



# **Consideration to approve the resolution in support of the Revised Town of Bluffton Employee Handbook**

Presentation to Town Council  
Stephen Steese, Town Manager  
July 10, 2025



# **Background**

Town Council approved adoption of the Town of Bluffton Employee Handbook on October 13, 2004. This provided for subsequent revisions to be approved by Resolution of Town Council. Revisions to the Handbook have been made in accordance with this procedure in 2006, 2008, 2015, 2019, 2021, 2023 and in 2024.



## Background, cont'd.

- We are asking for Town Council to approve the resolution in support of the adoption of the revisions to the Town of Bluffton Employee Handbook.
- This is important to keep the Town of Bluffton in compliance with updated federal regulations and to support us in offering competitive and value-added programs for employees.



# Updates being proposed/recommended to existing policies:

## Traveling on Business policy:

- Reorganization of Policy into four (4) main areas: General Policies, Prior to Travel, During Travel, and Post Travel.
- Require P-card or VISA card use for travel expenses, not including meals
- Updated the meal per diem section with new guidelines for first/last day of travel and exceptions
- Defined travel distance requirement for lodging and how to determine most economical means
- Updated travel insurance information from insurance providers

## Social Media Policy:

- Add important language for clarification of official use versus non-official use of social media.
- Add important language for clarification for the guidelines and requirements for both official and non-official use of social media.

## Employee Behavior & Expectations – Code of Conduct:

- Amended language for clarification for items including Political Activity and Campaigning, firearms in the workplace and publicly criticizing the Town or coworkers.



# **New policies being proposed/recommended:**

## **On-Call Policy:**

The purpose of on-call pay is to have employees available and committed to support and to respond to unexpected events and/or technical/operational issues outside the normal working hours. This policy is put in place to provide administrative practices in processing payroll in the above-mentioned instances and to ensure compliance with Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), for calculating on-call pay.

### **Guidelines**

On-Call cannot be used as a means of payment to complete regularly assigned work done after hours or a means to compensate for special projects and/or work assignments. “On-call” time is not considered in calculating total hours worked. Employees are assigned to be “on-call” during non-operating hours. No “on-call” hours are required within the general normal operating hours, 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., Monday – Thursday, and 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. on Fridays (or 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday – Thursday and 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., Fridays, for the Police Department Civilian Staff).



# **New policies being proposed/recommended:**

## **On-Call Policy (Continued):**

### **Compensation**

1. Employees shall receive seven (7) hours of compensatory time for every week (7 consecutive days) they are on-call. If they do actually report to duty, their service shall be compensated from the time of their arrival at the work location at their regular hourly rate of pay unless the call to work results in overtime during the workweek. If the call to work results in overtime, the service shall be compensated at the rate of 1-1/2 hours for every hour worked (overtime or compensatory time off). If the call to work occurs on a recognized Town holiday, the employee called back shall receive holiday pay in addition to any other compensation earned.
2. Call-in pay begins or is granted only if the employee has left work for their regularly scheduled workday for over 30 minutes and has left the premises. If recalled within that 30-minute period after regular work hours, compensation will be made as if they had not left for the day.

# **New policies being proposed/recommended:**



## **Service Award Program:**

Service Award Program has been established to recognize and reward employees for their long-term dedication and service to the Town of Bluffton. This program seeks to honor both full-time and part-time employees reaching their 5, 10, 15 and 20-year marks with monetary awards, expressing the Town's appreciation for their ongoing commitment and contribution to our community. The Mayor, Councilpersons and judges are not eligible for this program.



# **New policies being proposed/recommended:**

## Service Award Program (Continued):

The service awards program includes:

- 5- Year Milestone: Employees who achieve 5 years of continuous service will receive a monetary award of \$100.
- 10-Year Milestone: Employees who achieve 10 years of continuous service will receive a monetary award of \$250.
- 15-Year Milestone: Employees who achieve 15 years of continuous service will receive a monetary award of \$500.
- 20-Year Milestone: Employees who reach 20 years of continuous service will receive a monetary award of \$1000.

These milestones are selected to reflect significant durations of service that warrant special recognition.



# New policies being proposed/recommended:



## Service Award Program (Continued):

1. **Enhancing Employee Retention and Engagement:** Recognizing service anniversaries can contribute to increased employee satisfaction and loyalty. By acknowledging their long-term commitment, the Town of Bluffton can foster a stronger organizational culture and encourage retention.
2. **Demonstrating Appreciation for Dedication:** The awards recognize the dedication and hard work employees invest in their roles, directly supporting the growth, safety, and success of our community.
3. **Boosting Morale and Motivation:** Acknowledging these significant milestones helps employees feel valued and appreciated, positively impacting morale and motivation across the organization.
4. **Supporting Employee Well-being:** Financial awards help employees meet personal needs or goals, contributing to their financial well-being and reinforcing the Town of Bluffton's investment in their success.



## Next Steps

- Upon adoption of Resolution, provide an electronic copy of the updated policies in the Employee Handbook to all employees, conduct training sessions to answer questions and review the updated information.



# Recommendations

- We are asking for Town Council to approve the resolution in support of the adoption of the revisions to the Town of Bluffton Employee Handbook.



# Questions?

Motion:

“I move to [***Approve, Approve with Conditions, or Deny***] a resolution in support of the adoption of the revised Employee Handbook.”