




MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 6, 2005
TO: Mayor & City Council
FROM: Ed Kitchen, City Manager 
SUBJECT: Items For Your Information

1. Water Bill/Lien Information

We have come up with a solution to the issue brought up by speakers at Tuesday's Council meeting concerning access to information about delinquent water bills and liens on associated property. In the future, we will be making the information available to anyone by address of the location or tax map number. This gets us around the problem with the public records statute concerning release of individual names. That solution, of course, does not address the second concern brought up by the attorneys – the wisdom of the lien itself. We will be putting some additional information together for Council's consideration on this matter in the near future. If you have questions, please contact Mitchell Johnson or Linda Miles.

2. War Memorial Stadium Stakeholders/Advisory Committee

Last month I updated you on the status of our plans for future repairs and potential renovations to War Memorial Stadium. I have now appointed the stakeholders/advisory committee and a list of the members is attached. This group will help us select the architectural firm for the project and advise us throughout the review. Please contact me or Bob Morgan if you have questions or suggestions. Bob is taking the lead on this from our office.

3. Employee Benefits

During budget deliberations, we shared with Council some comparative compensation data which resulted in our proposing and Council approving some pay adjustments during this year where we were behind the market. Veteran police officers were one example. We also indicated that we would be doing a comparative review of our benefits programs during the year. As a result of the later review, we have determined that we are below the market in a couple of areas. These include annual leave days granted at certain lengths of service, sick

leave granted, and health and dental benefits for Council members. There is also some trailing of the market for the number of holidays currently granted.

Based on this review, I am proposing some adjustments to our policies effective February 1, 2005. Specifically, I am planning on changing sick leave earned for each employee from 7.33 hours/month to 8 hours/month to bring us to the average of sick days granted by all other large cities and counties in NC. I am also proposing to add small amounts of annual leave earnings at several lengths of service categories (8 hours/month instead of 6.75 for the first 3 years of service; 10 hours/month instead of 8 and 9.25 for years 5 through 9; 12 hours/month instead of 10.75 for years 10 through 14, 14 hours/month instead of 12.5 for years 15 through 19; and 16 hours/month instead of 14.5 for years 20 and beyond. I am not proposing any change in holidays at this time due to service implications and costs, but will watch trends and evaluate this further during budget deliberations.

With regard to health and dental benefits for Council, we have determined that we are significantly behind what other large jurisdictions in NC offer. Greensboro has never offered these benefits to its elected officials, while all other major NC cities and counties now do. Accordingly, I recommend that we begin offering health and dental coverage to Council members effective February 1, 2005. The amounts paid for this coverage by elected officials varies by jurisdiction and by coverage level (employee only, employee-spouse, and family). The most common pattern is to pay similar amounts as for full-time employees, with 90-100% payment for employee-only and a much larger share for the employee for spouse or family coverage. My recommendation is that we offer the same level of benefits and costs to Council members as we do for full-time city employees for employee only coverage. Should council members wish to cover family members, they would pay the full cost of the additional premiums. The total cost to the City of offering this coverage, should all members of council participate, would be approximately \$37,000 for 12 months. The fact that this is common practice now, coupled with the increasing demands on council and our council salaries being below average, all lead me to conclude that this change is fully justified.

I plan to make the changes to our policies for employees effective February 1, 2005. With regard to benefits for Council, I plan to put a resolution on your January 18 agenda unless I hear otherwise from you.

cc: News & Record
Channel 2
Channel 8
High Point Enterprise
Carolina Peacemaker
TREBIC
Rhinoceros Times
Chamber of Commerce