



City of Fairburn
Special Called Council Meeting Minutes
March 4, 2024
4:30 PM

- I. The meeting was called to order by the Honorable Mayor Avery.
- II. Roll Call by City Clerk, Brenda James found the following members present:

The Honorable Mayor Pro Tem James Whitmore The Honorable Linda J. Davis
The Honorable Alex Heath The Honorable Samantha Hudson
The Honorable Hattie Portis-Jones

Absent: The Honorable Ulysses J. Smallwood

Also present was City Administrator Tony Phillips, Assistant City Administrator Jamila Criss, Assistant City Attorney Serena Nowell, and City Clerk Brenda James.

- III. The invocation was provided by City Administrator Tony Phillips.
- IV. Pledge of Allegiance was in Unison.
- V. Adoption of the City Council Agenda:

Council Member Portis-Jones made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented, with Council Member Hudson providing the second. **The motion carried unanimously.**

- VI. Regular Agenda Items:

- 1. Benefits Renewal 2024**

Human Resource Director Talisha Champagne presented this item and said each year our partners, BKS meets to ensure that the City provides a benefits package that continues to improve the health and well-being of our employees. There is an associated costs increase of 12% for the medical plan option with a new carrier (Cigna Healthcare) and a 2.5% increase for the United Health Care dental plan due to enhanced dental benefits. To fund the renewal, they are looking at a budget amendment to fund the cost of \$110,000 for the remaining FY24 budget year.

Ms. Champagne introduced BKS Partners Joe Harris and Jamila Mathis to discuss the renewal recommendations. Mr. Joe Harris said the city had a difficult claims year and United Healthcare came with a 25.9% increase (\$600,000 annual increase to the city). Cigna provided a competitive quote with a 12% overall increase, with no change and

matched the benefits. United Health Care enhanced the dental insurance to include implants and increased the rates by 2.5%, vision stayed the same. They are continuing the Health Reimbursement arrangement and will move the Administration for the HRA to Admin America. They are advising to remove the medical stipend which is an \$84,000 savings to the city. They discussed retiree coverage and said to add retiree coverage they would fund an HRA card that would allow funds for retirees to purchase medical coverage for themselves. They discussed moving the April 1st effective date to January 1st effective date.

Council Member Portis-Jones asked why they recommended removing the medical stipend. Ms. Mathis said the city pays their employees \$200 per month if they have access to a spouse's plan to wave coverage with the city. By removing the stipend, you will save \$84,000 annually. Mr. Harris said having more employees enroll in the plan will make the pool larger which will minimize claims. Council Member Portis-Jones said she was concerned that we're not helping ourselves by removing the stipend and asked for more clarification. City Administrator Tony Phillips said the high dollar claims that are not manageable are escalating our costs. United Health Care pays more in claims than we pay them in premiums. Adding more employees to the pool raises the premiums we are paying to the insurance company to offset that balance.

Assistant City Administrator Jamila Criss said last year at this time, they had a significant claim drop off our insurance, that positioned the city to get a better rate. At this time during renewal, our claims have significantly increased where they had a payout of over \$4 million.

Council Member Hudson said she was concerned for all employees and wanted to know how it looks for Public Safety. Mr. Phillips said the employees contributions will not be increasing and the coverage is the same.

Mayor Avery asked for more information regarding the retiree coverage that was mentioned. Ms. Mathis said they discussed adding retiree coverage if the city wanted it that would be a prefunded card that would allow your retirees to purchase health care coverage. Mayor Avery asked if the elected officials that use the coverage could be impacted by these modifications. Mr. Phillips said they added an option that the city could consider, it is not currently included in this plan and would require additional conversation.

Mayor Avery asked about the \$84,000 savings and wanted to know why they are doing it. Mr. Phillips said there were around 40 employees that do not have insurance with the city, and we pay those employees \$200 a month. This is not typically offered anymore and as we add more people to the plan, it will help balance the high claims.

Mayor Avery asked about the dental implants and said this is not a cheap undertaking. Mr. Phillips said it was a 2.5% increase, total cost is \$2,901. The cost was nominal, and we are saving money on the stipend, and the cost didn't increase for the

employees. Mayor Avery asked what the employees percentage of cost was for this. Ms. Champagne said the city pays 80% of the premium and the employee pays 20% of the premium. The employees will pay the same rates as last year, and the city will incur the extra costs.

Mayor Pro Tem Whitmore asked if the employees would have the same network coverage with Cigna. Ms. Mathis said they received a report from United Healthcare showing them the doctor's that employees were utilizing, and Cigna was able to match the provider list.

Council Member Davis said she was impressed with what they are doing for the employees and wanted to know why council was not included. Mr. Phillips said everything that is offered to employees is also offered to council members.

Ms. Champagne said the only plan Mayor and Council does not get is the buy up voluntary plan, but you are still getting basic life insurance. Council Member Portis-Jones asked why they don't get additional life insurance. Ms. Mathis said that was not put in place prior to BKS. Council Member Davis asked if it was portable and Ms. Champagne said yes, it is convertible for employees only.

Council Member Portis-Jones said for the third time, that is exactly what she is asking. The ability to buy up and convert for Mayor and Council and their dependents. She wants council to have the same afforded benefits as the employees. Ms. Mathis said they could take that back to Lincoln insurance to amend the plan, but the city does not contribute.

Council Member Portis-Jones asked for more information regarding the case management program and if incentives could be offered. Ms. Mathis said Cigna has a program and will provide \$20,000 in wellness benefits and can incentivize and allocate funds towards those programs.

Mayor Avery asked if there was an impact on medications. Ms. Mathis said you will have a transition of care, employees that have a prior authorization on the medications will be required to get a new prior authorization. The employees will have 30 days from April 1st to notify them if they need the transition of care and Cigna will have a representative to help. Mayor Avery asked about the formulary medications. Mr. Phillips said formularies are evaluated annually and Cigna will manage those as needed.

Mayor Pro Tem Whitmore said people are used to certain medications and asked if they still have a high volume of brand name versus generic. Ms. Mathis said she can't answer yes or no to that question, it depends on where the drug falls on the tier with Cigna.

Council Member Portis-Jones said now that the stipend has been removed, it is very important that conversation be had with those employees who have not participated

as well as their dependents. Ms. Champagne said they will meet with the employees affected by the stipend. Council Member Portis-Jones ask they be provided with the census as a result of removing the stipend.

Council Member Heath made a motion to proceed with the recommended benefit renewal plan which includes a transition to a medical plan option with Cigna Healthcare, vision, and dental plan services under United Health Care with the enhanced dental benefit, and renewal with the current providers for basic life, disability, Health Reimbursement (HRA), Flexible Spending Account (FSA), and COBRA administration for the 2024 benefit plan year. The second was provided by Council Member Davis. **The motion carried unanimously.**

VII. Public Hearings:

2. Data Center Text Amendment

Planning and Zoning Director Denise Brookins requested this item be continued to the next regularly scheduled public meeting.

Council Member Hudson made a motion to continue the Data Center Text Amendment to the next regularly scheduled public meeting. The second was provided by Council Member Davis. **The motion carried unanimously.**

VIII. Council Comments: N/A

IX. Adjournment

Council Member Davis made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:30 pm, with Council Member Heath providing the second. **The motion carried unanimously.**


Brenda James, City Clerk


Mario Avery, Mayor