

**NORTH RIDGEVILLE CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD OCTOBER 15, 2018**

To Order:

President Kevin Corcoran called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. in Council Chambers at North Ridgeville City Hall, 7307 Avon Belden Road.

Attendance:

In attendance were Council members Dennis Boose, Martin DeVries, Gregg Westover, Bruce Abens, Michelle Hung, Robert Chapek and President Kevin Corcoran.

Also present: Mayor David Gillock, Assistant Clerk of Council Tara Peet, Clerk of Council Nancy Linden, Safety-Service Director Jeffrey Armbruster, Law Director Brian Moriarty and Auditor Jeffrey Wilcheck.

Clerk of Council Linden read the notice aloud.

President Kevin Corcoran has announced that there will be a Committee of the Whole meeting on Monday October 15, 2018 at 6:15 P.M. in City Council Chambers.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the following:

T 103-2018 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 2725-93 AND SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENTS THERETO IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS AFFORDED TO DEPARTMENT HEADS AND CERTAIN DISCRETIONARY EMPLOYEES.

T 104-2018 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 5477-2017, WHICH ESTABLISHED AN ANNUAL SALARY AND BENEFITS FOR THE NORTH RIDGEVILLE CITY ENGINEER.

T 105-2018 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 5485-2017, WHICH ESTABLISHED AN ANNUAL SALARY AND BENEFITS FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR.

President Corcoran stated the message he heard from Council at the beginning of the process was to get control over costs. He stated he wasn't looking to harm existing employees and felt that is where everyone was getting confused. The ordinance in discussion will be for future hires after the adoption date of the ordinance. President Corcoran stated this was just the starting point of the overall discussion. He further noted he would like to set a plan from this point forward. He asked for Council's direction on what they would like to see in benefits for new hires. President Corcoran stated he felt Council was heading in a direction when the Engineer was hired and when the Parks and Recreation Director was converted to salary.

President Corcoran started on the vacation portion of the T 103. He asked Council if they would like to

see the vacation policy for new hires be use it or lose it – that if they haven't taken their vacation by the their anniversary, it will expire.

Mayor Gillock stated he was the one that introduced the initial ordinance and his intent was to only remove overtime and make hourly employees exempt. He wanted to treat the department heads with more flexibility and actually treat them as managers rather than punching in and out. He noted he didn't have an issue with trying to control costs, but he wanted to keep current employees whole and where they are today. Mayor Gillock stated his intent was to keep the benefits parallel to the union contract which provides the opportunity for employees to cash and roll vacation. Mayor Gillock stated he didn't know the previous Law Director, Andy Crites, wrote the Engineer and Parks and Recreation positions in the manner in which he did with use or lose language for vacation. Mayor Gillock stated when each employee's anniversary came up, they were short-staffed and the Mayor would not allow them to take their vacation.

President Corcoran asked the Mayor if he was suggesting that the intention was not use or lose on the vacation issue.

Mayor Gillock stated he misunderstood. He stated he wants employees to be able to cash vacation and not allow them to roll it over.

Councilman Abens stated if employees are permitted to cash out vacation, the City is then paying them for fifty-four weeks of time rather than fifty-two weeks. He believes vacation was for the purpose of recharging and employees should take it.

Mayor Gillock stated the employee only gets to cash out up to half of their annual accrual and carry over one week.

Councilman Abens stated he doesn't have an issue with granting a special exception to roll one week of vacation in the event a supervisor cannot take their vacation due to being understaffed.

President Corcoran asked the Committee to keep the conversation on T 103 and the vacation discussion.

Councilman Chapek stated his past experience in the private sector was use or lose vacation on a calendar year not anniversary with no ability to cash or roll and felt that was how it should be treated for the new hires.

Councilman Boose stated he agreed with Councilman Chapek and his experience was that vacation was used in a calendar year rather than an anniversary date. He recommended the City move in that direction.

Councilwoman Hung stated she agreed with Councilman Boose and Chapek.

Mayor Gillock stated AFSCME states anniversary and changing it to a calendar year may be difficult.

Auditor Wilcheck stated it would be easier from the payroll standpoint to have every employee on the

same plan.

President Corcoran stated he understood, but this was the point Council was trying to get to with new hires.

Mayor Gillock and Safety-Service Director Armbruster asked how internal promotions would be handled if anniversary dates are changed to a calendar year. It may be too difficult of a change.

President Corcoran stated switching the employee from hourly to salary will be a change.

Councilman Abens stated his past experience he was part of a conversion from anniversary date to calendar year and noted in some areas he gained and in some areas he lost.

Councilman Boose stated in his past experience in converting someone to a calendar year, employees were prorated one time which can be done with no problem.

President Corcoran asked how much the timekeeping system will help in the conversion process.

Law Director Moriarty stated the timekeeping system is programmed for anniversary dates but could be changed.

Councilman Chapek stated in his past experience, vacation requests came in the first quarter of the year.

Councilman Boose stated he has no problem with what date the administration uses for vacation – whether it is calendar year or anniversary date, but the administration hasn't managed the time banks the best they could be.

Councilman Westover stated in his past experience vacation was a use it or lose it policy, but an exception was built in.

Safety-Service Director Armbruster stated that within six to eight months it can be determined how well the new timekeeping software is working.

Councilman Boose asked how vacation is currently managed in regard to using it and scheduling it.

Safety-Service Director Armbruster and the Mayor stated they let the department heads take their vacation around their staff as long as their department is covered.

President Corcoran asked the Committee overall how they felt about making the ordinance use it or lose it.

Councilman Boose, Councilman Chapek and Councilman Abens both stated they were good with it as long as the administration can grant exceptions in the event of the department head being understaffed.

Mayor Gillock asked if use it or lose it allows for the employee to cash in a week.

Councilman Abens and Councilman DeVries stated no.

Mayor Gillock stated making employees take their vacation will impact operations.

Councilman Boose suggested reducing vacation and increasing salary to avoid that issue.

Councilman DeVries stated in his experience half of the vacation accrual is used in succession. He felt that needed addressed so employees are not taking off every Friday.

Councilman Boose stated he was not trying to tell the administration how to do things, but further stated having an employee take off every Friday is not productive.

Auditor Wilcheck asked if the changes are for current employees or new hires. He further stated as it is written before the Committee, it impacts current employees.

President Corcoran stated he understood that.

Councilman DeVries asked for clarification that his understanding is the ordinance before the Committee will be geared for new hires and current employees will stay on the ordinance they are on currently.

President Corcoran stated that was correct. He further asked the Committee if they wanted to create exception language for when a department head is understaffed and they cannot take vacation to roll or cash it.

Councilman Westover stated he would like to see special exceptions for being understaffed and the ability to roll one week.

Councilman Abens felt rolling one week to be used within a set period of time needed spelled out.

President Corcoran presented the scenario that if a department head is understaffed and their assistant is no longer there, it may take time to hire that person.

The Committee agreed to allow a special exception in the event of a department head being understaffed, at the discretion of the Mayor, that one week can be rolled to be used within six months.

Councilman Abens stated this exception would only be used when the administration denies the department head vacation, not because the employee just forgot to take it and it was about to expire.

Councilman Boose stated he would assume this exception would rarely be used and stated if an employee has four weeks' vacation and one week was rolled, they would have to use up five weeks.

Councilwoman Hung stated she felt the exception of rolling one week should be used within three months rather than six months.

President Corcoran move on to the discussion of longevity. He asked if it was Committee's goal to eliminate longevity for new hires.

Councilman DeVries stated yes.

Mayor Gillock clarified it would be for new hires, not employees promoted.

President Corcoran stated the discussion is on the position, not the person. He stated no longevity would be awarded if they were promoted.

Mayor Gillock stated the City will never promote from within.

Safety-Service Director Armbruster suggested doing a one-time pay out for longevity and increase the salary.

The Committee agreed they would like to eliminate longevity for all new hires.

President Corcoran stated it would be for new hires only. He stated there may be an issue that needs looked into on the promotion of current employees.

Mayor Gillock stated he felt taking away longevity would turn candidates away.

Safety-Service Director Armbruster stated the City already lost a stellar employee, an electrician, to Fairview Park for better wages.

President Corcoran stated the discussion at hand is longevity and the most anyone could get under current contract is \$3,000 after twenty-eight years. He asked Mr. Armbruster if he was stating that a promoted employee wouldn't be making at least \$3,000 more when they are salary.

Mayor Gillock and Safety-Service Director Armbruster stated they didn't know.

President Corcoran stated the Council has agreed to take out longevity, but has not decided how to handle promotions.

Safety-Service Director Armbruster asked how he moves someone up in their salary range. He noted how it is written freezes all wages.

President Corcoran stated the employee will move within the range with the average of the union contracts and receive a bonus, outside of their salary, for performance. He further asked why the ranges wouldn't be competitive.

Councilman DeVries stated when the wage is no longer competitive; he assumed the administration would come to Council showing they are no longer competitive. An example is T 99 on the Council agenda for this evening.

Safety-Service Director Armbruster asked if he could move employees within the ranges.

President Corcoran stated yes, so long as the dollars are budgeted.

President Corcoran moved the discussion on to sick time. He noted the biggest cost when an employee separates is the cashing out of sick hours. He noted some of the recent costs for employees that have separated - \$41,000, \$27,500 and \$32,000. He noted state law allows for cash-out of twenty-five percent of the sick bank at a max of thirty days (240 hours). He asked Council if they wanted to reduce it from 1000 hours to 240 hours for new hires.

Councilman DeVries stated this only applies to City employees and not police and fire.

Mayor Gillock noted the employees that have large cash outs are here every day and never miss work. He felt reducing the cash out will encourage employees to actually use their sick time.

Councilman Boose asked how much is accrued annually.

Auditor Wilcheck stated 119.60 hours.

President Corcoran stated the City cannot go below state statute, just at or above.

Councilman DeVries asked what the policy is for back to back sick days and if the employee needs documentation.

Mayor Gillock stated usually after three days a doctors excuse is required, however they can request one at any time.

The Council agreed to reduce the sick time cash out for new hires, with ten or more years of service at the City, to a maximum of two hundred and forty hours.

Mayor Gillock stated new hires will no longer receive longevity, can only cash out twenty-five percent of their sick bank at separation, and vacation is use or lose. He further stated he will never be able to hire someone. He noted that the benefits the City provides are standard in other cities and recommended Council look at the SERB website to see the union contracts.

Assistant Clerk of Council Peet summarized the changes she heard she is to make to T 103 as agreed upon which were – vacation will be use it or lose it with special exceptions granted by the Mayor to roll one week to be used within six months when a department head is understaffed; longevity goes away for new hires and a determination still needs made in regard to internal promotions; and sick time cash-out for employees with the City ten or more years, upon separation, will be a maximum of two hundred and forty hours. She reiterated these changes are for new hires only.

President Corcoran stated that was correct.

President Corcoran adjourned the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Approval of minutes on November 5, 2018:



PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL



CLERK OF COUNCIL