



City of Lowell - Law Department

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Eileen Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*

FROM: Kerry Regan Jenness, 1st Assistant City Solicitor

DATE: June 4, 2021

SUBJECT: **Motion by C. Mercier – Req. City Mgr. Inform City Council As To Policy Regarding Juneteenth Holiday In Terms Of City’s Recognition Of The Legal Holiday Which Would Include Paid Time Off As With Other Legal Holidays.**

I write in response to Councilor Mercier’s Motion. In consultation with the Human Relations Department, we have examined the City’s obligations under its current personnel ordinance and collective bargaining agreements (“CBAs”) in connection with the newly-adopted Juneteenth holiday, as well as how other Massachusetts communities are handling the holiday this year.

At present, only four of the current CBAs contain language that would automatically grant the members an additional holiday for Juneteenth without additional bargaining. The remaining union employees and those employees whose positions are not covered by CBAs would not be accorded the holiday without additional collective bargaining and/or an amendment of the personnel ordinance.

As you are aware, the Juneteenth holiday commemorates the end of slavery in the United States on the anniversary of the date that Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas and informed residents that slavery had been abolished by the Emancipation Proclamation two years earlier. Due to the significance and importance of this holiday and pursuant to the discretionary closure provisions of our CBA Agreements, it appears you would have the authority to close City Hall and other City offices this year, on Friday, June 18, 2021, in observation of Juneteenth. Since the Pollard Memorial Library is ordinarily open on Saturdays, it would be closed on Saturday, June 19, 2021 in connection with the holiday, in lieu of Friday.

For future years, we will engage in collective bargaining with each union regarding how Juneteenth may be incorporated into their respective CBAs.