

GOVERNMENT OF THE CITY OF SOUTH FULTON

Office of the City Manager


WILLIAM "BILL" EDWARDS
MAYOR



ODIE DONALD II
CITY MANAGER

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor William "Bill" Edwards & City Council Members

FROM: Odie Donald II 
City Manager

DATE: April 10, 2020

SUBJECT: Gladiator Benefits Program

Gladiator Benefits Program for Essential Staff Members

Currently, the world is experiencing a historic health emergency in the form of a coronavirus, COVID-19. Responding to the virus has created a myriad of issues related to municipal service delivery and direct person-to-person contact. The pandemic is also currently wreaking havoc on the global economy, which is quickly being felt in local economies, including the City of South Fulton.

The City has made great strides in stabilizing finances and following an aggressive plan to alleviate a long-standing budget deficit. While current projections provided exclusively by the City Treasurer show the City is in solid position to endure the pandemic, margins to do so are razor thin. As such, the City Treasurer's fiscal impact statement related to cash payments, shows that the City is unable to move forward with a cash payout at this time.

The proposed Gladiator Benefits Program (GBP) for Essential Staff Members is structured to provide hazard compensation by creating a longer term pay incentive in lieu of one-time cash payments. GBP is designed to promote retention of the City's most valued partners, its employees. The program has several unique options which includes flexible shift scheduling, new paid leave accrual, and a potential for cash payout options.

Flexible Work Scheduling

If staffing levels permit, applicable department heads would be authorized to adjust work schedules by one shift allowing employees greater flexibility. Rotational scheduling of a flex work shift is encouraged to allow all eligible employees an opportunity to take advantage of the benefit. Employees will continue to receive their full compensation during their scheduled flex shift day. The intent of this benefit is to encourage a level of work-life balance and mental-wellness renewal. Recently, the City of Atlanta implemented this shift change for its sworn police officers.

New Paid Leave Accrual

Through creation of an additional leave bank, the Gladiator Benefits Program would include a new paid leave accrual category. Eligible employees will accrue one shift for each full month worked through the declared end of the emergency period. Employees scheduled for a flex shift day will remain eligible for this leave accrual, although they may not physically work a full schedule due to enjoying the benefit of the flex shift day. The accrued leave would be maintained in a separate leave bank allowing the employee to utilize the leave at a future date or take a cash payout option, **if** the City has been authorized for federal reimbursement.

The monthly cost impact is shown in the below illustration. Please note that the valuation of the accrued leave will increase over time as the proposed Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA), previously recommended at a total of 3% split over two years, are implemented with the next two budget adoptions (FY2021 and FY2022).

	# of Positions	Gladiator Leave Accrual @ 1 shift per month
Community Development & Regulatory Affairs	17	\$ 3,005
Arborist	1	\$ 239
Code Enforcement Administrator	1	\$ 277
Code Enforcement Officer	11	\$ 1,648
Code Enforcement Team Leader	2	\$ 380
Development Site Inspector	2	\$ 462
Fire	126	\$ 28,805
Fire Battalion Chief	5	\$ 1,673
Fire Captain	22	\$ 6,436
Fire Sergeant	44	\$ 10,088
Firefighter	55	\$ 10,609
Police	129	\$ 38,915
Crime Scene Supervisor	1	\$ 227
Crime Scene Technician	2	\$ 308
Criminal Information Systems Technician	4	\$ 563
GCIC Records Manager	1	\$ 269
Police Captain	2	\$ 887
Police Detective	10	\$ 3,379
Police Lieutenant	10	\$ 3,870
Police Officer II	77	\$ 22,364
Police Officer II- Park Ranger Division	3	\$ 900
Police Quartermaster	1	\$ 179
Police Sergeant	17	\$ 5,634
Police Sergeant- Park Ranger Division	1	\$ 335
Grand Total	272	\$ 70,726

Cash Pay Out

If stimulus funding becomes available, the City will revert to leveraging federal funds to the highest dollar value available and allow cash payout of the accrued leave, in accordance with the policy of this benefit program and the approved legislation governing the City's reimbursement eligibility.

Eligible Employees

Eligible employees include first responders and employees previously identified by their department head as holding frontline safety-sensitive positions that require them to perform essential duties involving direct interaction with the public. Newly hired employees and recruits that are still under the scope of on-the-job training may not be immediately eligible for the benefits program.

Effective Date and Vesting Period

Both the flexible shift scheduling and paid leave accrual benefits will be made effective beginning the pay period of April 13, 2020. As such a program would require a resolution of Mayor and Council, which if approved would occur on April 27, 2020, the accruals would be retroactive.

All employees designated as essential front-line and first responders are needed daily to continue life, safety and critical operational services for South Fulton residents and customers. Therefore, employees will be able to utilize the new paid leave accrual benefit upon continuing one full year of service after activation of the GBP.

If the employee separates before satisfying the one-year requirement, the employee will be entitled to 25% vesting of the accrued leave at the end of every quarter that they remain a South Fulton employee (see chart below).

	GBP Leave Accrual Vested Percentage
April - June 2020	25%
July - September 2020	50%
October - December 2020	75%
January - March 2021	100%

After one-year, the employee will become fully vested and can begin taking well-deserved paid time off or elect a cash payout, if applicable, as defined in the cash payout section. The accrued leave will not expire and will continue to roll-over until the balance has been exhausted. However, if the City in its discretion decides to cash out an employee's accrued leave balance at a time other than specified in this program, payments for such accrued leave will be paid at the regular rate earned by that employee at the time the employee receives such payment.

Summary

The Gladiator Benefits Program is intended to show our employees the immense value they have to the City and how much we appreciate and value their commitment by offering a unique benefits program coupled with flexible work shifts and paid leave accrual. GBP is intended to balance the employees dedicated service to the residents and customers of South Fulton and also allow them a level of work-life balance, as much as we are able to do so without placing the City in a significant financial hardship during these uncertain times.

The City of South Fulton continues to lead the region by offering a competitive compensation package and benefits contribution to employees. In 2019, the City adopted a compensation plan that pays first responders and front-line employees above the market in most classifications, when compared to other local and regional jurisdictions. The City offers 14 paid holidays a year and employees accrue approximately one day of vacation and one day of sick leave every month. The City has an aggressive retirement match for employees contributing to the defined and deferred contribution plans. By implementing the Gladiator Benefits Program, an eligible employee's total compensation package will increase as a result of the new paid leave category.

Job Title	Department	Average Annual Salary	Total Compensation
Arborist	Community Development & Regulatory Affairs	\$ 62,131.00	\$ 92,394.91
Code Enforcement Administrator	Community Development & Regulatory Affairs	\$ 71,999.00	\$ 105,299.22
Code Enforcement Officer	Community Development & Regulatory Affairs	\$ 38,182.00	\$ 61,076.99
Code Enforcement Team Leader	Community Development & Regulatory Affairs	\$ 49,354.00	\$ 75,686.53
Development Site Inspector	Community Development & Regulatory Affairs	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 89,608.22
Fire Battalion Chief	Fire	\$ 76,838.00	\$ 113,734.89
Fire Sergeant	Fire	\$ 52,007.00	\$ 80,582.44
Firefighter	Fire	\$ 44,926.00	\$ 71,128.43
Crime Scene Supervisor	Police	\$ 59,134.00	\$ 88,475.76
Crime Scene Technician	Police	\$ 40,092.00	\$ 63,574.68
Criminal Information Systems Technician	Police	\$ 36,364.00	\$ 58,699.60
GCIC Records Manager	Police	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 102,685.14
Police Records and Docs Supervisor	Police	\$ 51,822.00	\$ 78,913.91
Police Quartermaster	Police	\$ 46,411.00	\$ 71,837.99
Police Captain	Police	\$ 76,838.00	\$ 118,466.57
Police Detective	Police	\$ 57,338.00	\$ 91,230.85
Police Lieutenant	Police	\$ 66,375.00	\$ 103,852.86
Police Officer II	Police	\$ 52,007.00	\$ 83,785.03
Police Officer II- Park Ranger Division	Police	\$ 52,007.00	\$ 83,785.03
Police Sergeant	Police	\$ 57,338.00	\$ 91,230.85
Police Sergeant- Park Ranger Division	Police	\$ 58,000.00	\$ 92,155.47

Total compensation illustration is based on current average annual salary and the city's current benefits contributions.

Conclusion

This overview of the program should be considered high level with a formal detailed presentation planned for the Council on Monday, April 13, 2020 at 10am as part of the virtual meeting. The presentation will also provide recommendations related to mitigating the fiscal impact of the current global pandemic.

Should you need further information regarding this correspondence, please contact Odie Donald II at odie.donald@cityofsouthfultonga.gov.