



Belle Isle Police Department

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TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Chief Travis Grimm

DATE: October 23, 2025

SUBJECT: Military Activation Pay and Benefits Policy — Adoption for Immediate Implementation and Inclusion in Next Policy Update

Mayor and Council,

Background

At the request of two City Council Members, I reviewed how the City can support employees who are activated for federal or state military duty. Florida Statutes §115.14 provides for thirty days of full City pay during qualifying activation and allows municipalities to provide supplemental differential pay after day thirty so that an employee does not experience a loss of earnings when base military pay is lower than City salary.

Currently, the City does not have a codified policy that covers differential pay beyond the initial thirty days. This has resulted in significant income gaps for activated employees in past instances.

Examples of Impact

1. **Deputy Chief Grimm — MOS Training (July 2019 to January 2020)**
Annual City salary: \$73,141.01 (about \$6,095 per month).
Military base pay: E-4 with six years at \$2,664 per month.
Lost income over six months (with 30 days City pay applied): **\$17,155.42.**
2. **Officer Mendez — Deployment (August 2024 to September 2025)**
Annual City salary: \$57,986.99 (about \$4,832 per month).
Military base pay: E-7 with thirty years at \$5,429.10 per month.
Over fourteen months, military pay exceeded City pay by **\$7,759.06** (no City cost).
3. **Sergeant Grimm — Deployment (August 2015 to July 2016)**
Annual City salary: \$44,260.00 (about \$3,688 per month).
Military base pay: E-4 with four years at \$2,555.40 per month.
Lost income over twelve months (with 30 days City pay applied): **\$12,462.27.**
4. **Officer Nick Trendafilov — Anticipated Activation (~6.5 months)**
Annual City salary: \$50,742.93 (about \$4,228 per month).
Military base pay: E-1 at \$1,680.90 per month.
Projected lost income (with 30 days City pay applied): **\$14,012.23.**

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These examples demonstrate how a differential policy eliminates financial harm when military base pay is lower, while creating no cost to the City when military pay is higher.

Comparison to Neighboring Cities

- **Maitland:** Provides thirty days full City pay, followed by **up to eleven months of differential pay** covering the gap between City salary and military base pay.
- **Ocoee:** Provides thirty days full City pay, then **differential pay for up to five months** to cover the difference between military and City pay.
- **Orlando:** Follows the statutory baseline of thirty days full pay but does not have a publicly posted differential pay policy beyond that.
- **Hollywood:** Pays full City salary and offsets it with military base pay (an implicit differential model).

This shows Belle Isle would be in line with sound practices already in place in nearby municipalities, while providing competitive benefits that support recruitment and retention.

Proposed Policy for Council Consideration

1. **First thirty days of activation:** Employee receives full City pay consistent with Florida Statutes §115.14.
2. **Differential pay after day thirty:** The City supplements pay so that the employee's City base salary (step pay, education incentive, longevity pay, and rank/classification pay) minus base military pay results in no loss of earnings. Specialty pays, shift differentials, and off-duty earnings are excluded.
3. **Proof and reconciliation:** Employees provide a Leave and Earnings Statement each pay period; Finance reconciles any over or underpayments in the next cycle.
4. **Benefits and retirement continuation:** Health insurance, retirement service credit, and all other benefits continue consistent with USERRA and Florida law.
5. **Training leave:** Employees in the National Guard or Reserves receive up to 240 hours of paid training leave per fiscal year per Florida Statutes §115.07.
6. **Effective date and codification:** The policy would be effective immediately upon Council approval and incorporated into the next update of the City's personnel policies.

Fiscal Impact

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Costs are episodic and limited to covering the difference between City base pay and base military pay during extended activations. As demonstrated, some activations create gaps in the range of **\$12,000 to \$17,000**, while others incur no cost when military pay exceeds City pay.

Additional Benefits

This policy would not only honor employees of the City who continue or choose to serve our country, it would also serve as a strong **recruitment and retention tool**. By providing clear support for those balancing military and municipal service, Belle Isle will position itself as an employer of choice for highly qualified candidates who value public service in multiple forms.

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