



Apex Town Council Work Session

Tuesday, February 21, 2017

Lance Olive, Mayor
Nicole L. Dozier, Mayor Pro Tempore
William S. Jensen, Eugene J. Schulze, Denise C. Wilkie,
and Wesley M. Moyer, Council Members
Drew Havens, Town Manager
Timothy L. Donnelly, Assistant Town Manager
David Hughes, Assistant Town Manager
Donna B. Hosch, CMC, NCCMC, Town Clerk
Laurie L. Hohe, Town Attorney

The Apex Town Council met for a scheduled Work Session on Tuesday, February 21, 2017, at 5:30 p.m. in Training Room A of Apex Town Hall, 73 Hunter Street

In attendance were Mayor Lance Olive, Mayor Pro Tem Nicole L. Dozier, and Council Members William S. Jensen, Eugene J. Schulze, Denise C. Wilkie, and Wesley M. Moyer
Also in attendance were Town Manager Drew Havens, Assistant Town Manager Tim Donnelly, Town Clerk Donna B. Hosch, and Town Attorney Laurie L. Hohe

COMMENCEMENT

Mayor Olive called the meeting to order and explained this was an open meeting with the purpose of continuing discussion and to follow up with questions on the matter of a paid parental leave policy.

DISCUSSION

The Mayor stated the Town Manager worked through some of Council questions. Several could be answered by staff. The Mayor stated he would facilitate and let Council Members Schulze and Dozier lead the discussion since they were the members of the Personnel Committee. Afterwards, the Mayor hoped Council would be able to determine the next step.

Dozier stated she hoped Council could come up with what could be agreed upon as a win/win. She wanted this to be a real benefit that the town could be proud of. Based on the questions, she thought Council could get some things done on a leave policy for employees.

Schulze stated this was not a question of whether or not employees are valued or about being pro-family or pro-kid. The town benefit package, which is paid for with tax dollars, is competitive.

Council discussed some of their pros and cons of such a policy:

- Making this relevant to employees who are not child bearing age – could be broadened to taking care of a parent, bereavement, etc.;
- Using tax dollars for a benefit that will go up as the work force grows;
- Parents of neonatals getting more than six weeks off;
- The reasoning behind males and females both getting the same number of weeks off.

Staff stated that Durham has 12 weeks paid parental leave which also applies to adoptions and foster care. Staff explained that some employees have short term disability. If not, we have used shared leave on occasion when an employee is out of leave. Staff exemplified the bereavement leave that some municipalities offer.

Council explained how the pay portion would work. Staff added that we have not paid any over time or additional time in the Police Department. The Fire Department may have used an LSE to cover a shift. EMS money comes through the County. Normally, workloads are shared among the employees who are present. Staff stated we don't have data on how much work this adds to a person, if any. We probably fall short of our targets, but we have no metrics for comparison. However, cost is measured more in productivity rather than dollars.

Council spoke about how the work stacks up when we deploy crews to other towns, and how we haven't brought in extra people in those instances. Council felt that while we would be able to absorb some of this, employees would take advantage and exasperate the problem of people covering for the people who are out. Council talked about their situations when they had children and the effects of not having paid leave, especially with a NICU baby. Staff stated she believed most municipalities allow one six week stint every 12 months. Explained was how some couples stretch out FMLA so their child does not have to go to day care earlier than they would wish for him/her to do so.

The Mayor asked Schulze did he see any value in discussing this further in Personnel Committee. He answered 'no', he's still opposed and does not favor moving forward with this. The Mayor asked for thoughts on what to do. Dozier stated she wanted to hear Schulze's and the HR Director's thoughts. Schulze presented the reasons why he was not in favor: he did not see people leaving because we don't have this policy, the cost is not free and would be a hardship on the employees standing in, he wondered where the money would come from, and there was no evidence that not having such a policy makes it hard to draw applicants. We have a lot of other demands going into budget season which are higher priorities, even though he would love to be able to offer this.

The HR Director stated she had an updated chart on those municipalities considering parental leave. Most local governments have benefits similar to ours. Therefore, if the municipalities around us adopt this, it will put us in a place where the quality applicants are going to look elsewhere. Staff did not have data, but these were her thoughts.

Schulze stated he would be willing to reconsider this next year or whenever. The Mayor talked about space for pumping moms, staff stating we do comply with this law. The Mayor stated it was fine to continue to explore details of this issue to see if a new momentum will arise. However, there would be no action taken this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business, Mayor Olive adjourned the Work Session.

Donna B. Hosch, CMC, NCCMC
Town Clerk

ATTEST:

Lance Olive
Mayor