

**AGENDA**  
**\*RESCHEDULED\***  
**Administrative-Finance Committee**  
**November 4, 2024**  
**6:30 p.m. – City Hall Conference Room**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Public Comment**
- 3. New Business**
  - a. Tuition Reimbursement Policy Revision**
  - b. Approval of Minutes – October 7, 2024**
- 4. Other Business**
- 5. Next Meeting – December 2, 2024**
- 6. Adjournment**

**AGENDA MEMO**  
**Administrative/Finance Committee**  
**November 4, 2024**

**ISSUE STATEMENT**

A motion to approve a revision to the city's personnel policy, Section 22 Education and Training Leave and Reimbursement.

**BACKGROUND/HISTORY**

The city's personnel rules and union contracts offer employee tuition reimbursement. The personnel rules generally apply to those employees not covered by a union contract.

The personnel rules relating to tuition reimbursement have not been revised since prior to 2002 nor has any employee taken advantage of tuition reimbursement.

Chief Thomas advised that Deputy Chief Norton is interested in earning his master's degree. While at the FBI National Academy (NA), Deputy Chief Norton's coursework was all graduate-level courses (except the physical training block) and was considered part of the University of Virginia (UVA). Since Deputy Chief Norton's credits already earned at the NA will count for Public Safety, half of the Master's Degree was earned while at the NA. While this benefit provision is rarely used, staff is supportive of additional job related education.

In reviewing the policy, staff modified it to reflect current trends in education, including remote learning and educational expenses. A marked copy is included with this memo and listed as Exhibit A

**STAFF/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends approval of Exhibit A

**ALTERNATE CONSIDERATION**

As directed.

**DECISION MODE**

This item will be placed on the November 18, 2024, City Council agenda for consideration.

**SECTION 22. Education and Training Leave and Reimbursement**

- .05 The City may provide paid leave and reimburse employees for expenses related to professional conferences, training and seminars when either attendance has been required of the employee by the City or has been approved by the City Administrator subject to budgetary appropriation. Reimbursement shall be based on established City policy at that time.
- .10 Full-time employees may apply for tuition ~~reimbursement assistance~~ for courses or other educational programs in an accredited university, college or adult education program or other school or authorized training recognized by the City Administrator for the purpose of education in subjects relating to the work of the employee and which will benefit the employee and the City in accordance with IRS regulations and the following tuition plan:
- A. The employee must submit a written ~~application request~~ for the educational program, ~~including certification that the reimbursement is tax exempt under IRS regulations. The request and it~~ must receive approval of the department head & the City Administrator.
- B. The City will provide reimbursement of tuition & books for approved educational courses, provided the course is completed. ~~At its discretion, the City may pay the authorized training organization directly. Reimbursement is based on the following schedule:~~
- Grade of A or B: ~~5100%~~ reimbursement to a maximum of ~~\$4,000~~ \$15,000 reimbursement ~~while employee is employed by the City of Darien~~ per year.
- Grade of C: ~~2550%~~ reimbursement to a maximum of ~~\$4,000~~ 15,000 reimbursement ~~per year while employee is employed by the City of Darien~~.
- Grade of D or below: No reimbursement
- .15 If the City provides reimbursement for tuition, the employee must remain in the City's service at least ~~two~~ five (25) years following the completion of a course and reimbursement. If the employee fails in this obligation, the City's portion of the tuition and books will be deducted from the employee's last paycheck. If the employee's last pay check does not cover the required reimbursement amount, the employee will be required to reimburse the city based on a training cost agreement.
- .20 In the event the course is not based on credit hours, the employee's required length of stay after completion of the course shall be determined by the employee City Administrator before the course begins.

Exhibit A

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- .25 If the requested education or training program requires leave from work, the City Administrator may authorize a special leave of absence, without pay, in accordance with Section 21, Leave of Absence, of this Manual.
- .30 If it is in the best interests of the City, an employee may be allowed to attend classes during working hours, subject to the approval of the City Administrator.
- .35 **Training Cost Agreement.** Expensive and extensive training and education is often part of employment within the City workforce. The City is at risk when investing in training or education for an employee and having that employee leave the City's service shortly thereafter without the benefit of the employee's increased skills. Because of such expense and time, the City may impose the following:
- A. The employee, prior to receiving extensive training, may be requested to execute an agreement with the City to remain in the City's service for a period of time following training. Should such employee leave the City's service prior to the time period specified in the agreement, the employee shall reimburse the City per a pre-arranged payment schedule based on the amount of time that has passed following such training.
- B. A reimbursement payment schedule for training received will only apply in cases where the employee voluntarily leaves the City's employment. Other conditions of separation do not apply under this section.

Exhibit A

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- A. ~~The employee, prior to receiving extensive training, may be requested to execute an agreement with the City to remain in the City's service for a period of time following training. Should such employee leave the City's service prior to the time period specified in the agreement, the employee shall reimburse the City per a pre-arranged payment schedule based on the amount of time that has passed following such training.~~
- B. ~~A reimbursement payment schedule for training received will only apply in cases where the employee voluntarily leaves the City's employment. Other conditions of separation do not apply under this section.~~

**City of Darien**  
**Minutes of the Administrative/Finance Committee**  
**October 7, 2024**

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Chairwoman/Alderwoman Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Committee members Leganski and Schauer were present. Also in attendance was City Administrator Vana and Treasurer Coren.

**Motion to approve the tax levy determination for general and special purposes for Fiscal Year 2024-2025**

Staff presented the tax levy determination for 2024. Staff advised the police pension actuary report recommended a city contribution of \$2,971,285 for FYE 26. This is a 14.72% increase (\$381,350) compared to last year’s police pension contribution of \$2,589,935. In order to maintain last year’s tax extension and not increase the property tax, the city would contribute \$459,325 from other revenue sources. Last year, in order to maintain the previous year’s levy, the city contributed \$83,297 from other revenues. The committee discussed funding options and impacts the levy may have on the budget. The committee unanimously recommended to:

- Set the City’s 2024 general property tax levy and special corporate tax levy (police pension fund) at \$2,971,285 (which is equal to the full-recommended pension contribution) and consider an abatement after the FYE 26 budget discussions.
- Set the City’s 2024 Special Service Area I property tax levy at \$5,000.

**Police pension fund report – continued review**

The Administrative/Finance Committee discussed the police pension actuarial valuation at its last meeting. The committee asked to continue a general discussion on this item

**Review of concert expenses**

Staff reviewed the expenses for this year’s concert series and Oktoberfest.

**Minutes – September 3, 2024** - The committee unanimously approved the minutes.

**Adjournment** - The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Approved:

Mary Sullivan, Chairwoman \_\_\_\_\_

Ted Schauer, Member \_\_\_\_\_

Gerry Leganski, Member \_\_\_\_\_