



**COMMISSION  
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

**Item No.** 8e

**ACTION ITEM**

**Date of Meeting** May 25, 2021

**DATE :** May 6, 2021

**TO:** Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

**FROM:** Tammy Woodard, HR Director – Total Rewards  
Kim DesMarais, HR Director – Talent Management

**SUBJECT: Introduction of Resolution No. 3790 Updating the Salary and Benefits Policy Directive to Reflect an Administrative Change Modifying Two Definitions Related to Probationary Employees**

**ACTION REQUESTED**

Request Introduction of Resolution No. 3790: A resolution of the Port of Seattle Commission amending the policy directive for salaries and benefits for employees not covered by a collective bargaining agreement established by Resolution No. 3739, to Reflect an Administrative Change Modifying Two Definitions Related to Probationary Employees, and providing an effective date for all amendments of June 8, 2021.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This administrative change updating of two definitions related to probationary employees will permit newly hired employees who have not completed their six-month probation period to apply for job openings across the Port while ensuring a full six-month probation period applies to their latest position.

In January of this year, Human Resources updated the Port’s Talent Acquisition Policy (HR-8). One update to the policy removed the restriction on employees who had not yet completed their six-month probationary period from applying for other Port employment opportunities. Probationary employees are now allowed to apply for other opportunities at the Port. Along with removing this restriction and allowing probationary employees to apply for other Port opportunities, the policy now requires a restart to the employee’s probation period, which is described as an extension of the hiring process, if the employee is offered a different position while in their probationary period. The probationary period is designed to provide employees with six months to demonstrate an acceptable level of performance and behavior. The probationary period restart gives new employees’ managers the same amount of time to observe performance and behavior and assist the employee in reaching the performance level required for continued employment.

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This policy change and the existing definition of Probation Period and Probationary Employee in the Salary and Benefits Policy Directive are out of alignment. The requested update to the Salary and Benefits Policy Directive will bring the HR Policy and the Salary and Benefits Policy Directive back into alignment.

**JUSTIFICATION**

The updates to the Port’s Talent Acquisition Policy permits probationary employees to apply for new opportunities within the Port leading to higher retention rates and employee engagement. The probationary period is designed to give employees an opportunity to learn their job as well as the Port environment where they perform it. It is also an opportunity for the employee’s manager to observe performance and behavior together with providing feedback and coaching to help the employee learn their job responsibilities and how to utilize Port systems and processes. This process is designed to help new Port employees be successful at the Port.

Since employees may now change jobs, as well as departments or functions during their initial probationary period, it is reasonable to give the employee the full six months of a probationary period in their new job to learn their responsibilities and the Port environment where they will be performing it before determining if they have achieved a successful level of performance to continue their Port employment. It is also reasonable to give the employee’s new manager the same amount of time to observe the employee’s work, assess performance, and provide training, feedback, and coaching to help employees achieve the acceptable level of performance. To facilitate this beneficial change, the definitions of Probation Period and Probationary Employee in the Salary and Benefits Policy Directive need to be updated to address the potential for employees changing jobs during their first six months of Port employment.

**ATTACHMENTS TO THIS REQUEST**

- (1) Draft Resolution No. 3790.

**PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS**

None