

WOODBURY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA ITEM(S) REQUEST FORM

Date: 2-22-24

Weekly Agenda Date: 2-27-24

ELECTED OFFICIAL / DEPARTMENT HEAD / CITIZEN: Supervisor Taylor

WORDING FOR AGENDA ITEM:

Approval of Policy to Allow the Board of Supervisors to Extend Health Insurance to Employees and their Families Catastrophically Injured in the Line of Duty if Necessary and Clarifying Secondary Roads Workers' Inclusion

ACTION REQUIRED:

Approve Ordinance

Approve Resolution

Approve Motion

Public Hearing

Other: Informational

Attachments

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Nearly two years ago, the Woodbury County Board of Supervisors became a leader in support of employees who engage in work that is often dangerous from jailers and courthouse security personnel to deputies, juvenile detention, and first responders.

The following proposal extends from the original extension of insurance benefits that the Board of Supervisors extends to fallen heroes (those who give their life in the line of duty). This item clarifies that Secondary Roads employees are included. This is a result of having the BOS/county engineer highlight that those clearing snow sometimes do so under treacherous conditions and in some cases, their doing so is the only avenue for law enforcement or emergency responders to be able to reach our citizens.

Bottom line up front: should a secondary roads worker be catastrophically injured in the line of duty, the Board of Supervisors can extend health insurance coverage to employees who will retain the current level of coverage. The premium will be paid by the county until the employee secures other health coverage through virtue of other employment, election of spousal coverage, the paid-for-coverage by a legal settlement, or by reaching the age of 65.

BACKGROUND:

This coverage seeks to fix the problem that is inherent in an employee by virtue of performing his or her duties becomes injured and is no longer able to be employed. To no longer employ that person is no one's choice but becoming injured in harm's way should be commended not punished. The following clarification will help:

-Woodbury County will pay the premium that otherwise would have been paid by the employee.

-The insurance benefit will only be paid at the current level when the catastrophic injury occurred, e.g. single coverage can be extended or family coverage can be extended but not changed after the date of a line-of-duty injury.

-This policy recognizes the understandable and laudable work of law enforcement and first responders but is not limited to any one group per se and will cover, for example, the law enforcement deputy, jailer, courthouse security officer, juvenile detention employee, conservation officer, or motor grader--as long as the injury can be verified by the county's designated physician to be a direct result of catastrophic causation.

-The employee must file a written statement detailing the circumstances of injury and any witness statements and be certified by an accompanying physician report.

-Such insurance benefit may only be paid by the county up until the age of 65 and will not be retained when insurance is offered (and denied) by another employer should the employee become gainfully employed, nor when elected to be put on a spouse's insurance plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Should be rare and have little financial impact overall.

RESOLUTION NO:

WHEREAS Woodbury County employs approximately 400 employees and values each and every one of them;

WHEREAS county employees often engage in public safety, law enforcement, emergency services, on county roads during hazardous situations, and may become injured due to acting in the "line of duty", and

WHEREAS health insurance is a benefit extended by virtue of employment and a "line of duty" catastrophic injury is an event that may necessitate a medical discharge from otherwise being able to fulfil employment, and

WHEREAS the Board of Supervisors upon receiving the filing of an employee to include a written statement detailing the circumstances of injury and any witnesses accompanied by a medical examination at the choice of the county's designated physician when a "line of duty" injury is found to be the direct causation of performing in the line of duty;

WHEREAS upon receiving such certification the county subject to the approval of the Board of Supervisors will pay both the premium and cost of coverage at the current level of insurance that the employee retained upon the date of the line-of-duty injury, and

WHEREAS such insurance benefit may only be paid by the county up until the age of 65 and will not be retained when insurance is offered (and denied) by another employer should the employee become gainfully employed, nor when the former employee elects to be put on a spouse's insurance plan,

Now be it resolved on this day of the month of , 2022 that the Woodbury County Board of Supervisors hereby passes such a policy to protect its valued employees and recognize the service that they perform in the line of duty.

IF THERE IS A CONTRACT INVOLVED IN THE AGENDA ITEM, HAS THE CONTRACT BEEN SUBMITTED AT LEAST ONE WEEK PRIOR AND ANSWERED WITH A REVIEW BY THE COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE?

Yes No

RECOMMENDATION:

Ensure that the policy of the Board of Supervisors extending health insurance coverage with the policy points and procedures as described here contain the certain provisions for secondary roads workers and if not that the BOS takes action to amend policy to match the above resolution and communicate this safeguard with our appreciation to each secondary roads worker.

ACTION REQUIRED / PROPOSED MOTION:

Ensure that the policy of the Board of Supervisors extending health insurance coverage with the policy points and procedures as described here contain the certain provisions for secondary roads workers and if not that the BOS takes action to amend policy to match the above resolution and communicate this safeguard with our appreciation to each secondary roads worker.