

TO: Department Directors

FROM: _____
Alexander Banks VI, City Manager

SUBJECT: WORKPLACE ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE AND ROUTINE OFFICE HOURS

Effective Date: May 29, 2024

Expiration Date: Indefinite

I. PURPOSE

A Workplace Enhancement Committee (the Committee) shall be established to foster open communication between City employees and management on issues of importance to the organization.

In conjunction with other City-wide and departmental employee-focused programs, the Committee provides an important framework for City management and employees to build effective teams that promote innovative ideas and best practices, increase employee morale and productivity, and deliver outstanding public service to citizens.

The City Manager shall additionally establish routine office hours set aside for any employee to meet with the City Manager to foster open communication between City employees and management.

II. ELIGIBILITY

All regular full-time and part-time City employees not in a supervisory or management role within departments under the direction of the City Manager are eligible to participate and serve as departmental representatives to the Committee. Department/Agency Heads not under the direction of the City Manager (e.g. elected/appointed officials) may opt for their departments to participate in the Committee.

For the purpose of this policy, references to the City Manager, Director of Human Resources, or department head shall include their designees.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Committee Representation/Selection

The Committee will be composed of a diverse group of selected departmental representatives. Each department shall have one primary representative and an alternate. The alternate will represent the department on the Committee in the absence of the primary representative.

Committee representatives shall be selected through an application process. Any interested and eligible employee may apply. Should multiple employees apply from a department, selection between applicants shall be made by random draw. Selected representatives and alternates shall serve a two-year term. Each representative (or alternate) may serve up to two consecutive terms and must wait two years before serving another term.

B. Expectations of Members

Committee representatives are expected to be professional and respectful in their interactions with others, remembering that the work of the Committee is for the greater good of all City employees and the City of Harrisonburg as an organization. The Committee shall not be used as a venue to discuss issues specific to a department or individual such as departmental policies/procedures or individual employee issues that are disciplinary or personal in nature such as appeals of performance evaluations, grievances, and/or medical information.

C. Duties of the Committee

The responsibility of the Committee and its members is to provide input to City management. The Committee may make recommendations but does not establish policy.

D. Frequency of Committee Meetings

The Committee shall coordinate meetings with the City Manager and Director of Human Resources at least twice a year. Each department's Committee representative and alternate shall meet with the department head at least quarterly.

Sub-committees will be established on an as-needed basis for discussion of topics impacting only a subset of employees. Sub-committee meeting minutes will be provided to the full Committee.

E. Conduct of Meeting

Attendance verification will be part of the meeting minutes. The primary representative is expected to attend all meetings. Alternate Committee representatives are expected to attend the Committee meetings only in the absence of the primary departmental Committee representative. Minutes and attendance records will be provided to department heads.

F. Agendas and Minutes

Committee members must submit agenda items to the City Manager or their designee in advance of the meeting by the designated deadline.

The City Manager's Office or Human Resources Department shall prepare minutes of each committee meeting. Copies of the minutes shall be made available to committee members before the next committee meeting. Minutes shall be posted on City Central for access by all employees of the organization.

G. Responsibilities

1. *City Wide Committee Representatives*

- a. Each representative (or alternate) is responsible for soliciting input from members of the department in the form of questions, concerns, and suggestions.
- b. Each representative (or alternate) is responsible for raising organization-wide issues at the meetings with the City Manager and the Director of Human Resources. These concerns shall be submitted to the City Manager within the schedule agreed upon between the City Manager and the Committee representatives. The City Manager will ensure the timeliness of response to concerns raised during the meeting.
- c. Committee representatives (or alternates) are responsible for ensuring that Committee minutes are available to employees within their departments.
- d. City Management may seek input from Committee representatives (or alternates) regarding issues that may significantly impact City employees.

2. *Department Heads*

- a. An internal departmental committee may be established to enhance interdepartmental communication among the employees.
- b. Department heads are responsible for providing timely responses to questions, concerns, or suggestions raised during City-wide Committee meetings.
- c. Department heads shall ensure that representatives are afforded time within the normal workday to participate in Committee activities.

3. *City Manager*

Notwithstanding any provision of this administrative regulation, the City Manager has the exclusive right and ultimate responsibility to manage the affairs of the City without limitation expressed or implied.

