



City of Stevenson

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To: Stevenson City Council
From: Leana Kinley, City Administrator
RE: Standby Pay Discussion
Meeting Date: November 18, 2021

Executive Summary:

Public Works employees currently rotate carry an emergency phone on weekends and holidays during non-working hours. During this time, “the employee must be able to respond to a call within 30 minutes shall not be impaired at any time while on call” (pg. 22 current personnel policy). They are compensated an hourly rate of \$2.24 when they are on-call and are paid overtime for any call-outs or rounds work done during their on-call period. The Public Works Director carries the phone during the week and is not compensated for the on-call phone nor for any call-out. The departure of the Public Works Director necessitates the Public Works employees step up and carry the on-call rotation on a weekly basis. It was requested the city review the standby pay rate to accommodate the additional workload of extending the standby rotation period into the workweek.

Analysis:

Prior to 2018 staff received \$500 per month, or \$6,000 a year, for having water and wastewater certifications and being on-call on weekends and holidays on a rotating basis. In June 2018, after a salary analysis, council approved adding the \$500 pay to the employees’ monthly salary and instituting a \$2.00 per hour on-call pay for hours employees are on standby during non-work hours for weekends and holidays. The Public Works Director carried the on-call phone during the week with no additional pay.

With the departure of the Public Works Director, the on-call rotation will now be for 7 days rather than only on weekends and holidays to cover the gap. The job description only addresses weekend duties for on-call rotation as part of the job conditions. While the immediate need for the change is due to the departing Director, this is an opportunity to improve cross-training within the public works crew. Being in a weekly on-call rotation will allow staff to perform the daily rounds on a regular basis and become more knowledgeable on both the Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants. If council would like to make this change permanent, the job descriptions would need to be changed.

When performing the requested review of the standby pay-rate, it was found that of the 17 cities of similar size surveyed (details in the following table), 7 did not have any standby pay. How the other 10 cities paid varied, with some paying a flat rate while others paid on an hourly basis. Normalizing these rates created a range between \$0.94-\$8.16 per hour. Removing the lowest and highest rates and averaging the rest results in a rate of \$2.67 per hour. The current annual cost of this increase would be about \$2,750.

City	Pop.	Standby-Pay	City	Pop.	Standby Pay
Bingen	735	No Pay	Stevenson	1560	\$2.13/hr
La Conner	925	\$32 a day on weekends	Sumas	1571	No Pay
North Bonneville	1010	No Pay	South Bend	1620	Yes-don't know rate, call back Monday
Coulee Dam	1100	No Pay	Tenino	1785	¼ of hourly wage
Tonasket	1110	\$25 a day on weekends	Cle Elum	1875	\$120 Friday-Mon \$50-Holiday
Cascade Locks	1158	2 hours regular pay on weekends	Carnation	2030	\$2.50-3 hour minimum for call-outs
Entiat	1195	No Pay	Westport	2115	\$1.85/hr
Darrington	1400	No Pay	Friday Harbor	2255	No Pay-4-hour Minimum call-out
Kittitas	1500	\$150/month split between the employees (50/50 if they carry the phone 50/50, etc)	White Salmon	2480	\$6.87

Conclusion:

The recommendation is to increase standby pay for employees from \$2.24 per hour in 2022 to \$2.67 per hour. The rate will then increase annually based on the COLA.

Another option is to increase the call-out minimum from 2-hours to 3-hours, like Carnation.

Staff direction is needed on whether to make the change to a weekly standby rotation an emergency status or permanent and update the job descriptions accordingly.