

Open Work Session

Health Care Benefits for Service in the Line of Duty Death

June 14, 2022

Major Tod Richardson; John Psota, Acting County Executive; Charles Schmechel, CPA CFE, Deputy Director of Finance; and Jaci Curry, Director of Human Resources, came before Council.

Mr. Psota said, using Mr. Cannon's statement as a segue to the open work session regarding the health care benefits for service in the line of duty death, Ms. Curry will flesh out some more detail, but basically he wanted to bring to the Council's attention that they are having a very generalistic discussion here without specifics. He said they are looking into contractual and cost analysis to see what they can do regarding health benefits for the survivors of the law enforcement officers and what that definition might be, and what they can do in their current health care contract to take care of the survivors of a fallen law enforcement officer.

Ms. Curry said this is a request to discuss the possibility of amending their personnel manual to include a death in the line of duty health insurance option of coverage continuation for eligible spouses and dependents for deceased employees not eligible for retirement. She said it would be in a nonactive post-tax group that they already have in place that would offer that option to eligible surviving spouses and dependents of employees who are not eligible for retirement. She said currently in their personnel manual, chapter 10 under employee benefits, Section 10-13b, death benefit it says deceased employee not eligible for retirement. She explained, if a deceased employee was not eligible for retirement and continuation of benefits, the spouse and/or eligible dependents if eligible may retain their health insurance under applicable and appropriate State and federal laws, which means COBRA coverage. She said, if anyone is familiar with COBRA coverage, it is extremely expensive. She said it is the entire cost of the plan for that group, whether it be employee, employee/spouse, employee/child, or family coverage, which family would include any more than one child on the plan. She said they already have this nonactive post-tax group in place, and this is a request to consider it to be an option for those deceased employees who are not actually eligible for retirement. She said, had someone been eligible for retirement, they would have this option to continue in this post-tax nonactive group.

Mr. Psota said, just for clarification, being self-funded in their health care plan they have the flexibility to make this consideration. He said, also, for clarification, they are asking to continue doing this contractual and cost analysis and to ask Council if there is a consensus to continue on in this research.

Major Richardson said the one thing he wants to bring out was that if Glen had survived his injuries and had become disabled and unable to perform police duties and went out on a 66 and 2/3 retirement, he would have been eligible for the better insurance. He clarified, basically, the way this is written currently, he is being penalized for succumbing to the injuries, and he thinks that is something they need to adjust and fix.

Mr. Psota said, again, as a reminder, that is an example, and they are talking generalistically here.

Mr. Holloway asked if this is referring to just police officers, to which Ms. Curry responded, that is something they are looking at, who the coverage would include. Mr. Holloway asked, if a County Roads employee got killed along the road, and they had someone killed a few years ago working at the landfill who was electrocuted on the job, would this include them, to which Ms. Curry responded, that is

something they are looking at. Mr. Holloway clarified, so they are looking at that, anyone under County employment who dies in the line of duty, whether they are a corrections officer or a roads worker.

Major Richardson said currently the family is covered until July 31 under his current situation, so, if they can get this prepared before July 31, that will help a lot.

Mr. Dodd asked if Deputy Hilliard's family is only covered until July 31, to which Ms. Curry responded, premiums are paid a month in advance, so in June he paid the premium for July.

Mr. Dodd said the Council is here for Deputy Hilliard and the Sheriff's Department deputies, but he is open to discussing other line of duty deaths as well.

Mr. Psota clarified, they are just keeping the discussion generalistic.

Mr. Cannon said, as he understands it, if they come to a resolution on this it would be in the form of a Resolution, not a Legislative Bill, which means they could act rather quickly. Mr. Wilber, County Attorney, then came to the table and said typically a personnel manual amendment is done by Legislative Bill, to which Mr. Cannon responded, so they will have to have a timeframe with a public hearing and allow for that amount of time. He said he does not know whether this could fall under emergency legislation, but he guesses the key is how quickly they could act if they chose to do so, to which Mr. Wilber responded, he thinks it would be tough to categorize this under the emergency category, but he can look at that. Mr. Cannon said at least they know what their guidelines are, which means they want to try to expedite at least the first reading by their next Council meeting so they can get started. He said he does not know what time restrictions Mr. Wilber is under, to which Mr. Wilber responded, certainly, if it is a two-reading situation, they would want to do that in July to have it in place by the end of the month, but Ms. Curry needs to do research.

Mr. Psota said typically there is coverage until the end of the month, but they can continue to do research, and he is sensing that they have a consensus to continue to look into that.


Mr. McCain said he definitely thinks they need to move forward, but it sounds like they need some clarification between their verbiage addressing in the line of duty. He said Ms. Curry talked about the current policy and she is talking about any deceased employee, if he heard correctly, who is not eligible for retirement, to which Ms. Curry responded, they are discussing it in general terms. Mr. McCain said that is sort of two different things, and they said they are working on it, but they need to get that figured out as that is a much broader category, obviously.

Mr. Cannon asked if there is a consensus to move forward, to which there was. Mr. Cannon said they appreciate them even thinking of this and taking these measures, and they look forward to seeing them again in early July.

There was no further discussion.

Signatures on next page

**Open Work Session
Health Care Benefits for Service in the Line of Duty Death
June 14, 2022**

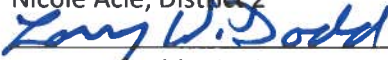


John T. Cannon, President, At-Large
absent

Ernest F. Davis, Vice President, District 1


William R. McCain, At-Large

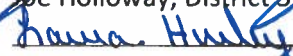
Nicole Acle, District 2



Larry W. Dodd, District 3
absent

Josh Hastings, District 4



Joe Holloway, District 5


Laura Hurley, Council Administrator