

CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Ordinance amending Chapter 3.79 of the Bellevue City Code to add Juneteenth as an additional paid holiday for employees; authorizing the City Clerk to make all additional necessary changes to the Bellevue City Code to reflect this change; and establishing an effective date.

Joy St. Germain, Director, 452-4581
Human Resources

Linda Whitehead, Chief DEI Officer, 452-7886
City Manager's Office

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Ordinance amends the Bellevue City Code to add Juneteenth as an additional paid holiday for City employees.

RECOMMENDATION

Move to adopt Ordinance No. 6654

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

On June 19, 1865, more than two years after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, the news that slavery had been abolished and that all enslaved people had been freed was announced in Galveston, Texas, the last state of the Confederacy that maintained institutional slavery.

June 19, recognized as “Juneteenth,” has been celebrated to commemorate the end of slavery in practice in the United States as well as the contributions by Americans of African descent to society.

During the 2021 regular session, the Washington state legislature passed substitute house bill 1016 establishing Juneteenth as a state legal holiday to celebrate the end of chattel slavery. The bill states that the legislature adopted Juneteenth as a paid holiday, in part, to recognize the “catastrophic and unrelenting legacy of trauma for generations of Black/African Americans” caused by slavery, and that “the historical and continued harms of slavery and the rejoicing of the end of this atrocity should be acknowledged and celebrated by all Washingtonians.” As such, in 2022 there will be an additional paid holiday for state employees.

Additionally, on June 17, 2021, President Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act recognizing Juneteenth as the twelfth federal holiday.

Pursuant to RCW 1.16.050(6), the legislative body of a local government may choose to adopt the state’s holiday schedule or to adopt more or fewer holidays by resolution or ordinance. Many local governments and public entities including Everett, Federal Way, Redmond, Issaquah, Kent, Lynnwood, Tacoma, Edmonds, Bonney Lake, the Port of Seattle, Pierce Transit, and Metro Parks in Tacoma have chosen to recognize Juneteenth as a paid holiday. Human Resources anticipates that most Washington jurisdictions will eventually add the holiday.

The City has historically followed the state's holiday schedule. Bellevue City Code section 3.79.130(G) and the Human Resources Policies and Procedures Manual (HRPPM) section 10.1 adopt the same schedule as the state's previous holiday calendar and provide for the same number of floating holidays as the state.

On March 14, after discussion in Study Session, Council directed staff to return with legislation amending the City Code adding Juneteenth as an additional paid holiday for fully benefited employees.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

The City unequivocally embraces efforts to address institutional racism and to strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion in City policies and programs. This action will mean that the City of Bellevue's administrative offices will be closed annually in observance of Juneteenth beginning in 2022.

Fiscal Impact

Providing an additional paid holiday is not cost neutral. While not having a direct fiscal impact, as most City employees are paid a salary, the City will incur opportunity costs of a day of lost productivity by adding a paid holiday. For most benefited employees, excluding represented employees, this is the equivalent of eight hours of pay.

OPTIONS

1. Adopt the Ordinance amending Chapter 3.79 of the Bellevue City Code to add Juneteenth as an additional paid holiday for employees; authorizing the City Clerk to make all additional necessary changes to the Bellevue City Code to reflect this change; and establishing an effective date.
2. Do not adopt the Ordinance and provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS

Proposed Ordinance No. 6654

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A