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To: Mayor Kudron and the Grand Lake Board of Trustees
From: John Crone, Town Manager
Re: Providing Parental Leave
Date: October 9, 2023

Background

People in Grand Lake have often expressed the need to bring in more families. Additionally, the Town government has been trying to identify ways to incentivize people to consider Town jobs as career opportunities. One way to work toward both of these goals is to provide parental leave to staff members.

Currently, the Town does not have a paternal leave policy. If an employee has a child (or adopts or fosters a child), they are required to take PTO if they want to be paid for their time off. This can be problematic given the necessity for multiple doctor visits throughout the first year of a child's life, as well as the very real possibility that the staffer will also face the need for time off for reasons unrelated to the child throughout the year.

The Family Medical Leave Act is a federal requirement that allows workers to take up to twelve weeks of leave for various medical reasons including having a new child (whether through childbirth, adoption, or fostering). The FMLA does NOT require that the employee be paid for this time. The State of Colorado is starting a FAMLA insurance program at the beginning of 2024. This program will provide a certain amount of pay for those employees taking FMLA leave; however, the amount covered by the insurance will be somewhere between 40% of pay and 90% of pay depending on how much the employee works. Although the insurance will help, relying on it will put employees in serious financial risk given the high cost of living in Grand Lake.

Currently, no other municipalities in Grand County offer paid paternal leave; however, Winter Park is introducing a policy for potential adoption by its Council.

Discussion

Staff would like to propose that the Town institute a paid parental leave policy. The proposed policy would provide make-up pay for a certain period of time. This pay would cover the difference between the insurance payouts and the employee's regular pay. During any leave, the Town is required to still provide benefits and must allow the employee to return to their job (FMLA). However, we need feedback on several points.

1. Is the Board even interested in instituting such a policy?
2. How long should the Town provide the pay (up to twelve weeks)?
3. How much should the Town pay?
4. Should there be limitations on who is eligible (e.g. full-time, have worked here for at least a year, etc.)?
5. Are there any other limitations needed?