

CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING

November 17, 2014

9:00 A.M.

Mayor Jerah Cordova called the Workshop of the Belen City Council to order at 9:00 A.M. Roll call taken by Jay Ruybalid, City Manager.

PRESENT: Mayor Jerah Cordova
Councilor Darleen Aragon
Councilor Frank Ortega
Councilor Wayne Gallegos
Councilor David Carter

CITY MANAGER: Jay Ruybalid

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Jerah Cordova led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Jerah Cordova asked for a motion to approve the Agenda. Councilor Wayne Gallegos made a motion to approve the Agenda. Councilor Darleen Aragon seconds the motion. Roll Call Vote:

Councilor Wayne Gallegos	Yes	
Councilor Darleen Aragon	Yes	
Councilor David Carter	Yes	
Councilor Frank Ortega	Yes	Motion carried

DISCUSSION ITEM

EMPLOYEE MAXIMUM ACCRUAL HOURS: Jay Ruybalid, City Manager

Jay informed the Council that the maximum accrual hours used to be 240 hours; however about two years ago, it went to 160. He conveyed that it has been suggested, by employees, that the maximum accrual hours go back up to 240 hours. He informed the Council that there are some employees with leave over 240 hours, and they are having a difficult time going down to 160 hours. Councilor Gallegos asked for a summary of what took place at the last City Council Meeting; Councilor Gallegos was absent for the last meeting. A copy of what took place at the last meeting can be found on the Minutes from November 3, 2014. Councilor Ortega would like to know the difference between 160 and 240 maximum accrual hours; he stressed, "how do we know the same thing wouldn't happen with 240 hours". Councilor Wayne Gallegos mentioned that we need the input of our HR Manager; Lucy was not at work today. Jay Ruybalid reported that the maximum accrual of sick leave was also previously lowered from 1080 to 800. Jay understood that two years ago there was an audit finding and recommendation from the City's Auditors; however, the finding was on the sick and annual leave combined. Councilor Aragon stressed that it is important to have a work/life balance. Paul Dominguez, Water Department stated that employees with 10 years of service should have been grandfathered in. Dale Tafoya, Public Works Director stated that the problem two years ago was that employees were also earning comp time; therefore annual leave was high. Councilor Gallegos stated that there was also an issue with employees assuming they had until December 31st to take their leave, but it was the last pay period in December. Pamela explained that every year a date was given to employees as to when they had to have their hours down to 240; however, employees would argue that the end of the year meant December 31st. She added that employees that waited up to December 31st to take vacation would lose their overage accrual hours. Councilor Gallegos agreed and reiterated what Pamela stated. Dale asked if the date could be moved to December 31st to use up accrual

time. Pam answered no; it has to be the last physical day paid in December. Dale mentioned that he recommends his employees to take off during the Christmas Holidays, because it's a slow time. Pamela Toledo, Payroll Clerk replied that they can still do that, but it will be accounted towards next year's leave. Dale stated that employees don't like to use their time all right away, at the beginning of the year; they usually like to save it. Manny Garcia, Fire Chief, stressed that when employees were hired, they were provided a package explaining their benefits, and what the City cannot provide in salary, they do provide in benefits. Chief Garcia agrees with Chief Dan Robb and his recommendation of having this policy affect new employees hired after the change. Councilor Carter asked about budgeting for retirees. Roseann stated that was the issue; the payout for the retirees was too high. Roseann explained that the way she works the budget is that she asks Pam who is eligible to retire and how much will the payout be. Councilor Carter pointed out that if an employee terminates employment without retiring they receive their vacation leave as well. Pamela informed the Council that the accrual amount was supposed to change along with the deduction of the 160 hours, but it did not. Roseann informed the Council that last year, employees were paid out for excess accrual hours. Pamela added that employees are hoping to get paid out again. Councilor Gallegos asked if there were still payouts for sick leave. Roseann answered no; it's either use them or lose them. Councilor Carter stated that is the issue; the employees were paid out last year. Councilor Gallegos stressed that we need to look into the liability. Councilor Carter stressed that if employees lose accrual hours at the end of the year, it's not because they are losing the benefit, it's because they are not taking them. Councilor Carter stated that employees need to take responsibility and take their leave. Councilor Gallegos asked how immediate this issue was, and he asked if we are trying to decide on something at the last minutes again. Dale asked if the employees can get an extension for now. Councilor Ortega asked the City Manager for his recommendation. Jay's recommendation is that the maximum accrual hours should be back to 240. Jay likes the idea of grandfathering employees that have been here 10 years or more. Jay also likes the idea of another workshop with the HR Manager present. Roseann suggested an extension of time to take the vacation leave down to 160. Councilor Gallegos asked if this is fair to those employees that did take their hours down to 160. Jay took a poll from the employees, and the employees would like an extension until January 1, 2015 to go down to 160 accrual hours, and they would like for employees hired with the 240 maximum accrual be grandfathered in. Julie Cervantes asked the Council if they can guarantee her that she will never be short staffed again. Jay stated that he will put together a committee to include the HR manager. Jay will also grant an extension of time to take accrual vacation hours over the 160 hours until January 9, 2014, because that is the end of the pay period.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Jerah Cordova asked for a motion to adjourn the workshop. Councilor Frank Ortega motioned to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Wayne Gallegos seconds the motion. Roll Call Vote:

Councilor Wayne Gallegos	Yes	
Councilor Darleen Aragon	Yes	
Councilor David Carter	Yes	
Councilor Frank Ortega	Yes	Motion carried

Jerah Cordova, Mayor

ATTEST:

Leona Vigil, City Clerk, CMC