

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Melissa R. Marsh, City Manager

Date: September 3, 2026

Subject: Military Leave Policy Modernization

Recommendation

I recommend that City Council adopt the attached resolution establishing a consistent 26-day paid military leave benefit for eligible full-time City employees and formalizing the City's existing practice for long-term active military leave.

Background

The City has historically supported employees who serve in the military. For long-term active military leave, each individual leave has been brought to City Council for approval by resolution, including authorization for the City to provide a pay differential between the employee's City compensation and verified military compensation. This Council approval process has been the City's established practice.

Michigan Public Acts 57 and 58 of 2026 changed the framework for military leave. PA 57 confirms that a local unit of government may provide, by ordinance, resolution, or personnel policy, either a differential pay program or a specific number of paid military leave days. PA 58 establishes a 26-day paid military leave requirement for qualifying full-time law enforcement officers and firefighters who are members of the reserve components. Staff recommends extending a comparable benefit to other eligible full-time employees.

What is changing

The key policy change is the creation of twenty-six (26) paid military leave days per calendar year for eligible full-time City employees. These days are intended to cover verified military leave, including shorter periods of active military duty and routine reserve obligations. Currently, this type of leave requires an employee to use their personal leave banks. The 26 paid military leave days will be separated from the employees' regular leave banks and must be used exclusively for verified military leave. Unused military leave may not be accumulated, carried over to a subsequent calendar year, or paid out.

For active-duty military service lasting 90 days or more, the City's existing practice will continue: the employee may receive a pay differential between the employee's City base wage and verified military compensation. Currently, this would require separate resolutions by City Council; staff is requesting that City Council adopt this resolution, making this the standard practice.

Fiscal and policy considerations

The 26-day benefit is required for Police and Fire employees; however, the city would like to extend it to all full-time employees. This extension is above and beyond the state requirement and therefore optional.

The City will continue to administer military leave in accordance with applicable federal and state law, including USERRA, and applicable collective bargaining agreements. The City's policy should not be construed to diminish any greater right provided by law or an applicable collective bargaining agreement.

Conclusion

The proposed policy recognizes and supports employees who serve in the military while creating a clear, consistent framework for administering military leave. The principal change is the establishment of 26 paid military leave days per calendar year per State law, extending this benefit to all full-time employees and solidifying our process and pay-differential practice for long-term active military service.