



Council Agenda Item

Meeting Date: July 16, 2024

Agenda Item: Employee Handbook

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BACKGROUND

(Enter the who, what when, where, why)

Ordinance 2.70.010 states as follows: The City of Whitewater Employee Manual and any amendments or revisions thereof as periodically approved by the city council is hereby adopted herein and made a part of this chapter.

The current Employee Manual was approved in December of 2011. Over the years, the City moved away from the employee manual and started utilizing policy statements. This created confusion between manual and policies with all in need of updating. Previous revision attempts in 2013 and 2016 were unsuccessful. After a number of meetings/discussions and a recommendation from CVMIC, a commitment was made to move forward with an updated Employee Manual.

In April of 2023, HR staff began the review of the state of the handbook and policies as well as numerous current and former employee suggestions. CVMIC was also reviewing the handbook for the third time as the previous suggestions had not been implemented.

CVMIC provided their suggestions in July of 2023. Many of the suggestions involved discarding current City policies and replacing them with CVMIC sample policies. HR began the process of researching polies, handbooks and best practices in order to combine everything into a document that is current but relevant to our City culture.

Starting in September of 2023, staff held discussions with an employee focus group regarding what was needed in an employee handbook.

Additionally, staff purchased the Society of Human Resource Management handbook builder which provided a general framework, sample policies and will allow us to receive updates when there are changes in state or federal laws that will need to be added or updated in our handbook.

From January through February 2024, department and division directors along with payroll personnel meticulously reviewed the old handbook page by page discussing current practice, requested changes, and clarified the meanings of various sections.

From those discussions, a draft was presented in April 2024 to employees from DPW, Parks, PD, FD, and Finance. The City Manager completed his review in May. Employees were then given a two-week comment period in late May, during which additional changes and requests were incorporated into the final draft. The City Attorney approved the final version on June 13, 2024.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS – COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

(Dates, committees, action taken)

December 2011 – Date of previous Employee Manual.

January 17, 2023 – Council voted unanimously to repeal Ordinance 2.70.010 (First Reading) which would have subsequently ended the use of the Employee Manual.

February 7, 2023 – Council voted to postpone the item indefinitely until the Council decided they wanted to bring it back.

February 23, 2023 – Council directed staff to create a timeline to untangle the discrepancies between the handbook and polies and create a framework through the Finance Committee for ongoing review of policies.

June 19, 2024 – The updated draft Employee Handbook and related policies were presented to the Finance Committee. The committee recommended moving forward to Council.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

(If none, state N/A)

There are changes in the handbook that will cause a financial impact but indications are the impact will be minimal. Additionally, estimated impacts will depend on utilization. For instance, there is a \$1,500/yr. stipend recommendation for Spanish-Speaking Fluency. Impact will be dependent on the number of employees who decide to pursue Spanish fluency.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approving the Employee Handbook and related policies. Upon approval, staff will set up employee meetings to review and obtain acknowledgements for the handbook. Additionally, the handbook will be available online with links to the individual policies for employee further review.

ATTACHMENT(S) INCLUDED

(If none, state N/A)

1. Summary of handbook main changes
 2. 2024 Draft Employee Handbook
 3. Policies to be linked online
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