



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Jennifer Schembri

**SUBJECT: STIPEND FOR EMPLOYEES
WORKING FROM HOME DUE
TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

DATE: October 5, 2020

Approved

Date

10/8/2020

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution to:

- a) Authorize the City Manager to negotiate with the following bargaining units and execute a Side Letter Agreement with those bargaining units that agree to the terms set forth in this memorandum related to a \$200 stipend for eligible employees working from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - Association of Building, Mechanical, and Electrical Inspectors (ABMEI);
 - Association of Engineers and Architects (AEA);
 - Association of Legal Professionals (ALP);
 - Association of Maintenance Supervisor Personnel (AMSP);
 - City Association of Management Personnel (CAMP);
 - International Association of Firefighters, Local 230 (IAFF);
 - International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW);
 - Municipal Employees' Federation (MEF);
 - International Union of Operating Engineers, Local #3 (OE#3);
 - San Jose Police Officers' Association (POA); and
 - International Union of Operating Engineers, Local #3 Peace Officers Park Rangers Association (POPRA).

- b) Approve a \$200 stipend for eligible executive management and professional employees in Unit 99 consistent with the terms of the Side Letter Agreement with the City's bargaining units.

OUTCOME

Adoption of the resolution would result in providing a \$200 stipend to those eligible working from home employees on their November 6, 2020, pay check to help defray expenses these employees may have incurred as a result of being required to work from home specifically due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

BACKGROUND

Since March 17, 2020, many City employees who ordinarily work in a City facility have been working from home due to the closure of several facilities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the City has endeavored to provide technology, supplies, and equipment to employees wherever possible, including allowing employees to take home computers, office supplies, and other items such as chairs, it is recognized that employees have incurred some expenses as a result of working from home.

ANALYSIS

Since March 17, 2020, an estimated 2,500 City employees who ordinarily work in a City facility have been required to work from home due to the closure of their regular work location as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many employees have been able to return fully to their regular work location on a consistent basis, but many more have been working from home, either fully or partially, since March 17, 2020. While the City has an existing Flexible Workplace Program that specifies that employees working from home will be responsible for any expenses associated with their home office, the City recognizes that the program was originally conceived as voluntary despite being modified to give the City the ability to require employees to work from home in the event of an emergency.

To defray expenses employees may have incurred as a result of being required to work from home specifically due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Administration recommends providing a one-time, taxable, \$200 stipend to eligible employees. Eligible employees include employees represented by bargaining units as well as unrepresented employees in Unit 99 who have worked from home on a continuous basis, either fully or partially, beginning on or after March 17, 2020 and are anticipated to continue working from home through November 6, 2020. Employees who are voluntarily working from home are not eligible for the stipend.

The stipend is intended to offset the cost of incidental expenses associated with working from home, such as additional telephone or cellular phone expenses and enhanced internet capabilities. It is not intended to cover the expense of replicating an employee's normal office. Instead, employees may make arrangements with their departments to retrieve office supplies and most equipment needed to perform their duties, including items such as City-issued laptops or desktop

computers. The stipend is also not intended to serve as a direct reimbursement for any and all expenses each employee claims to have incurred.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that the City Council adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to negotiate with those City bargaining units outlined in the Recommendation section above and execute a Side Letter Agreement with those bargaining units that agree to the terms set forth in this memorandum related to a \$200 stipend for eligible employees working from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic that will be paid on November 6, 2020, and to provide the stipend to eligible unrepresented employees in Unit 99 on November 6, 2020 as well.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

No further follow-up action with the Council is expected at this time.

CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSE

The recommendation in this memo has no effect on Climate Smart San José energy, water, or mobility goals.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Manager's Budget Office and the City Attorney's Office.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

No commission recommendation or input is associated with this action.

COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

The Administration estimates that approximately 2,500 employees will be eligible for this \$200 stipend resulting in a cost of \$500,000. The cost for the stipend will be absorbed within each department's personal services budget.

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

October 5, 2020

Subject: Stipend for Employees Working from Home Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

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CEQA

Not a Project, File No. PP16-010, City Organizational and Administrative activities resulting in no changes to the physical environment.



JENNIFER SCHEMBRI
Director of Employee Relations
Director of Human Resources

For questions, please contact Allison Suggs, Assistant Director of the Office of Employee Relations, at (408) 535-8157.