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# Employee Relations Committee Annual Report

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Norfolk City Council

FROM: Patrick Roberts, City Manager

Subject: Employee Relations Committee – Annual Report

Date: March 19, 2025

In accordance with Ordinance No. 49,415, Sec. 2.2-42 (b), I am providing City Council with a summary report of all Employee Relations Committee (“ERC”) meetings which have occurred to date, following the adoption of this Ordinance on November 23, 2023. Attached are copies of the agenda for each of the four employee committees. The meeting dates, location of meetings and a brief summary of the matters discussed are provided below. All meetings were facilitated by the City Manager, with Human Resources staff in attendance. Time was allotted for each member of the employee committee to report out on issues of concerns or interest, and to ask questions of the City Manager. The duration of each of the meetings was roughly 90 minutes.

Items of interest to the employee groups, such as compensation, equipment and facility needs and other specific matters have received recommendations in the proposed FY 2025 Operating and Capital Budget, within the overall context of affordability and prioritization of the City’s competing needs.

**Employee Committee:** General Administration

**Date:** March 11, 2025

**Time:** 3:00pm

**Location:** Human Resources Multi-Purpose Room, 800 E. City Hall Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

**Union or Professional Organization(s) represented:** None

**Issues Discussed:**

- The City Manager announced that the budget will be presented on March 25th, 2025. He expressed that the budget is informed by citizen surveys and feedback from the City Council. Included in the budget is a proposal to adjust the pay scales, which will include automatic steps.

- The committee discussed staffing and vacancies within the City. Members requested staffing increase for the Zoo and The Slover as well as addressed onboarding concerns, namely the background check processing times.
- The committee asked about more telework opportunities and alternate work schedules.
- The committee wanted to know the status on the substance abuse policy.
- There were discussions about healthcare benefits including the request to consider Long-term Care insurance as a benefit along with Proton therapy for cancer.
- Committee members asked about merit-based pay raises.
- The committee brought up some safety concerns including patrons vandalizing The Slover and at Library facilities.
- There were discussions surrounding employee engagement, specifically discounts and employee recognition.
- Other open questions/concerns included overtime for supervisors, on call pay, additional benefits and comment cards which the administration looked into or addressed.

**Employee Committee: General Administration**

**Date:** September 17, 2024

**Time:** 2:30

**Location:** Human Resources Multi-Purpose Room, 800 E. City Hall Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

**Union or Professional Organization(s) represented:** None

**Issues Discussed:**

- The City Manager provided information on the health insurance initiative. He explained that he is looking to hire a healthcare consultant to assess the insurance marketplace. This consultant will serve as an outside expert to help with selection of the best insurance.
- The City Manager reported that he has hired Evergreen to conduct a pay study. This study will include reviewing the marketplace to see who the City is competing with for talent, and what it would take to bring back the step pay plan.
- The committee proposed cross training for employees which would be beneficial for some employees to pick up extra income, filling productivity gaps, and improving retention.
- There were concerns regarding City benefits and incentives relating to Employee Engagement.
- The Committee inquired about teleworking for employees within the different departments.
- The Committee discussed the need for a supervisor survey. The City Manager stated that the employee engagement survey would be the best opportunity to address these issues.
- The Committee shared concerns about the bereavement leave, highlighting that employees with little to no leave who face death in their families cannot take enough leave time. She proposed extending the current 14 day leave time for bereavement. The administration stated it would look into the policy.

**Employee Committee: Operations**

**Date:** March 13, 2025

**Time:** 1:00pm

**Location:** Human Resources Multi-Purpose Room, 800 E. City Hall Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

**Union or Professional Organization(s) represented:** None

**Issues Discussed:**

- The City Manager announced that the Evergreen consultant has made several recommendations as part of the pay plan study. He said the focus is on aiming to attract and retain talent. A new pay plan with automatic steps will be presented to the council on March 25th during the budget presentation. Phased implementation will start late this year.
- The City Manager stated that CDL holders who use the license on an as needed basis will receive a 50% stipend which has been added to the Compensation Plan.
- The City Manager stated efforts are underway to speed up the background check process as this has been the consistent delaying point for onboarding new employees. HR has reached out to the vendor and changed some internal policies and procedures to expedite the process.
- Members asked about the status of hazard pay for selected employees.
- The Committee discussed concerns with regard to salary compression and staffing shortages/new hire delays in their respective departments.
- The Committee requested for additional days to be added to the bereavement leave.
- Members shared concerns about the timeframe that disciplinary actions remain on an employee's record. The City Manager stated that disciplinary actions are taken on a case by case basis for each employee.
- The employee engagement position was discussed during the meeting. Employees would like to see employee events/discounts come back. They feel it helps to boost employee morale.
- The Committee discussed concerns related to benefits, the Summer Incentive Bonus Program, and Alternate Schedules which would be looked into by the administration.

**Employee Committee: Operations**

**Date:** September 18, 2024

**Time:** 9:00am

**Location:** Human Resources Multi-Purpose Room, 800 E. City Hall Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

**Union or Professional Organization(s) represented:** None

**Issues Discussed:** The committee was concerned about the following issues:

- Creation/facilitating the use of the ‘use or lose’ leave dashboard that has been developed by HR. Managers have access to view the dashboard.
- The Committee asked if the City Manager would consider leave buy back. The City Manager stated that this would not be in consideration this year and encouraged employees to use leave.
- The Committee brought up concerns with on call pay and leave combination issues. The City Manager stated that Human Resources would look into these issues.
- The Committee brought up stipend issues for individuals with CDL. The City Manager stated that Human Resources will look into the issues and propose increases as needed.
- The Committee asked about the Health and Wellness fair. Human Resources stated that this would not be created this year due to historically low attendance and participation.
- The Committee brought up concerns regarding adequate ERC representation for specific sub departments. The City Manager committed to adding more representatives.

**Employee Committee: Police**

**Date:** March 17, 2025

**Time:** 10:30 am

**Location:** Human Resources Multi-Purpose Room, 800 E. City Hall Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

**Union or Professional Organization(s) represented:**

- Southern State Police Benevolent Association: Michael Lynch, Police Officer (Absent)
- Fraternal Order of Police: Biran Lee, Police Lieutenant (Absent)

**Issues Discussed:**

- The City Manager provided information on the Public safety pay plan. The Evergreen consultant has made several recommendations as part of the pay plan study. He said the focus is on positions with vacancies or low competitiveness, aiming to attract and retain talent. A new pay plan with automatic steps will be presented to the council on March 25th during the budget presentation. Phased implementation will start late this year.
- The City Manager reported that there will be no increases in healthcare cost in 2025. A new consultant is working with Anthem for HR and Norfolk Healthcare Consortium negotiations.
- The Committee asked whether recruit pay will increase and whether the step implementation will affect signing bonuses. The City Manager stated that changes to the signing bonuses may happen but are not confirmed.
- The Committee discussed the status on the health insurance initiatives. The City Manager shared that we have hired a new consultant that is assisting the City in providing the best benefit offerings.

- The Committee discussed concerns with regard to salary compression and staffing pointing out that they are still having issues retaining employees.
- The Committee asked if there would be modification to the external employment procedure and were informed that policy has not changed.
- The Committee asked for more information regarding the bathroom privacy policy. The City Manager stated that this is still being viewed by legal but they have an eye on guidance from the state.
- The Committee reported that there were issues with on-call-pay. They reported that although they are on call and may resolve issues over the phone, they do not get paid unless they physically report. The Administration will follow up.
- The Committee reported on the need for more driving/training facilities, as well as lack of adequate vehicles for new recruits. The City Manager responded that training facilities were documented as a need, and he will be making this issue a priority.
- Other concerns included a need for an Open-door policy with the police chief and inclement weather leave having some issues (these were addressed in the meeting by Human Resources)

#### **Employee Committee: Police**

**Date:** September 23, 2024

**Time:** 3:00pm

**Location:** Human Resources Multi-Purpose Room, 800 E. City Hall Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

**Union or Professional Organization(s) represented:** Southern State Police Benevolent Association: Michael Lynch, Police Officer (absent); Fraternal Order of Police: Brian Lee, Police Lieutenant (absent)

#### **Issues Discussed:**

- The Committee stated there were some issues about outside employment for part time police officers, most notably if it would be allowed and how to schedule it. The City Manager said he would look into these issues and address them through the Police Chief. Human Resources clarified to members that they are allowed to have external employment providing they have gone through the appropriate steps.
- The Committee members shared concerns about onboarding-related issues. They expressed frustrations about the length of time it is taking to get computer access for new employees.
- The Committee shared that they wanted a supervisor survey, notably the employees want to evaluate their supervisor in addition to being evaluated. The City Manager directed the Human Resources to incorporate these concerns in the next survey.
- The Committee discussed issues with locker room privacy and asked for insight. The City Manager and Human Resources stated that a locker room policy was being looked into.

- The Committee expressed issues with on call pay related to being on call but not having any kind of compensation. The City Manager stated that he would consider incentives for on call personnel.
- The Committee stated that there were issues with being unable to use leave and asked about a buy back program. The City Manager stated that leave should be able to be used as needed.

**Employee Committee: Fire-Rescue**

**Date:** March 19, 2025

**Time:** 10:00 am

**Location:** Human Resources Multi-Purpose Room, 800 E. City Hall Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

**Union or Professional Organization(s) represented:**

- Norfolk Professional Fire Fighter – IAFF Local 68: Mark Old, Firefighter EMT - Advanced

**Issues Discussed:**

- The City Manager announced that the Evergreen consultant has made several recommendations as part of the pay plan study. He said the focus is on positions with vacancies or low competitiveness, aiming to attract and retain talent. A new pay plan with automatic steps will be presented to the council on March 25th during the budget presentation. Phased implementation will start late this year.
- The Committee discussed the status on the health insurance initiatives, noting that cancer screening, as a new initiative, has been successful, however, there were some employees were denied for proton therapy. They added that the city should model other cities in terms of their retirement benefits carry on until they reach the age for Medicaid.
- The Committee discussed concerns with regard to salary compression and staffing, specifically paramedic staffing. They emphasized that staff shortages have been creating a drag on the department. More fire inspectors are needed.
- The Committee wanted to know the status on the substance abuse policy.
- There were discussions surrounding facilities and apparatus.
- Other concerns included Fire hose testing with a proposal to outsource testing for consistency and reduced risk.
- On-street regulations: Discussion about updating parking rules to facilitate quicker emergency response.

**Employee Committee: Fire-Rescue**

**Date:** September 2, 2024

**Time:** 1:30pm



**Location:** Human Resources Multi-Purpose Room, 800 E. City Hall Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

**Union or Professional Organization(s) represented:** Norfolk Professional Fire Fighters — IAFF Local 68: Mark Old, Firefighter EMT— Advanced

**Issues Discussed:**

- The City Manager provided information on the health insurance initiative. He explained that he is looking to hire a healthcare consultant to assess the insurance marketplace. This consultant will serve as an outside expert to help with selection of the best insurance.
- The City Manager reported that he has hired Evergreen to conduct a pay study. This study will include reviewing the marketplace to see who the City is competing with for talent, and what it would take to bring back the step pay plan.
- A Committee member proposed cross training for employees which would be beneficial for some employees to pick up extra income, filling productivity gaps, and improving retention.
- There were concerns regarding City benefits and incentives relating to Employee Engagement. The Department of Human Resources is working with the engagement manager on additional incentives.
- A Committee member inquired about teleworking for employees within her department. HR is working with department heads to increase the number of telework opportunities.
- The Committee discussed the need for a supervisor survey. HR will reevaluate and adjust the survey accordingly.
- A Committee member proposed extending the current 14 day leave time for bereavement.



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## **City of Norfolk Employee Relations Committee (General)**

### **Meeting Agenda**

March 11, 2025 - 3:00 pm

(800 E. City Hall Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Human Resources Multi-purpose Room)

- |             |  |   |
|-------------|--|---|
| <b>I.</b>   | <b>Welcome</b>   | <b><i>Patrick Roberts, City Manager</i></b> |
| <b>II.</b>  | <b>Introductions</b>   | <b><i>Group</i></b>                         |
| <b>III.</b> | <b>Recap of Previous Discussion</b>  | <b><i>Human Resources</i></b>               |
| <b>IV.</b>  | <b>Topics to be addressed/discussed</b>  | <b><i>City Manager / Group</i></b>          |
|             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FY 2025 Budget</li><li>• CDL Stipend</li><li>• Recruitment/Staffing</li><li>• Telework</li><li>• Substance abuse policy</li><li>• Healthcare benefits</li><li>• Parks and Recreation facilities</li><li>• Merit based pay raises</li><li>• Safety Concerns</li></ul> |   |



V. Open Forum (Concerns and Suggestions) *Group*

VI. Action Items and Responsibilities *Human Resources*

VII. Adjournment

**Please note: All attendees are expected to stay for the entire meeting. Interruptions should be minimized, and all cell phones should be silenced as we respect each other's time.**



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## **City of Norfolk Employee Relations Committee (General)**

### **Meeting Agenda**

September 17, 2024 - 2:30 pm

(800 E. City Hall Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Human Resources Multi-purpose Room)

- |             |  |   |
|-------------|--|---|
| <b>I.</b>   | <b>Welcome</b>   | <b><i>Patrick Roberts, City Manager</i></b> |
| <b>II.</b>  | <b>Introductions</b>   | <b><i>Group</i></b>                         |
| <b>III.</b> | <b>Topics to be addressed/discussed</b>  | <b><i>City Manager / Group</i></b>          |
|             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Salary Compression</li><li>• Budget</li><li>• Elevance/Anthem</li><li>• Staffing</li><li>• Additional Employee Benefits</li><li>• Wellness Program</li><li>• City Insurance Policy for Transgender Staff</li><li>• Bereavement Policy</li><li>• Employee Evaluations</li></ul> |   |
| <b>IV.</b>  | <b>Open Forum (Concerns and Suggestions)</b>   | <b><i>Group</i></b>                         |



V. Action Items and Responsibilities

*Human Resources*

VI. Adjournment

**Please note: All attendees are expected to stay for the entire meeting. Interruptions should be minimized, and all cell phones should be silenced as we respect each other's time.**



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## **City of Norfolk Employee Relations Committee (Operations) Meeting Agenda**

March 13, 2025 - 1:00 pm

(800 E. City Hall Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Human Resources Multi-purpose Room)

- |             |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|
| <b>I.</b>   | <b>Welcome</b>  | <b><i>Patrick Roberts, City Manager</i></b> |
| <b>II.</b>  | <b>Introductions</b>  | <b><i>Group</i></b>                         |
| <b>III.</b> | <b>Recap of Previous Discussion</b>   | <b><i>Human Resources</i></b>               |
| <b>IV.</b>  | <b>Topics to be addressed/discussed</b>   | <b><i>City Manager / Group</i></b>          |
|             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hazard Pay</li><li>• CDL Stipend</li><li>• Compression/Staffing shortages</li><li>• Insurance/Health Initiatives</li><li>• Increasing Bereavement Leave</li><li>• Timeframe that disciplinary actions remain on your record</li><li>• Addendum/Rider on Health Insurance for proton therapy and bariatric</li></ul> |   |
| <b>V.</b>   | <b>Open Forum (Concerns and Suggestions)</b>  | <b><i>Group</i></b>                         |
| <b>VI.</b>  | <b>Action Items and Responsibilities</b>  | <b><i>Human Resources</i></b>               |



VII. Adjournment

**Please note: All attendees are expected to stay for the entire meeting. Interruptions should be minimized, and all cell phones should be silenced as we respect each other's time.**



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## **City of Norfolk Employee Relations Committee (Operations)**

### **Meeting Agenda**

September 18, 2024 - 9:00 am

(800 E. City Hall Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Human Resources Multi-purpose Room)

- |             |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|
| <b>I.</b>   | <b>Welcome</b>  | <b><i>Patrick Roberts, City Manager</i></b> |
| <b>II.</b>  | <b>Introductions</b>  | <b><i>Group</i></b>                         |
| <b>III.</b> | <b>Recap of Previous Discussion</b>   | <b><i>Human Resources</i></b>               |
| <b>IV.</b>  | <b>Topics to be addressed/discussed</b>   | <b><i>City Manager / Group</i></b>          |
|             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leave Buyback</li><li>• On call pay and leave combination</li><li>• CDL stipend</li><li>• Health and Wellness Fair</li><li>• ERC Representation</li></ul> |   |
| <b>V.</b>   | <b>Open Forum (Concerns and Suggestions)</b>  | <b><i>Group</i></b>                         |
| <b>VI.</b>  | <b>Action Items and Responsibilities</b>  | <b><i>Human Resources</i></b>               |
| <b>VII.</b> | <b>Adjournment</b>  |   |





**Please note: All attendees are expected to stay for the entire meeting. Interruptions should be minimized, and all cell phones should be silenced as we respect each other's time.**



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## **City of Norfolk Employee Relations Committee (Police)**

### **Meeting Agenda**

March 17, 2025 - 10:30 am

(800 E. City Hall Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Human Resources Multi-purpose Room)

- |             |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|
| <b>I.</b>   | <b>Welcome</b>  | <b><i>Patrick Roberts, City Manager</i></b> |
| <b>II.</b>  | <b>Introductions</b>  | <b><i>Group</i></b>                         |
| <b>III.</b> | <b>Recap of Previous Discussion</b>   | <b><i>Human Resources</i></b>               |
| <b>IV.</b>  | <b>Topics to be addressed/discussed</b>   | <b><i>City Manager / Group</i></b>          |
|             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Healthcare benefits</li><li>• Compression/staffing</li><li>• Substance abuse policy</li><li>• Deduction of union dues</li><li>• External employment</li><li>• Bathroom Privacy Policy</li><li>• On call leave</li><li>• Equipment</li></ul> |   |
| <b>V.</b>   | <b>Open Forum (Concerns and Suggestions)</b>  | <b><i>Group</i></b>                         |



VI. Action Items and Responsibilities

*Human Resources*

VII. Adjournment

**Please note: All attendees are expected to stay for the entire meeting. Interruptions should be minimized, and all cell phones should be silenced as we respect each other's time.**



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## **City of Norfolk Employee Relations Committee (Police)**

### **Meeting Agenda**

September 23, 2024 - 3:00 pm

(800 E. City Hall Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Human Resources Multi-purpose Room)

- |             |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|
| <b>I.</b>   | <b>Welcome</b>  | <b><i>Patrick Roberts, City Manager</i></b> |
| <b>II.</b>  | <b>Introductions</b>  | <b><i>Group</i></b>                         |
| <b>III.</b> | <b>Recap of Previous Discussion</b>   | <b><i>Human Resources</i></b>               |
| <b>IV.</b>  | <b>Topics to be addressed/discussed</b>   | <b><i>City Manager / Group</i></b>          |
|             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Salary Compression</li><li>• Budget</li><li>• Elevance/Anthem</li><li>• Staffing</li><li>• Additional Employee benefits</li></ul> |   |
| <b>V.</b>   | <b>Open Forum (Concerns and Suggestions)</b>  | <b><i>Group</i></b>                         |
| <b>VI.</b>  | <b>Action Items and Responsibilities</b>  | <b><i>Human Resources</i></b>               |



VII. Adjournment

**Please note: All attendees are expected to stay for the entire meeting. Interruptions should be minimized, and all cell phones should be silenced as we respect each other's time.**



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## City of Norfolk Employee Relations Committee

### (Fire-Rescue)

### Meeting Agenda

March 19, 2025 - 10:00 am

(800 E. City Hall Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Human Resources Multi-purpose Room)

- |      |  |                                      |
|------|--|--------------------------------------|
| I.   | <b>Welcome</b>   | <i>Patrick Roberts, City Manager</i> |
| II.  | <b>Introductions</b>   | <i>Group</i>                         |
| III. | <b>Recap of Previous Discussion</b>  | <i>Human Resources</i>               |
| IV.  | <b>Topics to be addressed/discussed</b>  | <i>City Manager / Group</i>          |
|      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Healthcare Survey</li><li>• Compression/Staffing<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Paramedic Staffing</li></ul></li><li>• Substance abuse policy</li><li>• Deduction of union dues.</li><li>• New/updated training facilities</li></ul> |                                      |
| V.   | <b>Open Forum (Concerns and Suggestions)</b>   | <i>Group</i>                         |
| VI.  | <b>Action Items and Responsibilities</b>   | <i>Human Resources</i>               |
| VII. | <b>Adjournment</b>   |                                      |



**Please note: All attendees are expected to stay for the entire meeting. Interruptions should be minimized, and all cell phones should be silenced as we respect each other's time.**



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## **City of Norfolk Employee Relations Committee (Fire-Rescue)**

### **Meeting Agenda**

September 25, 2024 - 1:30 pm

(800 E. City Hall Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Human Resources Multi-purpose Room)

- |       |   |                                      |
|-------|---|--------------------------------------|
| VIII. | <b>Welcome</b>  | <i>Patrick Roberts, City Manager</i> |
| IX.   | <b>Introductions</b>  | <i>Group</i>                         |
| X.    | <b>Recap of Previous Discussion</b>   | <i>Human Resources</i>               |
| XI.   | <b>Topics to be addressed/discussed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Salary Compression</li><li>• Budget</li><li>• Elevance/Anthem</li><li>• Staffing</li><li>• Additional Employee benefits</li></ul> | <i>City Manager / Group</i>          |
| XII.  | <b>Open Forum (Concerns and Suggestions)</b>  | <i>Group</i>                         |
| XIII. | <b>Action Items and Responsibilities</b>  | <i>Human Resources</i>               |
| XIV.  | <b>Adjournment</b>  |                                      |





**Please note: All attendees are expected to stay for the entire meeting. Interruptions should be minimized, and all cell phones should be silenced as we respect each other's time.**

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