

South Lake Tahoe to create admin time policy

By Kathryn Reed

When South Lake Tahoe City Manager Tony O'Rourke has his staff meeting today one topic on the agenda will be administrative time.



"I want directors to review who warrants it and make sure the hours are appropriate," O'Rourke said.

Some people are given 40 hours, others more than 100 in a year. Thirty-nine employees now qualify for admin time.

O'Rourke was unaware the city did not have a policy in place regarding this practice until *Lake Tahoe News* wrote about it earlier this month. Administrative time is for salaried employees as a sort of comp time.

But the problem is without a policy in place and it not being tracked by the folks in payroll, the abuses of admin time are unknown. It's possible now for people to take the time without earning it. This means instead of taking sick time or vacation hours, they take this admin time and still have the other hours on the books. This would be a financial impact on the city.

O'Rourke said he wants to add a box that can be checked on timesheets to reflect the use of admin time. This in turn can be tracked to ensure people aren't using more than they have been allocated and possibly snare anyone abusing the system.

When O'Rourke was hired this summer his original contract called for 120 hours of admin time. He dialed that back to 80.

"I can't take all that time," he said of the three weeks.

That's the other concern of his – is whether the city can afford people to not work.

"How much can you allow people off even if they earned it?" he questions. With fewer employees and the ongoing furlough days, he questions how much admin time can be doled before the public isn't served.

A temporary admin time policy was written in the early 1990s when Kerry Miller was city manager, but it was never adopted as formal policy. Since then, Human Resources Manager Janet Emmett has drafted a couple possible policies. But former City Manager Dave Jinkens never brought them forward for the City Council to adopt.

"Why this has been untouched for years is beyond me," O'Rourke said. "It's an important housekeeping policy."

It's possible the council will be asked to address this Dec. 14. If not then, it will be on a January agenda.