

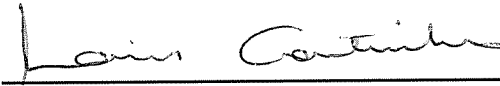
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Halifax Regional Council
July 8, 2003

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Louis Coutinho, Director of Human Resources Services

DATE: July 4, 2003

SUBJECT: HR Policies & Business Practices

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Human Resources's assessment of best practices.

BACKGROUND

The HRM HR Policies apply to all HRM staff and Council, except where they conflict with collective agreements or clearly communicated business-unit practices. HR is responsible for ensuring that the policies reflect current and reasonable terms and conditions of employment, in light of changes in legislation, the policies of other employers and union agreements. The proposed changes were discussed with the Non-Union and Management Employees' Association ("NUMEA").

These HR Policies and Practices were last revised in August of 2001.

DISCUSSION

It is incumbent on HR to ensure that HRM remains competitive and current with regard to its non-union terms and conditions of employment. This is critical for recruitment, retention and general employee satisfaction. As a tax-payer funded organization, HRM does not strive to be the most generous of employers, but it does need to recognize that it is continually being compared to other employers by current and potential employees.

Generally, when benefits are granted to unionized staff through collective bargaining, HRM considers awarding them to non-union staff. Not all unionized benefits are appropriate for non-union staff and *vice versa*. However, where there is no rational reason for a discrepancy, HRM strives towards consistency. These considerations have resulted in the recent changes to the Human Resources Policies and Practices.

The changes are described in the attached HR Policies & Business Practices Review, Year 2003 (Appendix "A"). The complete, updated, Human Resources Policies and Practices Manual is available from HR and will be distributed to members of Council.

The pregnancy leave top-up is retroactive to December 22, 2002. The changes in vacation entitlement are retroactive to January 1, 2003.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The pregnancy leave top-up, the increase in vacation leave and the pre-retirement leave change will increase costs, but it is expected these costs will be managed within existing envelopes. The retroactive changes for fiscal year 2002-03 will not be material.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

REGIONAL PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

ALTERNATIVES

The policies and practices, including the pregnancy leave top-up could 1) revert to previous benefit levels, or 2) HR could be asked to develop proposals which are less generous to non-union staff. Neither of these alternatives is recommended. These relatively minor changes are being implemented to assist in keeping HRM competitive in a highly competitive hiring marketplace. The changes in vacation, pregnancy leave top-up and pre-retirement leave also reflect what exists in most of the HRM collective agreements.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: HR Policies and Business Practices Review, Year 2003, Recommended Changes.

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by:



Michael Christie, Manager of Employee Relations, Human Resources Services

490-6137

Appendix A

**HR Policies & Business Practices Review
Year 2003
Recommended Changes**

<i>Business Practice Reviewed</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Recommended Change</i>	<i>Impact</i>
Acting Assignments	Recommend wording change to Business Practice to add clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New wording "In the event that there is a requirement, a written request may be made by the applicable manager(s) to assign an employee to temporarily take on the substantive duties of another position. Remove wording "in excess of 20 consecutive wording days." Change clarifies that employees will receive acting pay from the 1st day in the acting assignment. 	
Business Practice -Deferred Salary Leave	Recommend change to Business Practice to be consistent with NSUPE CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Add "Interest" language to be consistent with NSUPE CA 	
Pre-Retirement Leave	<p>Accord the same benefit on death as on termination of employment</p> <p>Clarify when and how the benefit is calculated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All employees, after ten (10) years of continuous, permanent service shall, upon death or retirement under any of the provisions of the pension plans... ...up to a maximum of 90 calendar days at the daily rate of the then current salary. The daily rate is the annual salary divided by 365 days. 	

Appendix A

**HR Policies & Business Practices Review
Year 2003
Recommended Changes**

<i>Business Practice Reviewed</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Recommended Change</i>	<i>Impact</i>
Business Practice- Vacation Entitlement	Recommend change to Business Practice to be more consistent with CUPE, NSUPE and ATU	Increase in vacation entitlement, except for employees in their 12 th year, who would get one day less of vacation.	Effective date for vacation change is January 1, 2003. No employees will have their already assigned entitlement reduced. Employees currently in their twelfth year will maintain their assigned vacation entitlement for 2003.
Military Leave	Recommend language rewrite	New language supports reservists and the training/knowledge they will bring back to HRM.	New language does not change application of existing business practice.
Pregnancy, Parental & Adoption Leave	Recommend language be revised	Removal of language. "However, cost sharing of benefits premiums for the period beyond 17 weeks of Parental Leave requires a return service commitment. That is, if an employee chooses not to return to work following the Leave, the employer's share of benefit premiums beyond the first 17 weeks of Parental Leave must be refunded to HRM."	Will be consistent with other employee contracts.

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Year 2003
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<i>Business Practice Reviewed</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Recommended Change</i>	<i>Impact</i>
"Top up while on Pregnancy Leave "	Recommend language consistent with the NSUPE CA	Gives top-up to 75% of gross salary during initial 2-week waiting period, and top-up to 93% of salary for the remainder of the pregnancy leave.	Effective date for adding top up is December 22, 2002
Attendance Management Program	Recommend name change	New Name - Attendance Support Program	
Recognizing Excellence	Name change to be consistent with Corporate Policy	New name - Recognizing Employees	

Appendix A

**HR Policies & Business Practices Review
Year 2003
Recommended Changes**

<i>Business Practice Reviewed</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Recommended Change</i>	<i>Impact</i>
Employee Complaint Resolution Procedure	Reviewed existing business practice	Recommend the rewritten business practice be adopted.	Sets out a process whereby employees have an informal or formal resolution process to help them resolve any complaint or conflict.
Earned Day Off	Reviewed existing business practice	Recommend the rewritten business practice be adopted.	
Recruiting - Hiring - Orientation	Reviewed existing business practice	No recommended changes	
New Business Practices			
Relocation Expenses business practice	Recommend adding "Relocation Expenses" business practice as a guideline and to included in the Recruitment, Hiring & Orientation section. Copy attached.		