AGENDA ID: I.a

OAK RIDGE CITY COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 18, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Mark Watson , City Manager

SUBJECT: Amend Ordinance No. 27-85, Personnel Plan, Article 11.2, Titled "Use of Emergency Leave"

SUPPORTING DEPARTMENT: Personnel Department

Introduction

An item for the agenda is an ordinance to amend the Personnel Ordinance/Plan §11.2.b. to authorize the City Manager to implement temporary policies allowing employees to immediately access their Emergency Leave bank.

Funding

No funding required.

Background

One of the aspects of the City of Oak Ridge leave system is the establishment of an emergency leave bank. As described in the Personnel Ordinance, emergency leave is to serve as a short-term disability program with restricted use. In the event that an employee has a non-city related emergency, the bank may be utilized after one workweek of General Leave (standard leave time). This allows employees to be in a paid leave status for personal illness, recovery from surgeries, or FMLA-approved care of family members when the employee maintains a sufficient amount of banked Emergency Leave. The only situation where immediate access to the Emergency Leave bank is allowed is for funeral/bereavement leave.

To encourage employees to get vaccinated, the City allows paid time off for an employee to receive the vaccination and booster as well as paid time off for recovery should the employee experience ill effects from the shot. However, with the continuation of the pandemic and the rise of the Omicron variant, some city employees (particularly newer employees) are reaching the point of not having one workweek of General Leave to take prior to accessing their Emergency Leave bank should they become infected or exposed to the virus. Given the cost of training and experience of our employees, it is important to retain them within our organizational structure, avoiding adverse actions that would cause employees to quit or seek opportunities elsewhere. This policy capability would allow the City Manager to insure that we are not faced with these situations, particularly for less tenured employees.

It is proposed to amend the Personnel Ordinance to authorize the City Manager to implement temporary policies allowing employees to immediately access their Emergency Leave bank in situations such as the pandemic but also for other unusual circumstances that may occur in the future. Such policies would be temporary in nature, with any permanent changes to leave usage requiring formal ordinance amendment by City Council. This will require review by the

Personnel Advisory Board (PAB), which is scheduled to meet on January 25, 2022. The PAB's recommendation will be added to the ordinance prior to second reading and adoption.

Recommendation

Allow the amendment of Article 11.2, Use of Emergency Leave that would provide clarification of an "emergency" and that would provide City employees access to their emergency leave bank in the case of illness of an employee or in the case of family emergencies without the requirement that an employee use "one (1) workweek of General Leave for the same illness." Additionally, granting the City Manager the ability to provide Advance Emergency Leave, in rare circumstances, to City employees after first 13 full pay periods.

Attachments:

Bold-Strikethrough - Personnel Ordinance - Emergency Leave - Ability to Modify for Pandemic Etc..docx

Personnel Ordinance - CM Authority Implement Temporary Policies on Emergency Leave.docx