

9/1 **BEREAVEMENT POLICY**
DATE : 15/10/2010
AGENDA : COUNCIL MEETING: 24/02/2011

REPORT : DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES

PURPOSE

The objective of this policy is to coordinate and regulate the coordination of the funerals of staff members and their families. Presently municipality is losing lots of human hours due to attendance of memorial services and funerals by employees because of the present practice.

The policy will also assist in ensuring that all employees of this municipality are treated equally when passed away or their immediate family members have passed away.

Further is to regulate the assistance that municipality has to give to the affected employee or family during the bereavement time.

It was therefore important for Human Resource Division to develop this policy that will expand more and give clear guidance on how employees should attend memorial services, funeral and what employer should do when staff member dies or his/her family member.

BACKGROUND

The policy was drafted by Human Resource Division. This policy was then tabled and adopted at the Local Labour Forum meeting held on the 28th September 2010. Training for Managers and Supervisors and employee wellness on this policy will be done before the end of December 2010.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

STAFF IMPLICATIONS

The policy will assist employees to be treated equally and ensure that attendance of employees to funerals and memorial service does not affect service delivery negatively.

CURRENT POLICIES

None

OTHER PARTIES CONSULTED

Local Labour Forum

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Bereavement Policy be accepted and approved by the Council.
2. That the contents of the Policy be communicated to all staff to ensure adherence.

(FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL)

Minutes Exco Meeting: 10/11/2010

Cllr Zim proposed that the matter be recommended to Council as follows and was seconded by Cllr Lithebe.

RECOMMENDED:

1. That the Bereavement Policy be accepted and approved by the Council.
 2. That the contents of the Policy be communicated to all staff to ensure adherence.
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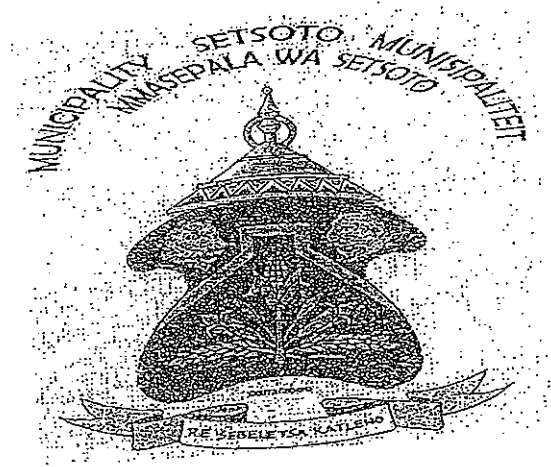
Minutes Council Meeting: 24/02/2011

Cllr Mokhuoane proposed that the matter be resolved as follows and was seconded by Cllr Zim.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Bereavement Policy be accepted and approved by the Council.
 2. That the contents of the Policy be communicated to all staff to ensure adherence.
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SETSOTO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY BEREAVEMENT POLICY



Compiled by: Human Resource Division

185

BEREAVEMENT POLICY

Policy Number: BP1001	Approved Date: 28.09.2010
Effective Date:	Review Date: 28.09.2011

DOCUMENT APPROVAL

Name Signature Date:

Responsible:

Person:

Key words: Bereavement Policy

Reference documents: BP1001

Applicability: *This policy is applicable to all employees.*

BEREAVEMENT POLICY

1. PRELIMINARY

1.1 SHORT TITLE AND COMMENCEMENT

This Policy is called the Bereavement Policy and will come into operation after consultation at Local Labour Forum and Council Resolution has been taken.

1.2 AIM

To ensure a uniform, fair and consistent approach in dealing with the,

- Death of staff, as well as
- Death of the immediate family members of staff (where relevant).

1.3 SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This policy applies to all SETSOTO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY staff and their immediate family (as defined), contract workers and interns while employed by the municipality, to the extent provided for herein.

This policy does not apply to consultants.

1.4 DEFINITIONS / ABBREVIATIONS

Municipality:

Setsoto Local Municipality

Units

Clocolan, Marquard, Senekal and Ficksburg

Immediate Family:

Human Resource Policy Manual Definition: Mother, Father, Husband, Wife, Child and Siblings of an employee.

Staff (also referred to as "employees"):

Human Resource Policy Manual Definition: A person who works for, or renders a service to municipality regardless of the form of her/his employment contract, and in respect of which any factor remunerated in Section 200A(1) of the Labour Relations Act applies.

- Staff employed on a permanent basis,
- Staff employed on a Fixed Term contract, and
- Learners / Interns (individuals who have completed their tertiary studies and are supervised within the Municipality for the purpose of gaining experience for employment opportunities).

LLF

Local Labour Forum (Consultative Structure according to Organisational Rights Agreement)

ORA

Organisational Rights Agreement

BCC

Bereavement Coordinating Committee

1.5 COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated through awareness campaigns, placed on the website of Setsoto Local Municipality.

1.6 POLICY AUDIT

Periodic audit: By Internal Audit: Human Resource Division when required or deemed necessary.

1.7 POLICY AMENDMENT

No amendment(s) may be made to any section of this policy without such amendment(s) first being:

- Consulted upon between employer and labour at Local Labour Forum
- Duly approved by LLF and resolved by Council.

2. PREAMBLE

Setsoto Local Municipality recognizes the fact that death is unavoidable and, as a caring employer, seeks to create a supportive environment for its employees and their immediate family members during times of bereavement.

3. GENERAL MEASURES

3.1 COORDINATING COMMITTEE

(This will be at Head Office Level)

- 3.1.1 A Coordinating Committee will be established annually to coordinate bereavement arrangements on behalf of Setsoto Local Municipality.
- 3.1.2 The Department: Corporate Service through its Human Resource Division will facilitate the constitution of the Committee.
- 3.1.3 The Committee will comprise of representatives from all Departments in all units.
- 3.1.4 The committee is fluid, allowing for representatives to be alternated as and when the need may arise.
- 3.1.5 The Committee will ensure that all processes outlined in this policy, unfold in respect of each notification of death received.
- 3.1.6 The committee will co-opt a representative from the affected Department in the Unit to assist with the implementation of the arrangements emanating from this policy, in respect of each relevant notification of death received.

3.2 DEATH OF A STAFF MEMBER

3.2.1 NOTIFICATION OF DEATH

- 1. In the event of the death of a staff member, the affected Manager must inform the Secretary of Bereavement Coordinating Committee.
- 2. The Secretary of BCC with approval from Director Corporate Services will in turn inform all staff.

3.2.2 OFFICIAL DELEGATION

- 1. The BCC together with the affected Manager and Supervisor will pay a home visit to the immediate family of the deceased staff within staff member within 48 hours of receipt of the notification of death, and, to represent the municipality at the staff member's funeral.
- 2. A representative from the Employee Wellness Unit will always form part of the delegation.
- 3. The delegation will comprise of a maximum of 8 (eight) municipal staff members.
- 4. All members of the delegation must obtain prior permission from their respective Supervisors / Managers.
- 5. Subject to sub-paragraph 1 above, other staff members who wish to accompany the delegation are required to liaise with the Director Corporate Services as well as their Supervisors / Managers.

- 6. The delegation's transport and (one night) accommodation costs will be funded by the municipality.
- 7. Other staff member who wishes to form part of the delegation will be responsible for their own transport and accommodation costs.

3.2.3 BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING

AFFECTED DEPARTMENT / UNIT

In the event of the death of a staff member:-

- 1. Within 48-72 hours of receipt of the notification of death, all staff attached to the department / unit will attend a voluntary group debriefing session, which will be facilitated by the Employee Wellness Unit.
- 2. Where staff attached to the department / unit require additional support on an individual basis, an assessment and referral (if necessary) will be done through the Employee Wellness Unit.
- 3. In the event of a referral, the affected employee will be referred to the Service Provider contracted with the municipality. Sessions will be limited to a maximum of (8) eight face to face counseling sessions (during employment term in event of contract employees). Should further support be required, the Employee Wellness Unit will link the affected individual with other free of charge / affordable service providers, at no costs to the municipality.

AFFECTED FAMILY

In the event of the death of a staff member:-

- 1. The Employee Wellness Unit will provide emotional support for the family during the week of notification of death.
- 2. Initial contact will be established within 48 hours of receipt of the notification.
- 3. The Employee Wellness Unit will link the family with other free of charge / affordable service providers for future interventions should the need arise, at no cost to the municipality.

3.2.4 MEMORIAL SERVICE

- 1. A memorial service will be arranged by the BCC in collaboration with the affected Department / Unit, Corporate Services through Human Resource Division, after receipt of the family's permission.

190

2. Cultural beliefs of the immediate family must be considered and accommodated.
3. The BCC will be responsible for the development of the memorial service program including the arrangements of a choir for the memorial service and funeral (where relevant).
4. The BCC in conjunction with the affected Department or Unit will consult the immediate family of the deceased staff member regarding the proceedings.
5. The BCC in conjunction with the affected Department or Unit will invite the belated staff member's immediate family members to the memorial service, and will provide refreshments (for the bereaved family only) not exceeding R500.00 (reviewable), from its own budget.
6. Transportation within the borders of SA will be provided for the family to and from the memorial service, limited to a maximum of 4 people. The most economical means of transportation will be used.
7. Additional family members may however attend the memorial service at their own cost.

3.2.5 CONDOLENCES

1. Municipality will provide a condolence book that will be arranged and managed by the BCC.
2. Municipality will also provide free grave for a staff member when passed away, hall and chairs for funeral and memorial service and wood.
3. Director Corporate Services will submit messages into the book on behalf of the municipality.
4. All staff will have the opportunity to sign the book, which will be presented to the family as a memento.
5. The affected Department / Unit will also arrange a card and a wreath / other relevant token of condolence from its budget, limited to R500.00.
6. The BCC in conjunction with the affected Department or Unit will nominate amongst themselves who will be responsible for accepting condolences in all forms. The BCC will communicate the particulars of the nominees to all municipal staff via inter memo or email.

3.2.6 TRANSPORT FOR STAFF TO FUNERAL

1. As far as practically possible, subject to available funding and depending on the number of staff wishing to attend the funeral, the BCC will arrange the most economical means of official transport (within SA Borders) for staff excluding accommodation.
2. Priority will be given to staff in the affected Department / Unit. The affected department or unit, will co-ordinate this responsibility consulting with the BCC from time to time.
3. All staff using the common transport will do so at their own risk and municipality will not be liable for any eventuality that may occur.
4. Municipality will not be responsible for payment of accommodation required for purposes of attending the funeral.
5. The attendance of the funeral is subjected to approval by managers of the relevant staff member.

3.3 PASSING OF STAFF MEMBER'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER

3.3.1 NOTIFICATION OF DEATH

1. In the event of the death of a staff member's immediate family member, the affected department / unit must inform the BCC and the Employee Wellness Unit.
2. The BCC with permission of the Director Corporate Services, will issue a notification to all staff.

3.3.2 OFFICIAL DELEGATION

1. The BCC in consultation with the Director Corporate Services will elect the delegation to pay a home visit to the staff member within 38 hours of receipt of the notification of death, and, to represent municipal at the funeral.
2. The delegation will be led by the Manager and Supervisor of the affected department / unit.
3. The delegation will comprise of 4 (four) Municipal members.
4. All members of this delegation must obtain permission from their respective Managers/ Supervisors.
5. Subject to sub-paragraph 1 above, other staff wishing to accompany the delegation is required to liaise with the BCC as well as their Supervisors / Managers.

6. The delegation's transport and (one) night accommodation costs within SA borders will be funded by the municipality.
7. Other employees who wish to form part of the delegation will carry their own transport costs.

3.3.3 BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING

AFFECTED STAFF MEMBER

In the event of the death of an immediate family member:-

1. An assessment or referral of the staff member will be done through the local Employee Wellness Unit, within 48 hours of receipt of the notification.
2. In the event of a referral, the affected employee will be referred to the Service Provider contracted with the municipality. Sessions will be limited to a maximum of (8) eight face to face counseling sessions (during employment term in the event of contract employees). Should further support be required, the Service Provider will link the affected staff member with other free of charge / affordable service providers, at no cost to the Municipality.

3.3.4 CONDOLENCES

1. The BCC will nominate individual(s) who will be responsible for accepting condolences in all forms.
2. The BCC will communicate the particulars of the nominee/s to all municipal staff via internal memo or email.
3. The Departmental Head / Manager will pass the condolences received to the affected staff member.

4. LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 A staff member may utilize her / his available five days family responsibility leave per annual leave cycle (as per Human Resource Policy Manual) in the event of the death of an immediate family member.
- 4.2 The undertaking of home visits / attendance of funerals by the Official Delegation will be considered to be official duty.
- 4.3 The attendance of funerals by employees in the affected department / unit with the consent of their managers will be considered to be official duty.

198

- 4.4 Attendance of funerals by other employees: will be considered to be time-off, and on reaching 8 hours, must be covered by the granting of vacation leave.

5. **PAYOUT OF LEAVE GRATUITY AND PENSION BENEFITS**

In the event of the death of a staff member, Salaries Division in consultation with Human Resource Division will assist with the payment of the staff member's:-

LEAVE GRATUITY

- 5.1 Leave gratuity (in terms of her/his employment contract and depending on her / his available leave credit) to the appointed leave beneficiary.
- 5.2 On request by the Family, the leave gratuity may be paid prior to finalization of debt recovery processes, subject to the availability of leave credits and an informed written consent by the appointed pension beneficiary/ies that all debts be recovered from the pension benefits.

MONTHLY SALARY

- 5.3 If an employee passes away during the month that employee will be paid his / her full month salary, taking into consideration Section 7 of Human Resource Manual Policy.

PENSION / FUNERAL BENEFITS

- 5.4 Pension benefits (including funeral benefits in terms of the deceased staff member's employment contract shall be paid to the beneficiary as appointed by the Trustees of the Pension / Provident Fund Scheme.

194

6. POLICY APPROVAL

SIGNED BY PARTIES AT _____ THIS _____ DAY OF _____

MEMBER OF THE LOCAL LABOUR FORUM
(REPRESENTING EMPLOYER) _____

MEMBER OF THE LOCAL LABOUR FORUM
(REPRESENTING SAMWU) _____

MEMBER OF THE LOCAL LABOUR FORUM
(REPRESENTING IMATU) _____