



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™
Human Resources Department

REPORT TO MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Jennifer Johnston, Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations

DATE: March 11, 2024

SUBJECT: City Retention and Recruitment Committee Recommendations

Recommendation

Set the attached resolution appropriating the sum of sixty-six thousand one hundred ninety dollars (\$66,190) for employee recruitment and retention and associated overtime expenses for public hearing on April 8, 2024

Background

The City is experiencing an increased turnover rate due to a number of factors. Over the past several months, we have lost police employees to other law enforcement organizations, ordinary retirements and officers leaving the profession altogether. Similarly, we have lost fire fighters to other professions with nursing being a draw as well as other communities whose emergency medicine delivery system is different. We have also lost CDL drivers to private employment and self-employment.

Presently, the Fire Department has 8 current vacancies. The Police department has 14 vacancies with a significant number of officers in training and with injuries or other leave status.

The General Services and Parks and Recreation departments have struggled to retain CDL drivers. While we presently we only have 1 CDL position vacant, our 15 new laborer/truck drivers with less than a year of service represents over half of the group of CDL operators in total.

Additionally, the Community Development has lost a number of skilled and technical employees to competing organizations over the past several months. Of the 38 positions in the Community Development Department, 16 have been with the organization for approximately one year or less. Another 3 positions are presently vacant.

Similarly, our legal department has lost several prosecutors in recent years.

This churning of the labor pool has impacted all City operations. Additionally, our valued employees who have remained with the City have been carrying larger workloads as we work to fill vacancies.

Since the end of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the available applicant pool has been at an all-time low,

thus negatively impacting recruitment efforts. However, there has been some modest recovery in limited areas of the market. Additionally, competition created by the tight labor market has resulted in an unusually high attrition rate for the City.

Historically, a pension, attractive medical benefits, and job security have been a draw for public sector employment. However, in the current employment landscape, these benefits have not been enough to retain, as well as attract, talent. As of December 2023, the Unemployment Rate in New Hampshire was a mere 2.5%; down from 2.9% in December of 2022.

Discussion

- 1) **Additional Earned Leave:** The City's Retention and Recruitment Committee recommends that the City establish a temporary earned leave bank as a stop gap measure against future employee loss.

This retention program will reward our current tenured employees who have taken on a drastically increased workload during this staffing crisis, with temporary additional earned leave time as detailed below. Said leave time must be used by December 31, 2024. Additionally, said leave cannot be carried over after December 31, 2024, nor will it have any cash value should an eligible employee depart the organization. This retention program is designed to slow the turnover rate, which will help the City time to recover from its current staffing deficit.

This temporary additional earned leave would be awarded to non-probationary, contractual employees at the following rates who are members of the following collective bargaining groups: UAW, AFSCME, CPPA, CPSA, IAFF, and CFOA. Said program is subject to these bargaining units entering into Memorandums of Understanding with the City related hereto.

Length of Service:	0-5 years	Amount of Leave Awarded:	16 hours
Length of Service:	5-10 years	Amount of Leave Awarded:	24 hours
Length of Service:	10+ years	Amount of Leave Awarded:	32 hours

Non-contractual employees will be ineligible to participate in the temporary additional earned leave program as their annual leave accrual was increased as part of previous recruitment and retention committee recommendation report in 2023.

To implement this program, supplemental funding will be required for FY2024 in the amount of \$66,190 for overtime costs to cover shifts of those employees utilizing this additional earned leave. Additionally, it is projected that this program will cost \$198,570 in FY2025. Appropriation of funds to for projected FY2025 expenses will be addressed during the FY2025 budget adoption process.

- 2) **"Perks Package" for City Facilities:** The retention and recruitment committee also recommends that the City establish an employee "Perks Package", which would afford all non-resident employees the ability to access to City pool and splash pad facilities, as well as the ability to receive a Concord Public Library card. The proposed package would also allow all City employees to receive the member guest rate at the Beaver Meadow Golf Course. None of these items require an appropriation for implementation.

Cc: City Manager
Deputy City Manager for Finance
City Clerk