

January 24, 2023 Ad Hoc Meeting - Employee Benefits and Wage Review Ad Hoc Committee

Ad Hoc Meeting – Employee Benefits and Wage Review – January 24, 2023 AT 12:00 P.M.

Members Present:

Mark Jantzer, Stephan Podrygula, Scott Burlingame, Harold Stewart, Lisa Jundt, Derek Hackett, Travis Seifert, Kevin Ternes, Margie Zietz

Members Absent:

Terri Phillion, Laurie Davis, Dallas Varty

Also Present:

Mikayla McWilliams (City Clerk)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mark Jantzer at 12:01 pm. Chairman Jantzer asked Lisa Jundt, HR Director, to provide a summary on the employee survey the City of Minot conducted. Lisa mentioned that 40% of the employees completed the survey. The main points would include the employees are overall happy with the benefit package, the most important benefit for the employees is the medical insurance, the second most important benefit is the vacation and sick leave, employees would like to see more cost savings of what is coming out of their checks, and EAP and long-term disability need improvement.

The employees chose e-mail as the best way to communicate but a problem is not all employees have the access to e-mail. The City of Minot will be fixing the issue by providing all employees with e-mails with the new HR system. Margie mentioned the survey did not have many questions on the current vacation and sick leave. Lisa stated that at the time of developing the survey there was not discussions on vacation/sick leave vs. PTO.

Chairman Jantzer asked Lisa to discuss the process of development of the survey. Lisa stated Brown & Brown provided survey questions and the HR Department was able to select from those questions which ones pertained to the City of Minot employees. The HR Department left it open and accessible on the intranet for two months. During that 2 months, 170 employees out of 435 answered the survey, which is roughly 40%.

The discussion of other insurances began with Lisa Jundt discussing the dental insurance. This insurance will usually see a premium increase due to claims/usage. The life insurance offered to employees is an old plan and could be looked at to be restructured. The long-term disability provided by the city saved on premiums this year. Lisa also mentioned that it might be time to start to think about going out to RFP for the EAP (Employee Assistance Program).

Alderman Podrygula asked about the current issues the city is dealing with where the EAP is concerned. Lisa stated the City of Minot currently uses the Village for EAP but she believes they are short staffed, with a low list of providers, and there is a lengthy wait for services. Alderman Podrygula was understanding of the issues but this is a critical service. He was concerned that the services were not acting promptly to help the individuals with a treatment plan or course for services.

Kevin Ternes was wondering if the city could just RFP for the Employee Assistance Program. Lisa replied the city can definitely go out for RFP on the EAP if that is directed. The EAP would require the respondents to add in a scope of work they are able to provide to the city.

Alderman Burlingame motioned a recommendation to be going out for RFP for a new EAP provider. Alderman Podrygula seconded and the motion carried with a unanimous vote in favor of the motion.

Margie asked about how AFLAC is able to go with the employee after employment but she was wondering if the life insurance plan could also. There is an optional portion to the insurance and could be turned into a whole life policy but the group portion cannot be. Alderman Podrygula mentioned that the city could possibly do more for a line of death duty or a work related death. He also mentioned there might be benefits to having a staff case manager for work related injuries who could coordinate benefits.

Alderman Burlingame asked if the city provides a short-term disability plan. Lisa stated the employees are not provided that benefit but they have the option to add that benefit individually with AFLAC. The city does provide long-term disability and that kicks in after 6 months. An employee would have to use sick leave, vacation leave, or have their own individual short-term disability plan.

Travis Seifert mentioned to the committee that he has had several people reach out to him stating they do not want a high deductible medical plan. Harold Stewart, City Manager, is opposed to the City of Minot going to only a high deductible plan but he is not opposed to offering both a low and high deductible plan. He also discussed some of the benefits of a high deductible plan such as the health savings account and how it is not a use it or lose it account and you keep your money in that account whether you stay with your employer or not.

Alderman Podrygula asked if Lisa would look into the costs of a short-term disability plan. An individual short-term plan monthly cost is dependent on age and possibly pre-existing conditions. Alderman Burlingame stating that a benefit for a short-term disability plan is the ability to use it with maternity/paternity leave.

The Flexible Spending Accounts offered to the city employees include medical and childcare. Lisa thought more employees might participate if there is more education on a yearly basis. Employees must enroll every year and the funding is a use or lose but medical does have a roll over amount.

Alderman Podrygula asked Harold about the different incentive options for employee benefits such as the idea of an a la carte benefit tool for recruitment. Harold replied saying the benefit providers prefer group contracts. There might be a hybrid option but the providers aren't structured for a cafeteria style option.

Alderman Burlingame wanted to discuss the options of health incentives/healthy living, which could help keep the medical insurance premiums down. Harold discussed a prior experience and how that city implemented an employee wellness program. Margie discussed how she would like to see the incentives available for all employees who participate. Margie also brought up the idea of a mental health coach who would be available to all employees. Lisa mentioned there have been discussions of other options for employee mental health. Harold discussed that the process has multiple pieces such as a better EAP, better management training, department coaches, etc.

Alderman Jantzer motioned a recommendation to be an employee wellness program. Alderman Podrygula seconded the motion and the motion carried with a unanimous vote in favor of the motion.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 12:00 pm. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:01 pm.