

Employee Group 65

DANE COUNTY HIGHWAY, AIRPORT, EXPO CENTER, LANDFILL AND ZOO WORKERS' EMPLOYEE GROUP'S REPRESENTATIVE

Grievance Number: EGR65112320

Date: 11-23-2020

Employee's Name: EGR65

Employee's Supervisor: Beth Petersen

Classification: Zoo Keepers

Work Location: Zoo

Employee's Phone: 608-212-3813

Date of Violation: 11-15-2021

Statement of Grievance:

For as long as anyone has been employed at the zoo, 25+ years, the Time Off Guidelines have remained predominantly unchanged. When alterations were necessary, they were always done in a way which involved transparency, communication, and consensus with the parties affected by said changes. On Sunday, November 15, General Curator Beth Petersen sought to apply unilateral substantial changes to the vacation selection process by distributing instructions via email which differ significantly from the 2020 Time Off Guidelines and past practice.

This new memo attempts to interpret EBH language to discriminate against single day vacation requests...

• *Per the Employee Benefit Handbook, "Employees shall be encouraged to use vacations in sustained periods of one (1) or more weeks, thereby deriving what is commonly accepted as the greatest value from the vacation. In the event that an employee shall wish to use vacations credit in small increments, this provision shall not be a bar to such use. Such smaller increments of vacation credit use shall be allowed with department head approval where such use does not interfere with the normal use of vacation credit by other employees or adversely affect departmental operation."*

o When submitting vacation requests for the 2021 calendar year, prior to the January 1st, 2021 deadline, only the first four (4) single day requests will be considered per person, still based on seniority. After January 1st, single day requests will be processed under all other applicable rules (2 people per day, 5 day increment for weekend days etc.).

In 2018, Local 65 and zoo management met for the purpose of clearing up some ambiguous language and making the Time Off Guidelines more flexible, particularly for those with less seniority. The following year, 2019, we collaborated again. Two important conclusions were agreed upon by all participants during these exercises:

- 1) The policy would only be changed when consensus was reached, and
- 2) No one's time off, regardless of the circumstances, is more valuable than another's.

For 25+ years there have been keepers who'd often use vacation in single day increments, and this practice has not routinely interfered with the normal use of vacation credit by other employees or adversely affected departmental operation. With more keepers employed than ever, it's now possible that even more flexibility can be exhibited by management – allowing 3, and even 4, off on a particular weekday. Furthermore, in many circumstances, employees have either switched days off, or successfully solicited a more senior keeper to forego their vacation to allow for major travel.

To make these discriminatory, unilateral changes to the vacation selection process, particularly this late in the year, denies the existing benefits of employees that have worked a lifetime in the department and navigated the process successfully thus far.

Article or Section of the Handbook that was violated:

SUBJECT: EXISTING BENEFITS

SUBJECT: VACATION

All others that may apply.

We request for settlement or corrective action desired:

Delete the above added language from the 2021 Time Off Guidelines. Meet & Confer regarding the proposed modifications in the 2021 sessions per Dane County Ordinance 18.24.

Make the employees whole.

Local's Signature Erik Anderson Date: 23 November 2020