

City Commission Workshop
October 9, 2018
5:30 pm

Mayor Nugent called the workshop to order at 5:30 pm.

Members present included Mayor Nugent, Commissioner Chastain, Commissioner Mortimer, Commissioner Smith and Commissioner Waters. Also present were Police Chief Jeff Johnson, City Manager Bob Milner and City Attorney Dan Sikes.

Mayor Nugent turned the workshop over to Mr. Milner. Mr. Milner welcomed Commissioner Smith to his first workshop of many. Mr. Milner introduced Megan Richardson with Dynamic Corporate Solutions. Mr. Milner said all of the changes recommended by the commissioners at the previous Employee Handbook Workshop have been made. Attorney Sikes asked that the word Inc be removed from the second line of page 5. Attorney Sikes objected to the wording policies and practices adopted by the City of Starke because changes to medical leave must be done by ordinance. He also is concerned because the Fire Department and Police Department fall under different guidelines. Attorney Sikes said any changes to vested rights of employees must be done through an ordinance. Mr. Milner said he is just trying to go through the handbook so it can be approved. Commissioner Chastain asked if employees hired under the old handbook have rights. Attorney Sikes said they do. Commissioner Mortimer asked Attorney Sikes what his recommendation is. Attorney Sikes said anything to do with employees vested rights does not need to be addressed in the handbook. Mayor Nugent suggested looking at the things that can be worked on. Mr. Milner asked the commissioners to turn to page 41 to address the total compensation package. Mayor Nugent asked that the line employees do not contribute to the retirement plan be changed to reflect the 1 percent employees do contribute to the plan. Commissioner Mortimer asked if it should be changed from do not to may contribute. Mrs. Richardson said she would prefer that. Mr. Milner addressed the line referring to a Personnel Manager saying someone needs to fill that role. Mrs. Richardson suggested changing Personnel Manager to HR Representative. Attorney Sikes asked that the section 125 plan status wording be changed to may provide. Attorney Sikes suggested using the verbiage "may provide" instead of "will provide" when discussing any benefit. Mrs. Richardson said she will make the changes. Mr. Milner discussed various insurance plans provided through the city. He discussed job postings and using online postings. Mr. Milner discussed transfers between departments and said he would add City Clerk and Police Chief to HR Representative and City Manager throughout the document. Attorney Sikes asked if the City Manager would have the ability to stop a transfer from the Police Department to the City Clerk. Commissioner Mortimer said he should not because it is not his area of responsibility. Commissioner Chastain asked if the position of HR Representative was being created. Mr. Milner said the commission needs to decide that. Commissioner Waters asked if the HR Representative could be a current employee. Mr. Milner said it could. Commissioner Smith said the HR Representative would have to have special training. Commissioner Mortimer said it could be a contracted position. Mayor Nugent asked about requiring employees to stay for a length of time following training the city pays for. Attorney Sikes said he could draw up a contract. Mr. Milner addressed the probationary period.

He said most employers have a probationary period of 6 months or less. Ours has been a year for a long time. The new handbook will set the probationary period at 6 months. Chief Johnson asked how the probationary period would affect promotions and annual raises. He does not believe someone should not receive the annual increase because they were promoted in the last 6 months. Attorney Sikes suggested removing promotions from what the probationary period applies to. Mayor Nugent called for a 5-minute break. Mayor Nugent called the meeting back to order. Attorney Sikes suggested using the term "provisional promotion". Mr. Milner discussed the loyalty oath and city residency requirements. Mr. Milner discussed leave time. Commissioner Chastain asked how leave time is documented. Mr. Milner said it is noted on the time sheet and the supervisor is responsible for documenting it. Commissioner Mortimer asked about the paper trail for leave time. Wendy Sullivan, Utility Billing Clerk for the City of Starke explained that a leave request form is filled out before leave time is granted. Mr. Milner said bereavement leave also includes immediate step family. Mr. Milner said the only holiday normally observed but not on the list is Good Friday. The City Commission retains the right to alter which days and how many days will be allowed for each holiday. Mr. Milner addressed paid time off. Mr. Milner said PTO does not require the employee to disclose what the time off is being used for. Mrs. Richardson said PTO is the industry standard. Mayor Nugent asked for the current policy for comparison. Chief Johnson said the Police Department went to annual leave and gave up sick leave but they got holiday pay at the end of the year. Mr. Milner said employees with 10 or fewer years of service earn 3.5 hours of sick leave and 4 hours of vacation leave bi-weekly. He said under the new plan they would earn 10 hours of PTO bi-weekly for employees with 5 or fewer years of service. Employees with 5 to 10 years of service would earn 13.5 hours of PTO bi-weekly. Mr. Milner said employees with 10 or more years of service would earn 17 hours of PTO bi-weekly then he said it is monthly not bi-weekly. Commissioner Mortimer asked for calculations on what employees with substantial leave will lose. Deputy Clerk Lisa Terry said she will lose 75 hours of sick leave that she has saved up in the event of a major medical event. Mayor Nugent suggested moving on with the rest of the handbook and finishing the leave time discussion at a later date. The commissioners agreed to meet November 6, 2018 at 5:30 pm to discuss PTO. Mr. Milner said we have a workshop with Canopy Communications on November 6, 2018. The commissioners agreed to move the Canopy Communications Workshop to a later date. Mayor Nugent asked to have a comparison of the current policy and PTO. Mrs. Richardson said she will bring an apples to apples comparison to the next workshop. Mr. Milner discussed scheduling paid time off, jury duty, the Family Medical Leave Act, medical leave of absence, domestic violence leave and military leave. Mayor Nugent asked the commissioners to provide Mr. Milner with questions so they can be addressed before the next workshop.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:47 pm.