

**Minutes**  
**Healthcare Benefit Program Governing Board**  
**10/19/2023**

The meeting of the Healthcare Governing Board was called to order at 1:01 PM.

**Members Present:** Lisa Brandl, Chairperson; Lee Lofton, Interim HR Director; Iasmina Giurgiev, Program Manager; Natasha Ramras, Chief Financial Officer

**Others Present:** City of Vancouver: Nena Cook, April Stinson, Emily Azadi, Caylee Tashiro  
VHA: Natasha Douglas, April Soffner  
Davidson Benefits Planning: Erica Riggs, Katie Burdick

- I. Minutes:
  - a. Approve 10-11-23 minutes
  - b. Approve 10-16-23 minutes  
**Action Taken:** Iasmina Giurgiev made a motion to approve the 10/11/23 and the 10/16/23 meeting minutes, Natasha Ramras seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.
  
- II. Communications:
  - a. none
  
- III. Reports:
  - a. none
  
- IV. Old Business:
  - a. Employee benefits survey results  
**Discussion Leader:** Iasmina Giurgiev  
  
**Discussion:** Iasmina reminded the governing board of the benefit survey results to help guide the conversation around 2024 renewal decisions. Employees do not wish to have copays or deductibles increased.
  
  - b. 30 Day notice ready – will vote at Nov. 22, 2023 meeting  
**Discussion Leader:** Iasmina Giurgiev  
  
**Discussion:** Iasmina advised the governing board that Nena has put together the notice to change the Deputy Finance Director board member position to Budget Manager. This change required a vote and will be on the governing board meeting agenda for 11/22/2023 meeting.
  
- V. New Business:

a. Part time premium rates split

**Discussion Leader:** Iasmina Giurgiev

**Discussion:** Iasmina led discussion, asking the governing board to consider changing the partiem premium rate split to simplify the process. There are not many PT employees on benefits, and would like to change the .5 FTE split to 50/50, would also like to consider changing the split for .6 FTE and .75 FTE.

**Action Taken:** Natasha Ramras made a motion to change the calculation of the medical cost share and make it proportionate to the FTE for the non-union employees and for those in the contract that do not require the city to re-negotiate this clause and reopen the contract. Iasmina Giurgiev seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

b. Remove Regence pharmacy OOP Max

**Discussion Leader:** Iasmina Giurgiev

**Discussion:** Iasmina led discussion, there is no benefit in having the separate pharmacy out of pocket maximum on the plan anymore, this was an old plan design and no longer serves a purpose. Davidson Benefits Planning confirmed with Regence that no one is meeting this separate out of pocket maximum, this change will have no employee impact.

**Action Taken:** Iasmina Giurgiev made a motion to remove the Regence pharmacy out of pocket maximum from the traditional plans, Natasha Ramras seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Kaiser vs Regence – Kaiser premiums higher than Regence

**Discussion Leader:** Iasmina Giurgiev

**Discussion:** Iasmina led the discussion, suggesting that if the city were to leave the Kaiser plan more expensive the way it is now, may cause the city to incur more cost as employees may move the Regence plan which is more expensive to the city. The board decided that this could be true only if employees moved plans and that is an unknown.

It was proposed to make the city contributions the same for both the Regence and Kaiser plans. Natasha Ramras would like to see how much it would cost the city to do this.

It was also suggested that the governing board look at the contribution modeling and plan change request that had been previously requested before entertaining another option.

d. Other 2024 renewal items

**Discussion Leader:** Erica Riggs

Discussion: Erica shared the updated Copy of the Contribution Modeling – Deductible Options spreadsheet. The spreadsheet illustrates the current 2023 employee costs versus the 2024 employee costs with no plan or contribution changes versus the 2024 employee costs with plan design and contribution changes.

Lee shared with the governing board that in his meeting with the unions, they are open to a straight contribution split and that whatever the governing board decided

if it benefits the employee, they are prepared to move to membership quickly as they know we would need an agreement quickly.

It was also discussed that changing to a contribution split is movement in the right direction. Based on employee feedback, the city would be meeting employee needs making the employee experience better as well as creating easier administration moving forward. This would also align the city with what the surrounding cities and counties are doing. What the city is doing now is unique.

A suggestion was made to keep contributions the same for 2024 due to timing, currently it is outside budget planning and the union negotiation cycle. Move forward with the plan design changes instead and begin the contribution change conversation for the union contract negotiation and bargaining next year to be effective 2025.

City of Vancouver HR deliverables for the next meeting to be scheduled Monday 10/23/23.

- Narrow down and calculate the costs and plan options, pick which contribution percentage it would be and what the total cost to the city would be. Share these calculations with the governing board so they can be reviewed prior to the next meeting.

VI. General Information:

a. None

**Discussion Leader:** Nena Cook

Discussion: Nena shared with the governing board that she had done some research since the last governing board meeting regarding what is considered a substantial change. The important thing to note is that there isn't a definition of what a substantial change is, but she did find in a 2004 case with the city of Edmond, that if there is not a substantial change in the aggregate schedule of benefits the change does not have to be bargained. Could the city change the premium about without bargaining, the answer is, yes. Both the command and guild contracts say there is a 90/10 split. If the ratio of 90/10 remains the same, premium increases do not need to be bargained.

The governing board agreed that since there have already been discussions with the unions regarding changes for 2024 and they have inserted that they do want to bargain at this time those discussions and bargaining will continue.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 PM