



Amherst Massachusetts

PERSONNEL BOARD

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON TOWN'S NEWLY ADOPTED SICK AND PERSONAL LEAVE BENEFIT FOR PART-TIME HOURLY EMPLOYEES

(for discussion purposes related to Petition Article 26)

- The Town of Amherst has a long history of providing paid sick leave to part-time employees, even with no legal mandate to do so. The Town already provides a prorated share of 15 sick days per year for regular part-time employees who work year round at least 20 hours per week.
- The Personnel Board takes the issue of paid sick leave seriously. Last fall and winter, the Board studied the makeup of the part-time workforce, the nature of work performed, the hours worked, and the cost of providing various amounts of paid leave. The Board surveyed what other municipalities do and it examined the impact of the State's "one size fits all" Earned Sick Leave Law on the town. It invited municipal workers to speak and listened to what they had to say.
- The Personnel Board decided Amherst can do better than other towns and the state. The Board proposed to provide up to 60 hours of flexible sick and personal leave to year round part-time employees who work- on average - at least 10 hours per week. This is 50% more generous than the new state law. It is precedent setting and groundbreaking policy amongst non-union workers in Massachusetts cities and towns. The Select Board adopted this policy on February 23rd, and it goes into effect on July 1, 2015.
- The Town's policy is fair, equitable, affordable, easy to understand and easy to administer. It covers regular part-time year round workers like the transfer station attendant, senior center lunch site manager, senior center nurse, relief parking enforcement officers, frequently scheduled Library Assistants, the plumbing and gas inspector, and the after school program leaders who also run the LSSE summer camp. It does not cover elections workers, lifeguards, pro shop attendants, substitute teachers, umpires, call fire fighters, tutors and the majority of part-time workers who work seasonally, intermittently, when called, or very little at all.
- The Town's policy provides an allocation of sick and personal leave that is immediately available to eligible workers on July 1st, based on their total hours worked in the previous fiscal year. Accrual by the hour accounting is not required.
- In offering the flexibility to use Sick or Personal Leave, the Town takes itself out of the "are you really sick?" business for both workers and supervisors. Our staff will work together to serve residents and business. The Town Manager and Personnel Board support this benefit and instruct department heads to make hiring and staffing decisions by need and not to avoid providing sick leave benefits.
- The Select Board has asked the Personnel Board to conduct regular reviews of its policy for fairness and equity, and recommend adjustments to it when warranted.

Sick Leave Policy Comparison

Parameters:	Town's Policy (adopted February 23, 2015)	State Earned Sick Leave Law
Authority to establish:	Select Board for Town and Library staff.	Town Meeting for Town, Library and Elementary staff <i>Regional School Committee for Region employees.</i>
Effective Date:	July 1, 2015	July 1, 2015
Eligible Employees:	Part-time Town and Library hourly employees working year round at least 10 hours per week. Based on Calendar 2014 hours worked, 26 additional covered employees. Part-time employees working more than 20 hours per week are already provided sick and personal leave.	All Town, Library and Elementary School hourly employees starting 91st day of employment, accrual retroactive to first day. Based on calendar 2014 hours worked, 250 town employees and up to 100 elementary school employees.
Types of Workers:	Senior Center lunch site manager, Senior Center nurse, frequently scheduled Library circulation desk workers, part-time Inspectors, relief parking enforcement officers, recreation program managers, DPW transfer station attendant.	Youth sports referees, elections workers, call fire fighters, golf course workers, seasonal laborers, substitute teachers, lifeguards, tutors, library shelvers, seasonal and intermittent staff.
Benefit Offered:	Up to 60 hours of Earned Sick and Personal Leave annually.	Up to 40 hours of Earned Sick leave annually.
Accrual Method:	A 19 hour/week employee is given 60 hours of sick and personal leave to use on July 1st. A 10 hour/week employee is given 32 hours to use. Earned leave time is prorated based on hours worked in prior fiscal year but is immediately available for use.	One Hour of Sick Leave is earned for every 30 hours worked starting July 1, 2015, able to be used after 90 days. No personal leave.
Average age and Years of Service:	36.5 years old; 3 years of service	22 years old, 1.5 years of service (Town staff only)
Allowable Use:	Sick or Personal leave may be taken in same manner defined for all Amherst employees in the Personnel Procedures Manual.	Sick leave may be used for personal illness, or to care for child, parent, spouse or parent of spouse only.
Cost Assumptions:	\$1,000/employee or \$26,000 for FY 16 assuming maximum accrual and replacement of some workers.	\$41,000 combined town and elementary school employees cost. \$33,000 for Town & Library plus \$8,000 for Elementary School Employees (S.Mangano). Admin costs for tracking not included - represents a second tier of leave benefit for part time employees