



Date: May 27, 2020
To: Civil Service Commission
From: Christina Pizarro Winting, Executive Director
Subject: DISCUSSION REGARDING EXTENSION OF PROBATION

BACKGROUND:

At the May 6, 2020 Civil Service Commission meeting a request for extension of probation was on the agenda which led to the discussion of the increased number of requests for extension of probation the Commission has received during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission requested that staff provide the following information regarding this type of request:

- Number of extensions that are COVID-19 related
- How the extensions are being tracked
- Follow up on all second and third requests for extension

COVID-19 RELATED REQUESTS

To date the Commission has approved 5 COVID-19 related requests for extension of probation primarily due to staff not being at their regular work sites due to the Safer at Home order because of the pandemic.

The Civil Service Department has 15 more requests in the queue to come before the Commission. Staff met with the Financial Management Department which has 12 of the 15 requests to identify the date that each request will come before the Commission based on the original anticipated end of probation. Two of those requests are on today's agenda. The remaining 10 requests will be brought forth closer to the date that is 30 days before the end of probation. This will allow for employee evaluations to be completed providing the employee with feedback on their progress during the pandemic. In addition, the Harbor Department has 3 additional Special Services Officers that will require extensions due to the unavailability of outside training they typically receive. They too will receive the appropriate evaluations.

TRACKING OF EXTENSIONS

A spreadsheet has been created to track the activity for extensions of probation. While this will assist us during the pandemic, this is an example of the development of an improved practice that we will use beyond the pandemic to assist us in tracking these requests. The spreadsheet is attached for your review.

In addition, staff will be sure to abide by Article V, Section 41(2) of the Civil Service Rules and Regulations when determining the extension period. The rule states, "Extensions of probationary period may be granted by the Commission in three months or 522 SCHEDULED work hours increments but shall in no instance exceed six months or 1044 SCHEDULED work hours of extended probationary time." These hours are added to the employees record in the human resources management system to assist

with calculating hours worked. This calculation considers any time off taken, as only scheduled hours (SH) or telecommuting hours (TC) are counted towards completion of probation. Civil Service staff checks this system when confirming these requests.

FOLLOW UP ON ALL SECOND/THIRD REQUESTS

Staff has researched the request for second and third extensions of probation previously granted by the Commission and found that there have been 8 extensions granted since January 2019.

Of those 8 extensions granted 6 were Special Services Officers from the Harbor Department. Of the six extensions, 4 successfully completed probation and have obtained permanent status with the City, and 2 resigned from the City during probation.

The seventh extension in 2019 was for a Water Department employee who has successfully completed probation and is now a permanent employee with the City.

To date in 2020, we have only had one request for a second extension. This request was from the Energy Department and was a COVID-19 related request. The first request for extension was due to inadequate training from the department. The second request was due to COVID-19 related circumstances.

SUMMARY

In summary, staff has now put into place a process and mechanism to track the requests for the extension of probation for City staff. The Safer at Home order caused by the pandemic has made it challenging for some supervisors to both provide adequate institutional or technical training as well as provide sufficient skill acquisition through training and observation by the supervisor. We anticipate there may be more than the identified requests listed in this report as staff throughout the organization continues to telecommute. Civil Service staff is confident our newly developed procedure will assist us in tracking the additional requests in a timely manner and welcomes any additional suggestions the Commission may have.

Agenda Item No. 8

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