

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 3, 2020
To: Finance Committee
From: Tom Hennig, Director of Administration
Subject: RMCSD COVID-19 Status Update

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Review District staff activities resulting from the COVID-19 crisis.
2. Approve the creation of a COVID-19 Sick Leave Bank of eighty (80) paid hours into each District employee's payroll leave bank by the District Human Resources staff.

BACKGROUND

1. On Tuesday, March 17, 2020, Sacramento County Health Officer, issued a recommendation for all non-essential businesses to have employees work from home where possible. That said, RMCSD is responsible for several essential services such as water, sewer, drainage, public safety, and a limited set of financial activities. Therefore, most RMCSD staff are considered essential and need to report to work daily. RMCSD non-essential personnel include those who work in offices in the Administration building. These staff can complete most of the work remotely. This action became a Statewide mandate a few days later.
2. On April 1, 2020, the U.S. Department of Labor announced new action regarding how American workers and employers will benefit from the protections and relief offered by the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act and Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act, both part of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). The Department's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) posted a temporary rule issuing regulations pursuant to this new law, effective April 1, 2020.

DISCUSSION

There are two primary sections of the State and Federal response to the COVID-19 crisis being addressed in this staff memo. The first item relates to the requirement by the California Governor for all non-essential workers to work from home/shelter in place. The second item is a Federal requirement to provide all U.S. workers with eighty (80) hours of paid leave taken for specified reasons related to COVID-19.

The transition from reporting to work at Rancho Murieta, to working from home, was nearly seamless for RMCSD staff. Our recent migration from traditional desktop computers to Microsoft Surface Book tablet computers allowed most of the team to work from their home offices the very next day. Within 24 hours of the County recommendation, all but one non-essential employee was able to successfully work from home. The one exception was the Office Assistant II, who needed specialized vendor support to enable the Ring Central phone system to work on a previously retired laptop. We also purchased five monitors and a dozen connection items to support the working environment at a few of the remote offices. In addition to the hardware, we implemented ZOOM for public meetings and Microsoft Teams as an internal collaboration tool. All the home use systems are accessing their mail through the Microsoft Office 365, web-based software, VPN for internet security, and we have encrypted all hard-drives. We continue to add additional security measures, as needed, to protect District assets used in remote locations. The total cost of items purchased for this required action has not exceeded \$5,000 to date. In the event of Federal or State reimbursements, all expenses are being identified as potentially reimburseable as they are COVID-19 related.

To meet the Federal requirement to allocate eighty (80) hours of paid leave, for employees who qualify for a COVID-19 related issue, we made the adjustment to the payroll file for all full-time staff. This additional leave will be available from April 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020 for a qualifying absence. Attached is the FFCRA flyer which provides the conditions for qualified leave. We have estimated the cost of additional paid leave will range from \$10,000 to \$20,000. This assumption is based on an estimated ten to twenty percent of our staff qualifying for the leave during the duration of the Federal mandate. Our recommendation is to absorb the estimate for the balance of FY 2019-20 and to add a line item to the budget for FY 2020-21. Adding this line item will require a reduction in one or more requests from the Prop 218 draft budget.

SUMMARY

Based on the discussion and possible direction from the Finance Committee, staff is prepared to bring this staff memo forward as a regular Board meeting agenda item.