Longevity Pay and Sick Leave Measures for Non-Union Employees Advance

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

The Kodiak Island Borough Assembly discussed pay benefits for borough employees during Thursday’s regular meeting. Longevity pay and sick leave compensation were on the agenda for non unionized borough employees, a recommendation from the Working Conditions Advisory Group.

Acting Borough Manager Bud Cassidy gave this background on the group.

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(Borough Pay 1 :31 “This is a recommendation of what’s called the Working Conditions Advisory Group. That’s a group that’s composed of employees not covered under the union contract and are composed of department heads, supervisors and members of the clerks office. It was an organization that was created under the borough adopted personnel manual. In the manual it talks about how the committee can negotiate directly with the assembly on these issues and the assembly in good faith can choose to vote on these recommendations. Obviously there’s no obligation on your part to adopt any of the suggestions that are brought before you.”)

Longevity pay was first up for discussion, and Assemblyman Tuck Bonney said it makes sense to reward the borough’s long-term employees and attract future long-term candidates.

-- (Borough Pay 2 :36
“I do support this ordinance. Some of the people at the borough haven’t had a raise in 12 years and I don’t think it’s right. I don’t think it’s right that you get to a certain level and you can’t make any more. If you’re good at what you do, and I think some of the borough staff is real good at what they do, they should have some mechanism so they can get a raise, and not just flat for the rest of your life. So I don’t have a problem, because if we’re going to keep good people here at the borough we’re going to have to pay them. And I feel strongly that we need to keep good people here at the borough and we need to be able to hire good people and I think this ordinance would do both those things, thank you.”)

The ordinance dealing with longevity pay was ultimately passed by the assembly five to one. Assemblyman Mel Stephens voted against the ordinance, and said he would vote against sick leave compensation for many of the same reasons.

-- (Borough Pay 3 : 46 “The cost has been estimated for non union employees, it is a very large cost, almost a quarter million dollars. And while it is phrased in terms of it would cost us $244, 000 if every such employee quit today, the plain fact is that by passing this ordinance we will be immediately taking on a potential $244,000 additional obligations. And there’s no estimate of what it means if it applies to all borough employees, not just non union employees, and once again you are just whistling by the graveyard if you think this isn’t going to be right on the next negotiating set of demands of the unioin employees.”)

While Stephens was the sole vote against longevity pay, he wasn’t the only one against sick leave compensation. Assemblyman Tuck Bonney spoke up against the ordinance after he received some clarification from Cassidy.

-- (Borough Pay 4 :20 “Question for Bud is do union employees get occurred sick leave. Mr. Mayor, Mr. Bonney, if you’re asking is the rate of sick leave they earned the same…well no can they save it up and cash it out? No. No one can save it up, we’re all under the same rules and regulations. So the union employees can’t do it either? Correct. I will be voting no against this.”)

In the end, the assembly was split on what to do and Borough Mayor Jerome Selby was asked to voice in on the matter.

-- (Borough Pay 5 :23 “Seeing none roll call vote please Madame clerk…Motion carried, 4-3.”)

Both ordinances will be revisited during the next regular meeting when a public hearing will be held and assembly members will give a final vote on the benefits.

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