



BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF SNOQUALMIE

AB23-041
March 27, 2023
Committee Report

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB23-041 Amending the Snoqualmie Personnel Policies by Rescinding and Repealing Policy 2.33	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
PROPOSED ACTION:	Adopt Resolution 1640 Amending the Snoqualmie Personnel Policies by Rescinding and Repealing Policy 2.33.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resolution

REVIEW:	Department Director/Peer	Mark Correia	Click or tap to enter a date.
	Finance	Jen Ferguson	Click or tap to enter a date.
	Legal	Bob Sterbank	3/17/2023
	City Administrator	Mike Sauerwein	3/17/2022

DEPARTMENT:	Human Resources		
STAFF:	Jen Ferguson		
COMMITTEE:	Finance & Administration	COMMITTEE DATE: March 21, 2023	
MEMBERS:	Bryan Holloway	James Mayhew	Rob Wotton
EXHIBITS:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Draft Resolution 1640 - Amending Personnel Policies by Rescinding and Repealing Policy 2.33 (Ex. 1)2. Resolution 1619 – Passed Resolution June 13, 2022 (Ex. 2)3. “COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations and Deaths By Vaccination Status,” Washington Department of Health (September 29, 2021) (Ex. 3)4. “COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations and Deaths By Vaccination Status in Washington State,” Washington Department of Health (February 13, 2023) (Ex. 4)5. Governor’s Proclamation 21-14.6 Termination of Emergency Order (Ex. 5).		

AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE \$ n/a

AMOUNT BUDGETED \$ n/a

APPROPRIATION REQUESTED \$ n/a

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This agenda bill recommends adoption of Resolution No. 1640. The Resolution would amend the Snoqualmie Personnel Policies by rescinding and repealing Policy No. 2.33, which establishes a qualification of employment requiring that all City employees be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 with a vaccine authorized by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The following enactments comprise the City of Snoqualmie legislative history relevant to this agenda bill:

Emergency Proclamation dated March 6, 2020
Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination and Masking Directives dated August 19, 2021
Revised Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination and Masking Directive dated January 17, 2022
Resolution No. 1619, adopted June 14, 2022
Recission of Emergency Proclamation effective October 31, 2022

BACKGROUND

On February 29, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee issued Proclamation 20-05 declaring a state of emergency in all counties of the state related to the spread of the Covid-19 virus. One week later, on March 6, 2020, then-Mayor Matthew R. Larson issued an Emergency Proclamation declaring the existence of an emergency within the City of Snoqualmie related to the significant health risks posed by the Covid-19 virus. On March 23, 2020, Governor Inslee issued a “Stay Home – Stay Healthy” order intended to reduce the spread and transmission of the Covid-19 virus, and subsequently issued many additional proclamations and orders related to COVID-19.

Among the additional proclamations was Proclamation 21-14, which required all State of Washington employees, on-site independent contractors, volunteers, goods and services providers, and appointees of designated state agencies to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 on or before October 18, 2021. At the time of issuance of Proclamation 21-14, Governor Inslee called upon other state and local leaders to impose similar mandatory vaccination requirements in their local governments and organizations. King County Executive Dow Constantine and Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan did so, and also imposed mandatory vaccination requirements for all County and all City of Seattle employees, respectively (subject to requirements for medical and religious exemptions and reasonable accommodations). On August 19, 2021, then-Mayor Matthew R. Larson issued the Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination and Masking Directives dated August 19, 2021, which imposed as a qualification of employment the requirement that all City of Snoqualmie employees and City volunteers, including volunteer firefighters and health care providers, be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 with a vaccine authorized by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. The mandatory vaccination requirements were imposed in light of continued surging rates of infection, hospitalization and death from COVID-19, driven at that time by the Delta variant, but subsequently by the Omicron and offshoot variants, including BA.5, BQ.1 and BQ.1.1.

Subsequently, on June 14, 2022, the Snoqualmie City Council adopted Resolution No. 1619, which incorporated the City’s mandatory COVID-19 vaccination qualification of employment as Policy 2.33 of the Snoqualmie Personnel Policies. In light of the significant vaccination rates within Washington State, the availability of bivalent COVID-19 boosters and treatments like antivirals, and the determination by health experts and epidemiological modeling experts, on October 28, 2022, Governor Inslee rescinded Proclamation 21-14 and the mandatory vaccination requirement for Washington State employees and independent contractors. Following the Governor’s lead, effective October 31, 2022 Mayor Ross rescinded the prior Emergency Proclamation adopted by Mayor Larson. The City’s vaccination requirement, however, remains in place, due to its incorporation as Policy 2.33 in the Snoqualmie Personnel Policies.

ANALYSIS

Circumstances have changed since the August, 2021 adoption of the Mandatory Vaccination COVID-19 Vaccination and Masking Directives. The rate of vaccination in City of Snoqualmie residents, and other East King County jurisdictions, is high. According to King County data, in the area including Sammamish, Duvall, Carnation, Snoqualmie and North Bend, and unincorporated areas east to the Cascade Crest, 90.1% of all residents have completed the primary series of COVID-19 vaccinations, and 68.8% have received the original booster. In the cities of Bellevue, Issaquah and Mercer Island, the rates are 91% and 67.4%, respectively. All current City of Snoqualmie employees have been vaccinated, and many have also received boosters. The City

has only 10-12 vacancies among existing FTE positions, of which a number are in the hiring process and have been advertised as being subject to the current vaccination requirement. Meanwhile, data collected by the Washington Department of Health (“DOH”) demonstrates a significant decrease in the rates of hospitalization and death per 100,000 people since the fall of 2021.

For example, the September 29, 2021 “COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations and Deaths By Vaccination Status” report indicates that the incidence of COVID cases per 100,000 people were 4-6 times higher in unvaccinated than vaccinated individuals across all age groups; hospitalization rates per 100,000 people were 10-26 times higher in unvaccinated than vaccinated individuals across all age groups (and 20-26 times higher for ages 35-64 and 65+); and deaths per 100,000 people occurred at a rate 9 times higher in unvaccinated than vaccinated individuals in the 65+ age group. See Exhibit 3.

By contrast, the February 13, 2023 DOH report “COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations and Deaths By Vaccination Status in Washington State” indicates that for the period January 5 – February 1, 2023, hospitalization rates per 100,000 people were 2.6 – 5.5 times higher in unvaccinated than vaccinated individuals across all age groups, and death rates per 100,000 people were 2.8 – 6.0 times higher in unvaccinated than vaccinated individuals across all age groups. See Exhibit 4.

In addition to the above, since the fall of 2021, bivalent COVID-19 boosters have become readily available for people 5 years and older and, COVID-19 vaccines have been approved for children 6 months and older, and antiviral treatments such as Paxlovid are also available for early treatment of individuals who may contract COVID-19.

The above change in circumstances were part of what led Governor Inslee to declare that “although Department of Health statistics reflect the continued persistence of COVID-19 in the state, including continued hospitalizations and deaths due to COVID-19, health experts and epidemiological modeling experts believe that as a state we have made adequate progress against COVID-19 to end the state of emergency,” and that, therefore, the Governor could terminate the State’s COVID-19 vaccination requirements. See Exhibit 5.

Based on the information set forth above, the Administration agrees with Governor Inslee that, although Department of Health statistics reflect the continued persistence of COVID-19 in the state, the decreased differential in rates of hospitalizations and deaths between vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals, and other factors outlined above demonstrate that sufficient progress has been made against COVID-19 to end the requirement as a qualification of employment that City employees be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. And, while for those persons who are able to be vaccinated, getting fully vaccinated and remaining up to date with all recommended boosters remains the most effective tool to protect themselves, their families, and their communities, all current City employees are already vaccinated, and existing City policy offers an incentive to unrepresented employees and employees in at least one collective bargaining unit to obtain a COVID-19 booster if they have not already received one by the time they commence employment with the City. Resolution 1640 does not change the booster incentive.

BUDGET IMPACTS

N/A.

NEXT STEPS

N/A.

PROPOSED ACTION

Move to adopt Resolution No. 1640 and authorize the Mayor to sign.

