: (3) Accrual of personal leave shall begin October 1, of each year. Eligible Hamilton County employees accrue 16 hours only on October 1, of each year beginning October 1, 1999.

Delete the italicized portion beginning October 1, 1999.

**Section 2.07 Hamilton County Policy for Retiree Health Insurance: on Page 2 of 3 (2)
Hamilton County Commissioners Court will pay up to \$250.00 per month for health care premiums.**

Delete the wording Commissioners Court

There was a lot of discussion in this section regarding retirees, their spouses and family and how COBRA worked for those who were covered. The county attorney will look into these issues and report back to the court at next workshop.

Court discussed having employees pay first and last payment up front to make sure coverage was there for the county.

Court wants to look at the \$250.00 per month for health care premiums for retirees.

Section 2.09 Policy on Retirement:

ELIGIBILITY

1. Regular full time and part time employees shall be a member of the retirement benefit program through the Texas County and District Retirement System.

There was a question about if a part time employee had to be offered the benefit and yes they have to be offered the benefit.

Section 1.02 Policy on Employee Status:

PART TIME (2) A part time employee shall be any employee in a position which has a normal work schedule of less than forty (40) a week.

Change to thirty (30) hours

Section 2.14 Sick Leave Pool Policy:

PURPOSE

The Sick Leave Pool Policy is to provide additional sick leave days to County employees in the event of a catastrophic/debilitating illness or injury, surgery, or disability that prevents an employee from active employment. Day may be applied from the pool only after the employee has exhausted all accrued sick leave and vacation leave.

Catastrophic has been a term we have struggled with; adding debilitating will be helpful making it a serious condition that the committee has to consider if it qualifies.

DEFINITIONS

(3) Delete catastrophic and insert: In an event of a county employee having an illness or injury is defined as terminal, life-threatening, and/or severe condition or conditions affecting the physical/mental health of the member that requires the services of a licensed physician for a prolonged period of time and that forces the member to exhaust all of his/her accrued leave time (sick leave, and vacation leave) and to lose compensation from the County.

COMMITTEE DUTIES RESPONSIBILITIES-Page 3 of 7

4. The decision of the committee shall be based on a majority vote of the quorum. A quorum shall be based on at least five (5) Committee representatives.

Change the italicized wording to four (4)

5. The Committee Chairperson shall forward all Department head approved sick leave request, (insert) to the County Treasurer's Office.

Delete The Committee Chairperson shall forward all and say The Department heads approved sick leave request shall be delivered to the County Treasurer's Office.

Page 5 of 7:

6. Members on Sick Leave Days from the Pool for a full or partial calendar month accrue paid leave for that month, provided they return to work following the leave.

Need to look at the language here for accrue there may possibly be better terminology used here.

8. The estate of a deceased member is NOT entitled to payment from the pool. However, if a member dies during a unit of Sick Leave Days, the estate of the member shall be paid for such days in the unit which accrued, but for which the member had not been paid, prior to the member's death.

Make a determination if we want this to remain as is or change wording.

Section 3.01 – POLICY ON ATTENDANCE AND TIMELINESS

There may be some thoughts on time keeping that need to be heard or addressed.

Dyer stated that she may need additional information added on administrative leave.

7. Full time employees absent from work who have been put on disciplinary suspension, who are not eligible for vacation or sick leave, or who choose not to use accrued hours of vacation or sick leave are considered to be on leave without pay. (No vacation or sick leave will be accrued on Leave without Pay)

Look at the text that is adopted to see if this covers everything needed. We want to consider using the term administrative leave and define the term also.

POLICY ON SAFETY

Section 3.05

Add No. 5

TESTING

5. All Hamilton County employees who may drive county vehicles and/or operate county equipment while performing their duties will be subject to random drug and alcohol testing, the cost of which will be borne by Hamilton County.

POLICY ON DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Section 7.01, Page 2 of 3.

Add Number 11

TESTING

11. All Hamilton County employees who may drive county vehicles and/or operate county equipment while performing their duties will be subject to random drug and alcohol testing, the cost of which will be borne by Hamilton County.

Section 4.06 – Policy on Overtime Compensation

2. Law enforcement is paid on a twenty-eight (28) day cycle. All hours worked over one hundred seventy-one (171) hours are paid at time and a half.

Change twenty-eight (28) to fourteen (14)

Change one hundred seventy-one (171) to eighty-six (86)

4. Covered employees shall receive compensatory time off, with pay, at a rate of one and one-half (1 1/2) times the amount overtime worked.

Define who covered employees are.

There was also a question about "Comp Time".

At a later date Tynes would like to go over the Vacation Policy.

A motion was made by Clary and seconded by Wagner to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

County Judge

Attest: _____

County Clerk