

**MINUTES OF THE CITY OF GREENVILLE AND GREENVILLE UTILITIES  
COMMISSION JOINT PAY & BENEFITS COMMITTEE**

The Joint Pay & Benefits Committee met on Thursday, September 11, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. in Conference Room 337, located inside of City Hall at 200 W. Fifth Street.

Committee Members Present

Council Member Marion Blackburn, City of Greenville  
Commissioner Wanda Carr, Greenville Utilities Commission  
Commissioner Justin Fuller, Greenville Utilities Commission  
Council Member Portia Willis, City of Greenville

Committee Members Absent

None

Staff Present

Dené Alexander, Assistant City Manager, City of Greenville  
Cortney Bazemore, HR Business Partner, Greenville Utilities Commission  
Glen Buck, Human Resources Manager, City of Greenville  
Tony Cannon, General Manager/Chief Executive Officer, Greenville Utilities Commission  
Michael Cowin, City Manager, City of Greenville  
Phil Dixon, General Counsel, Greenville Utilities Commission  
Leah Futrell, Human Resources Director, City of Greenville  
Ken Graves, Deputy City Manager, City of Greenville  
Steve Hawley, Communications Manager/PIO, Greenville Utilities Commission  
Lou Norris, Secretary to the General Manager/CEO, Greenville Utilities Commission  
Chris Padgett, Assistant General Manager/Chief Administrative Officer, Greenville Utilities Commission  
Lena Previll, Senior HR Manager, Greenville Utilities Commission  
Valerie Shiuwegar, City Clerk, City of Greenville  
Amy Wade, Executive Assistant to the General Manager/CEO, Greenville Utilities Commission  
Paige Wallace, Staff Support Specialist, Greenville Utilities Commission

I. Call to Order

City Manager Cowin called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

II. Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Carr made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Council Member Willis and carried unanimously, 4:0.

III. Approval of the Minutes

Council Member Willis made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 25, 2025, Joint Pay & Benefits Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Council Member Blackburn and carried unanimously, 4:0.

#### IV. Mercer Presentation: COG/GUC 2026 Recommendation for Health/Dental Insurance

Mr. Parker Cramer, Principal with Mercer, presented the 2026 renewal analysis and recommendations for medical, pharmacy, vision, and dental benefits.

He reviewed prior plan changes and noted that 2026 renewals reflect Internal Revenue Service (IRS)-mandated Health Savings Account (HSA) deductible increases and no other plan design changes.

The 2025 reforecast showed increased high-cost claim activity, including 15 members with claims over \$100,000 and two exceeding the \$300,000 stop-loss threshold. Major trends this year include inflation, an increase in cancer cases, and a continued pipeline of high-cost drugs. Mr. Cramer noted that it was too early to factor in tariffs.

Mercer projected a 9.4% overall increase for 2026, below the national average of 10.9%. Dental renewal requires a 3.6% increase.

Council Member Willis made a motion to approve the 2026 medical, pharmacy, vision, and dental renewal recommendations as presented. Council Member Blackburn seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously, 4:0.

#### V. Consideration of Community Service and School Involvement Leave Policy

Human Resources Director Leah Futrell presented the proposed policy which would support employees in their efforts to strengthen the community and support their children's efforts. The proposal provides 8 hours of paid leave annually for eligible employees and would be prorated for designated part-time employees. The proposed leave would be voluntary, utilized on a "use it or lose it" basis, and would require supervisory approval.

Committee members asked how such activities are currently handled and the rationale behind the proposed 8-hour leave.

Director Futrell stated employees currently use vacation leave. She further stated that the proposed leave duration was determined by examining peer agencies and their corresponding leave provisions for employees.

Commissioner Fuller made a motion to approve the policy as presented. Commissioner Carr seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously, 4:0.

#### VI. Discussion of Joint Committee Recommendations

Recommendations approved by the Committee will be presented at the September 22, 2025, Joint City Council – GUC Board meeting.

VII. Update on Upcoming Compensation Study

Director Futrell provided an update on the comprehensive classification and compensation study underway. Preliminary findings are expected in early 2026 and will be presented to the Joint Pay & Benefits Committee.

Committee members asked if staff foresees significant changes.

Staff noted that because of the recent true-up, the City and GUC are better positioned to avoid wide fluctuations.

VIII. Next Steps

Council Member Blackburn made a motion to cancel the September 16, 2025, Joint Pay & Benefits Committee meeting. Council Member Willis seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously, 4:0.

Mr. Cowin reminded the Committee members that these recommendations will be presented to the City Council and the GUC Board of Commissioner at the Joint Board meeting scheduled for Monday, September 22, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

IX. Adjourn

Council Member Blackburn made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Fuller seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously, 4:0. The meeting adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Valerie Shiuwegar, CMC  
City Clerk