

CITY OF FREEPORT
EDUCATION REIMBURSEMENT WORKSHOP MINUTES

City Hall Council Chambers
Freeport, FL
September 21, 2020 5:07pm

1. Meeting Called to Order

The Council Workshop was called to order at 5:07 pm in City Hall Council Chambers by Mayor Barley.

Council members present: Amanda Green, Mayor Russ Barley, Eddie Farris, Mark Martin, and Elizabeth Haffner.

Staff present: Finance Officer Sara Bowers, City Attorney Clay Adkinson, Planning Director Latilda Neel, City Manager Charlie Simmons, Parks and Recreation Director Travis Digges, and City Clerk Malani Robinson.

2. Education Reimbursement Workshop

-Mayor Barley opened the workshop by turning it over to City Director Hughes-Neel. City Director Hughes-Neel informed the Council that in the City's Strategic Plan one of the prongs of retention for employees is to have a method where they can pursue upward mobility within a department. Following the direction of a previous Council Meeting where she received approval to modify a sample education reimbursement plan City Director Hughes Neel and her staff drafted one for the City of Freeport. City Director Hughes-Neel noted that the meeting packet was a read ahead item and opened the floor for any comments or concerns. City Director Hughes-Neel noted that plan contained language to protect the City from an employee's termination following receipt of education reimbursement, which would allow the City to recover those funds. City Director Hughes- Neel briefly reviewed the Education Reimbursement agreement that would be signed by the recipient. City Director Hughes Neel noted that in the draft she left the reimbursement amounts blank for the Council to decide and planned on bringing it back to the Council's attention during the second Council Meeting in October, however her email and phone would be open for questioning. Mayor Barley inquired as to how the Council would come up with a figure for

CITY OF FREEPORT
EDUCATION REIMBURSEMENT WORKSHOP MINUTES

reimbursement. City Director Hughes Neel suggested reviewing standardized programs and previous payment paid by the City in the past for certifications, also City Director Hughes Neel offered to get tuition hourly rates from the local schools. City Director Hughes-Neel noted that each amount would go under review based on the information collected, prior to the City and the employee signing an agreement. Councilman Farris noted that he would like to see a sample agreement with a ballpark amount for reference; City Director Hughes Neel agreed to get with Finance Officer Bowers to collect data on previous educational expenses the City has made for various departments, along with the figures from different schools. City Manager noted to the Council that he would work in conjunction with City Director Hughes- Neel in creating a range for the education expenses. Councilwoman Haffner suggested looking to other municipalities for reference and Councilman Farris noted that the County had a similar program that could be used for guidance. Councilman Martin asked for clarity on the what would be included in the education expenses such as books and lab fees, City Director Hughes Neel informed the Council that they would decide what expenditures the Education Reimbursement would cover. City Director Hughes-Neel also reminded the Council that the City had already included such expenditures within the budget under certificate maintenance, and that the City may need to grow the employees they are struggling to find. City Director Hughes-Neel thanked the Council for direction on working on the Education Reimbursement Plan.

Mayor Barley adjourned the meeting at 5:17PM.

**CITY OF FREEPORT
EDUCATION REIMBURSEMENT WORKSHOP MINUTES**



Mayor

ATTEST:



City Clerk