

DEPARTMENT: All Departments

TITLE: **Personal Leave of Absence**

Minutes reference date: 30 March 2009

30 April 2012

PURPOSE:

To clearly establish a uniform policy on employee leaves of absence and to specify, as near as is possible, the conditions under which such absences will be granted.

POLICY:

Leaves of absence without pay may be granted to maintain continuity of service in instances where unusual or unavoidable circumstances require an employee's absence. Leave is granted on the assumption that the employee will be available to return to active employment when the conditions necessitating the leave permit.

In general, a leave of absence is considered a privilege. In no circumstances is leave granted automatically but must be requested by the employee. Granting leaves of absence should be administered with utmost discretion since employees are protected with some of the Town's benefits while on leave. In granting a leave of absence the employee's service record and circumstances requiring the leave should be carefully examined.

Leaves of absence are broken down into two categories:

- a) Short-term Leave of Absence (two through five working days)
Such absences may be granted without pay when the cause is reasonable and/or unavoidable (such as an extension of Compassionate Leave), and provided the absence is arranged in advance with the Department Head or, if this is prevented by an emergency, reported promptly to him/her.

The Department Head may at his/her discretion and in conformance with the provisions of this policy, grant employees up to one week (5 working days) of unpaid leave of absence. Such leaves are subject to review and approval of the Chief Administrative Officer for conformance to policy.

Employees granted such leaves of absence by the above authority shall resume work on the first scheduled workday following the expiration date of the approved unpaid absence.

An employee, with the prior approval of the Chief Administrative Officer, may receive salary for short term absence if it is deemed to be in the interest of the Town of Amherst.

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b) Long-Term Leave of Absence (in excess of five working days)

Consideration for such a leave of absence will depend upon:

- i) the reason for the leave
- ii) length of service of the employee
- iii) liability under any Provincial or Federal law
- iv) probable extent of the absence
- v) cost to the Town of Amherst of covering the absence

The terms and conditions of such leaves may vary with each case and are usually subject to research and negotiation by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Such long-term leaves shall require the approval of the Department Head and the CAO.

More specifically, but not to restrict the generality of this or any other paragraph contained herein, consideration will be given to requests and recommendations for unpaid absences in excess of five (5) working days in accordance with the following conditions, and upon approval from the CAO:

- i) Family Illness – When circumstances are of exceptional nature and compel absence from work, requests must be submitted specifying complete details of the reason for the request and an estimation of the extent of the request for leave.
- ii) Personal Business or Educational Leave: Absences may be considered when circumstances are of an exceptional nature and do not involve outside employment. Leave for educational reasons of benefit to both employee and the Town of Amherst may be viewed favorably but shall be given the same consideration prior to a decision. All requests must be submitted in writing specifying complete details of the reason for, and length of the request.

Benefits:

Employees who currently participate in the Blue Cross Benefit Plan will be required to pay 100% of the premium while on leave in excess of five working days. Payment must be provided to the Town in the form of post-dated cheque.

Employees granted any form of Leave of Absence must report to work on the first scheduled workday following the expiration of the leave.