

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: August 20, 2021

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Guy Smith, Executive Director, Milwaukee County Parks

Subject: Extension of Paid Time Off Benefits to Seasonal Employees Not Hired Due to the Pandemic

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

Parks is seeking County Board approval to extend vacation and sick leave paid time off benefits on a pro-rated basis to seasonal employees whose benefit accruals were disrupted by the hiring freeze in 2020 caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

POLICY

Wisconsin State Statutes:	
Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	17.182 Pro rata benefits
Specific Adopted Budget:	
Specific Adopted Budget Amendment:	
Specific Adopted Capital Project:	

BACKGROUND

On March 13, 2020 a proclamation was issued declaring a public health emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 30, 2020 an administrative order related to fiscal actions was issued which, among other things, implemented a hiring freeze so that vacant positions would not be filled. This resulted in a freeze on hiring seasonal employees which in a typical year would have started ramping up in the months to follow and carry through the summer.

Based in existing Milwaukee County Ordinance referenced above, seasonal County employees who work more than 1040 hours in one calendar year become eligible for pro-rated vacation and sick paid time off the following year. Due to the pandemic and the disruptions in our services and operations, a number of seasonal employees who would have normally worked the required 1040 hours in 2020 did not meet this threshold. Parks is requesting that an exemption be put forth for this group of employees so that they can still receive the pro-rated paid time off benefits this year as if they worked a regular schedule in 2020. Parks is requested to work with the Department of Human Resources to calculate a pro-rated paid time

off benefit for these employees based on hours worked in 2019 as a proxy for the typical hours worked in a year had we not had COVID-related hiring disruptions in 2020. Parks and Human Resources will have to implement this extension of benefits within the approved 2021 budget for seasonal labor.

Milwaukee County Parks staff is unaware of the status of seasonal employees in other County departments and the impact of this request on those employees. In support of equity for any employees unaccounted for, Parks will work with Human Resources and those departments to devise a similar pro-rated paid time off extension.

Related File No's:	
Associated File No's (Including Transfer Packets):	
Previous Action Date(s):	

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Describe how the item aligns to the objectives in the [strategic plan](#):

1B: Create and nurture an inclusive culture across County government – supports equity among seasonal employees as it relates to full time employees and benefits

FISCAL EFFECT

Seasonal labor is distributed as a pool of funds for managers to use in hiring and providing paid time off benefits. It is estimated that based on the number of seasonal employees who would qualify for this paid time off benefit in 2019 that this would have an estimated fiscal impact of \$5,000 in 2021 from the pool of funds that is already budgeted for this use.

TERMS

This request pertains to employees not hired onto typical employment in 2020 and would create a benefit for 2021. Future years would not be impacted as Parks was able to hire seasonal employees on a status quo basis in 2021.


VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Ermira Hayes, Human Resources Business Partner

PREPARED BY:

James Tarantino, Interim Parks Deputy Director

APPROVED BY:

Guy Smith, Parks Executive Director 

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution
Fiscal Note

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk
David Crowley, County Executive
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
Sheldon Wasserman, Parks, Energy & Environment Chair, Supervisor District 3
Steven Shea, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Vice-Chair, Supervisor District 8
Felesia Martin, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 7
Sylvia Ortiz-Velez, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 12
Liz Sumner, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 1
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board
Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services
Joseph Lamers, Fiscal & Budget Director, DAS
Vince Masterson, Fiscal & Strategic Asset Coordinator, DAS
Pamela Bryant, Capital Finance Manager, Comptroller's Office
Justin Rodriguez, Capital Finance Analyst, Comptroller's Office
Kelsey Evans, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk
Emily Peterson, Research & Policy Analyst, Office of the Comptroller
Anthony Rux, Budget & Management Analyst, DAS-PSB
Margo Franklin, Chief Human Resources Officer
Amos Morris, Zoo Director
Vera Westphal, Deputy Zoo Director
Mary Polaris, Human Resources Business Partner