

Administration Department

To: Finance Committee

From: Mayor McFarland

Date: February 6, 2025

Subject: Military Leave Policy Update

Background

The City leadership team recently discussed reviewing our Military Leave policy to ensure that it is representative of the current responsibilities of our city team members who serve in the United States Military. The leadership team was encountering situations where weekend training was extended into three days, and the two week a year trainings, were extending into three weeks a year. It is the desire of the Leadership Team to be supportive of the work of our military team members, and as such, they wanted to revise the policy.

The leadership team asked three city team members, two who are/were in the military, and one person who is familiar with the Finance Department's implementation of the policy, to review the text and provide recommendations to the leadership team.

Our current policy is below, and the proposed policy is attached. On the proposed policy, you will note one tracked change. That change is the only item that was changed from the version submitted by the three-person subgroup.

On the proposed policy, the headings of, "Written Notice, Health Insurance, WRS, and Return to Work," are all sections that are consistent with federal law. The headings that have flexibility at this time are "Leave Benefits, and Differential Pay." The majority of the "Leave Benefits" section is standard procedure for the city, except for the vacation section.

C. MILITARY LEAVE

Full-time employees who are members of the United States Military Reserve and who are granted a leave of absence for the employee's annual two (2) week reserve training and who have been employed by the City for thirty (30) calendar days shall be paid the difference between the employee's regular straight gross military base pay and the employee's regular straight time earnings for such annual two (2) week reserve training period. Such differential pay shall be paid upon receipt of evidence of the amount of the employee's total gross military base pay.

USERRA requires that service members provide advance written or verbal notice to their employers for all military duty unless giving notice is impossible, unreasonable, or precluded by military necessity. An employee should provide notice as far in advance as is reasonable under the circumstances. Service members are able (but not required) to use accrued vacation or annual leave while performing military duty.

Budget Goal

1. Supports employee retention and growth, while also evaluating operations and the associated staffing
2. Maintains a safe and healthy community, with an eye toward future needs and trends

Financial Impact

There are potential financial impacts depending on the circumstances. For example, if someone is deployed for eight months and returns and quits, we would have a vacation payout to consider. While the team member is budgeted to be present for the entire year, undoubtedly overtime expenses would accrue as well.

Recommendation

I recommend that Finance Committee discuss any unintended substantial financial risks and approve the policy.