



CITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION ITEM

CITY OF FAIR OAKS RANCH, TEXAS

AGENDA TOPIC: Consideration and possible action to approve a resolution amending the City of Fair Oaks Ranch Personnel Policies

DATE: March 20, 2025

DEPARTMENT: Administration

PRESENTED BY: Jim Williams, MBA, ICMA-CM, Assistant City Manager

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND:

The City last updated its personnel policies in 2006. Staff recently initiated a review of the City's Personnel Policies Manual and identified priority chapters for updates. This resolution, if adopted, will amend Chapters 12 and 14 and make broad updates to remove outdated terms. The proposed comprehensive changes are summarized below and presented in Exhibit A along with a tracked-changes version between the 2006 policy and the changes this resolution is proposing in Exhibit B, attached.

Chapter 12 Discipline.

- Updates the preamble policy statement to be more direct and acknowledges the principles and current practices of administering discipline fairly and uniformly, the City's workplace standards, and accountability
- Adds more direct language about supervisor expectations that disciplinary actions need to be justified
- Removes the 2006 Just Cause section title – should be a Procedure. Also, adds to the Procedure section improved language that explains supervisor responsibilities for making employees aware of work center rules, and when discipline is being considered to include investigation standards supervisors need to address
- Removes the performance standards and definitions from the prior Just Cause section and moves behavior standards to a new section named Workplace Standards. The new Workplace Standards section has new behavior standards which include new and updated definitions
- Updates the Disciplinary Action section by providing more detailed direction on the administration of disciplinary actions such as oral counseling, written warnings, suspensions, and dismissals
- Clarifies language and requirements on how to maintain discipline files
- Addresses inconsistencies in uniformity between the disciplinary action appeal process and the grievance process in Chapter 14. The proposal is to eliminate the complexity of the 2006 disciplinary action appeal process and use the proposed Grievance Policy to address discipline disputes and ensure uniformity in the dispute resolution process

Chapter 14 Grievances

- Updates the preamble policy statement to be more direct and acknowledges current practice and goals of maintaining a productive work environment, having a structured approach to resolving employee disputes and setting expectations of timely resolution
- Removes the Final Authority section which lists the Mayor as the appeal authority for City Administrator grievance decisions. Moves the final appeal decision step to the City Manager in Step 2 of the formal grievance process
- Clarifies which issues are grievable. The 2006 policy does not provide specific limitations. The proposed policy excludes matters such as City Council actions, layoff or reduction in force decisions, performance evaluations, or matters outside of the City's jurisdiction as grievable matters
- Adds the requirement to exhaust other City policy remedies before initiating a grievance
- Provides clarity on informal vs. formal grievance processes and when an informal grievance can be escalated. The proposed updated grievance process places the focus of resolving most disputes at the supervisory level
- Reduces the formal grievance appeal process to one appeal, with the final appeal decision resting with the City Manager. The 2006 policy identifies the Mayor as a second appeal authority, which conflicts with the City Charter
- Adds a prohibition of retaliation against employees who file grievances in good faith. The 2006 policy is silent on retaliatory protections for grievants
- Adds record keeping standards

The resolution also changes or updates outdated, or obsolete terms found throughout the 2006 Personnel Policies Manual including:

- Replace "City Administrator" with "City Manager"
- Replace "Mayor" with "City Manager"
 - Except 2.09.02 Public and News Media – change to the extent allowed by City Charter
- Replace "City Accountant" with "Director of Finance"

Upon adoption of this resolution, the Administration will promptly implement these policy changes across the organization. Additional updates to the Personnel Policies Manual will be presented to the City Council for consideration in future meetings.

POLICY ANALYSIS/BENEFIT(S) TO CITIZENS:

Consistent with Strategic Action Plan Priority 5.1 Evaluate and Implement Key HR Programs That Promote Organizational Design and Development

Implements Strategic Action Plan project 5.1.2 Evaluate and Update Employee Handbook

Complies with Chapter 5 of the Home Rule Charter for the City Manager to implement ordinances and policies adopted by the City Council.

LONGTERM FINANCIAL & BUDGETARY IMPACT:

None

LEGAL ANALYSIS:

The resolution is approved as to form by the City Attorney's office.

Chapters 12 and 14 were reviewed by the City Attorney's office.

RECOMMENDATION/PROPOSED MOTION:

I move to approve a resolution amending the City of Fair Oaks Ranch's Personnel Policies.