

**CITY OF MARSHALL
WORK SESSION
M I N U T E S
Tuesday, October 10, 2023**

The work session of the Common Council of the City of Marshall was held October 10, 2023, at City Hall, 344 West Main Street. The meeting was called to order at 4:00 P.M. by Mayor Robert Byrnes. In addition to Byrnes the following members were in attendance: Craig Schafer, Steve Meister, Amanda Schroeder, and See Moua-Leske. Absent: John Alcorn and James Lozinski. Staff present included: Sharon Hanson, City Administrator; E.J. Moberg, Director of Administrative Services; Sheila Dubs, Human Resource Manager; Laura Wing, Payroll/Benefits Specialist and Steven Anderson, City Clerk.

Consider 2024 Health and Dental Insurance Renewals

Sheila Dubs, Human Resources Manager, introduced Bill Chukuske from National Insurance Services (NIS) who brokers insurance for the city. Dubs informed the council that in 2023 Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) had an increase of 8.8% but for 2024 the increase amounted to 7.0%. For dental in 2023 the increase was 0.0% because there was a two-year rate guarantee. For 2024, Delta Dental proposed an increase of 10.57%. Chukuske went into the details of the renewal summary for insurance proposals. Chukuske briefly talked about long-term care (LTC) insurance. The Cares Act in the state of Washington has ignited a national trend. Last year, the state of Washington rolled out legislation that creates a Long-Term Care benefit for all W2 employees that meet the state's eligibility requirements -and it is funded by an employee payroll tax. Employees can seek exemption status from this payroll tax if they have a private LTC policy that meets the minimum requirements of the state. To mitigate this tax, hundreds of thousands of Washington residents chose to buy private LTC insurance. Since the Cares Act, similar legislation has begun to take shape in other states, including in the Midwest and East. Due to the new potential legislation, employers are considering educating their employees on risk and coverage levels or offering voluntary LTC alternatives to the state plans.

Originally BCBS was looking at a 10% increase but the underwriters for NIS did some additional research and found that there were some adjustments needed to employee numbers and were able to reduce the increase to 7.0%. With Delta Dental coming in at a 10.57% Dubs with the assistance of Chukuske submitted request for proposals and five carriers provided quotes for dental insurance. Staff recommended switching to Beam Benefits for dental insurance for a smaller rate. The dentistry situation in Marshall had created a unique situation where no dentist in the area was accepting insurance as in-network. With Beam Benefits the usual, customary, and reasonable (UCR) rate that would be paid was 95% opposed to the 90% covered by Delta Dental. Chukuske explained that UCR is a method that carriers used to gather how much a particular service costs in an area based on up to 10 provider and the carrier will determine an amount based on that information. Vision insurance saw no change because the rates were locked in through 2024, so for 2025 new bids would need to be sought. Meister asked how the change for employees would be if a switch was made to Beam Benefits. Chukuske clarified that it would be a similar process to Delta Dental because everything in the Marshall area are out of network for both insurance carriers. Members questioned how Public Housing employees were included in the city insurance policy. Dubs stated that Public Housing employees had been on the city policy for as long as she can remember but Public Housing pays 100% and there was zero contribution from the city. Schafer shared his experience with LTC insurance and sparked some conversation about lack of facilities and staff for these LTC facilities. At 4:33 PM Mayor Byrnes adjourned the meeting.

Attest:

City Clerk

Mayor