

POSSIBLE MOTION

I MOVE TO approve employee benefits that may vary from those set out in Section 6.14 of the City and Borough of Sitka Personnel Policies Handbook; specifically authorizing and ratifying up to 14 days of paid administrative leave per the Municipal Administrator's flowchart in response to COVID-19 essential operations.



City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Paxton and Assembly Members

From: John Leach, Municipal Administrator

Date: March 20, 2020

Subject: COVID-19 Paid Administrative Leave

Background

On March 15, 2020, and following the State's Emergency Declaration in response to COVID-19, I declared a Local Disaster Emergency in accordance with AS 26.23.140, closed CBS buildings, and limited operations to functions essential to the safety, health, and security of CBS citizens in alignment with FEMA definitions of essential functions.

Section 6.14 of the Personnel Policies Handbook states:

ASSEMBLY AUTHORITY TO APPROVE BY MOTION PARTICULAR BENEFITS THAT MAY VARY FROM THOSE SET OUT IN THIS PERSONNEL POLICIES HANDBOOK Notwithstanding any other provision of this Personnel Policies Handbook, the Assembly may approve by motion benefits for individual employees that vary from the benefits set out in this Personnel Policies Handbook. In the case of any employee other than the Administrator or the Attorney, the benefits that vary from those set out in this Personnel Policies Handbook that are to be approved by motion must be recommended by the Administrator.

Analysis

Some employees were forced home against their will due to their function within CBS, and others were forced home due to mandated quarantines following travel. If an employee was unable to work remotely, they would have been charged personal leave or sick leave for either of these scenarios, however, some employees' leave balances were insufficient to cover the mandated quarantine period, or even a short period in some cases.

I created a flowchart (enclosure 1), enacting a pathway to allow for up to 14 days of paid

administrative leave to cover the scenarios I described above, and to align with the 14-day quarantine timeline mandated by the CDC.

Currently, we are not requiring staff to report to work if they are uncomfortable and want to stay home. In that case, the employee can take sick leave, personal leave, or leave without pay.

After discussing this with AMAA, referencing our Personnel Policies Handbook, and speaking with other Alaskan communities, it appears that the administrative leave authorization must come from an Assembly motion per 6.14 of the Personnel Policies Handbook.

It should also be noted that other Alaskan communities are in this similar situation due to the lack of prescribed policies for situations such as these. The intent of my action was to keep staff ready and available to work and limit exposure to leave without pay so the CBS could maintain resiliency to provide essential services to the community while mitigating the spread of any COVID-19 exposure.

Fiscal Note

Wages are calculated at 97% FTE when included in the budget, which has already been allocated (not obligated) for FY20. We historically spend 92% FTE. Offering this Administrative leave option due to COVID-19 response will be transparent to our FY20 budget forecasts and promotes keeping money flowing through our economy during this pandemic.

Recommendation

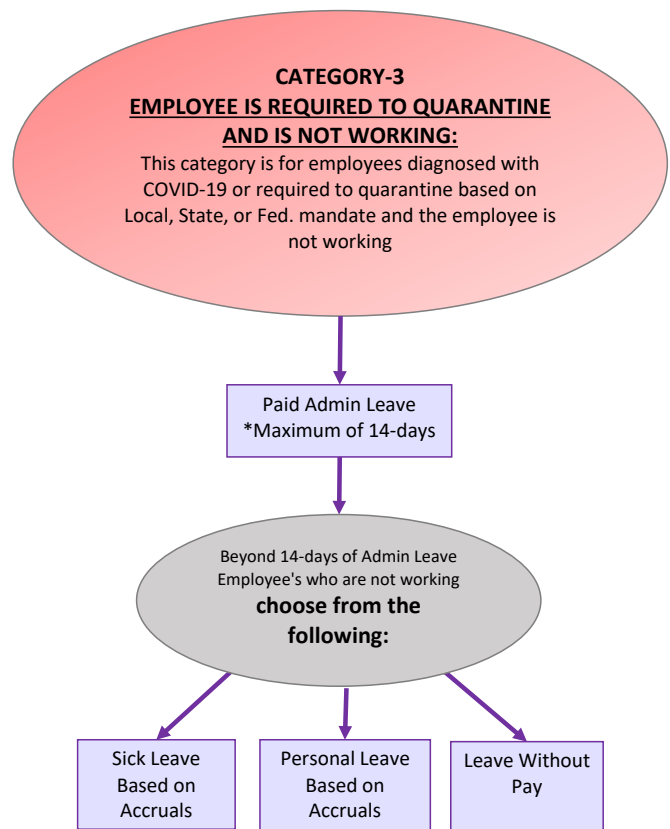
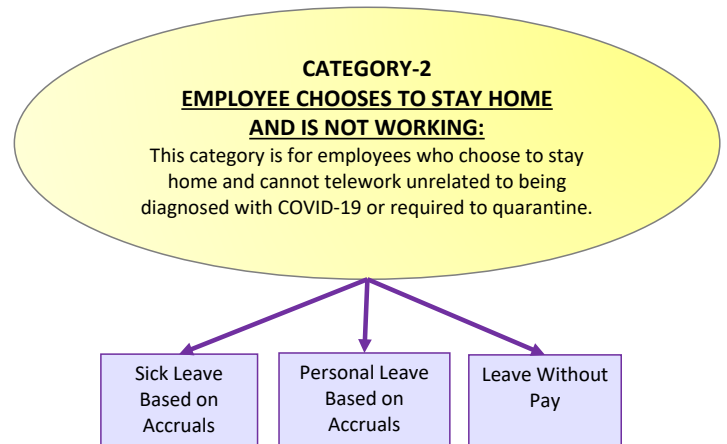
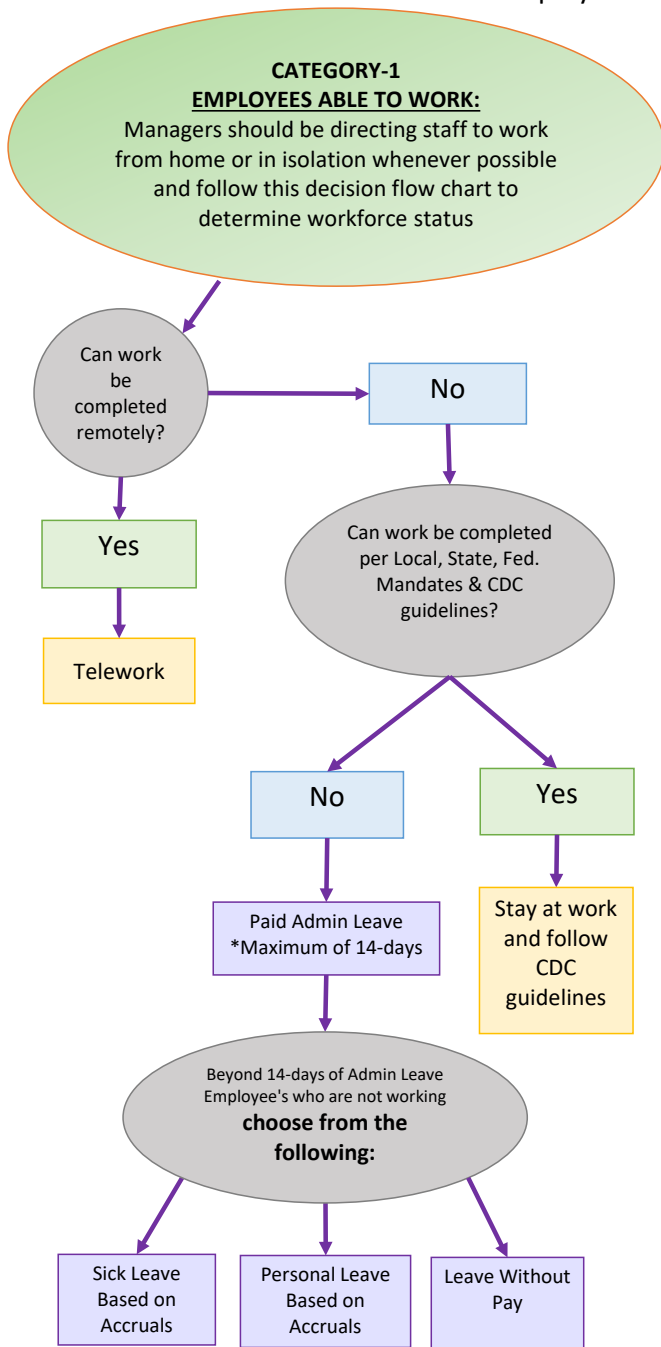
Approve benefits that may vary from those set out in the Personnel Policies Handbook by authorizing up to 14 days of paid administrative leave per my flowchart in response to COVID-19 essential operations and ratify the administrative leave decision I made during my emergency declaration on March 15, 2020.

Note: What is meant by “up to 14 days of paid administrative leave” is the employee may be paid the maximum hours of work for two regular work weeks with no overtime.

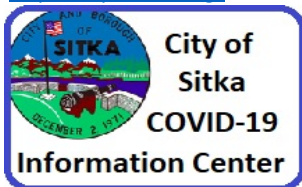
Encl: 1. Draft Administrative Leave Flowchart

City and Borough of Sitka

Employee Status Flowchart COVID-19



<http://cityofsitka.org/>



Link to CDC Guidelines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

Any employee who is quarantined will either be teleworking or on FMLA with a note from their healthcare provider. If the employee cannot work they will be allowed to use a *max. of 14-days paid Admin Leave before using leave accruals or leave without pay.

* "Maximum of 14-days" means the employee may be paid the maximum hours of work for two regular work weeks with no overtime