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PINELLAS COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR BARRY BURTON

SEPTEMBER 27, 2021

\$750 VACCINE INCENTIVE

- WITH MORE THAN 2 OF 3 EMPLOYEES ALREADY VACCINATED AT NO COST, THIS PROPOSAL IS REALLY COPTING MORE THAN \$250 TO INCENTIVIZE 1 EMPLOYEE TO BE VACCINATED. STILL, NOT EMPLOYEES WILL SO CONSENT. PINELLAS CITIES AND THE STATE DO NOT HAVE SIMILAR PROPOSALS. THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM IS ALIVE AND WELL. NO TO A CHRISTMAS BONUS MASQUERADING AS INCENTIVE.
- THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS BROKE, BUT KEEPS PRINTING PAPER MONEY.
 - THE FEDERAL AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (A GREAT SOUNDING NAME) GIVES PINELLAS \$189 MILLION FREE DOLLARS.
 - NOW PINELLAS MUST ALLOCATE THIS FREE WINDFALL. COUNTY BUREAUCRATS SAY "LETS GIVE EMPLOYEES A \$750 CHRISTMAS BONUS MASQUERADING AS A VACCINE INCENTIVE. SOME EMPLOYEES WON'T GET VACCINATED (RELIGIOUS, MEDICAL, UNBELIEVERS, LAZY REASONS).
 - WHY ONLY COUNTY EMPLOYEES? IT INCLUDES ADMINISTRATORS AND COMMISSIONERS. WHY NOT ALL RESIDENTS? COUNTY STILL FUNCTIONS WITHOUT THIS INCENTIVE. EMPLOYEES KEPT THEIR JOBS IN 2009, 2021, HAVE SICK LEAVE, MEDICAL INSURANCE, ETC.
 - UP TO 1/3 UNVACCINATED, SO 70% OR MORE ARE VACCINATED. THEY CARE ABOUT THEIR OWN HEALTH AND SAFETY AND THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF OTHERS.
 - $4,000,000 \div \$750 = 5,333$ EMPLOYEES TIMES 70% = 3,733+ VACCINATED EMPLOYEES.
 - JOBS HAVE REQUIREMENTS. MAKE FREE VACCINATIONS A REQUIREMENT WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS. IF ONE DOES NOT MEET REQUIREMENTS, ONE DOES NOT GET/KEEP JOB. TO GO TO SCHOOL CHILDREN MUST BE VACCINATED AGAINST MEASLES, MUMPS, POLIO, DIPHTHERIA.
 - GOVERNMENT TAKING CARE OF GOV. EMPLOYEES AT NEEDLESS TAXPAYER EXPENSE.
 - PINELLAS HAS MORE TAXPAYER MONEY THAN IT NEEDS, SO SPEND IT ON ^{NEEDLESS} VACCINE INCENTIVES, VERSUS MORE PRESSING TANGIBLE NEEDS.
 - DO NOT PASS THIS PROPOSED \$750 VACCINE INCENTIVE PLAN ^{FOR} THE ALREADY VACCINATED AND THOSE WHO MAY BECOME VACCINATED.
 - REQUEST THIS LETTER VIA COPY BE SENT TO ALL COMMISSIONERS.

Geoffrey S. Moakley

COUNTY COMMISSION

Pinellas eyes vaccine incentive

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By SUZETTE PORTER
Tampa Bay Newspapers

LARGO — During a Sept. 16 discussion on the best use of American Rescue Plan funds, Pinellas County Administrator Barry Burton asked commissioners if they would consider spending up to \$4 million to incentivize employees to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Burton's plan is to pay \$750 to each employee that is already vaccinated and those that get vaccinated by a certain date, not yet set but likely to be six weeks after the program is implemented. He said he had talked to the constitutional officers, including the sheriff, and they all favor using the incentive as a way to get more employees vaccinated.

The county is struggling to maintain its workforce with so many employees off due to COVID, Burton said. He said up to one-third of employees are out in some areas.

"I would like to use some of the funds (American Rescue Plan) to incentivize employees to take the vaccine," Burton said.

He said having more employees vaccinated improved their health and safety for the workforce.

He prefers giving an incentive as opposed to making it a mandate, adding that he didn't consider using either method until the numbers spiked and made it difficult to get work done with so many of the staff out sick.

Burton doesn't believe the incentive will result in 100% of employees getting the shot. Some don't believe in it and won't do it, he said. But some just don't care and incentivizing might help.

If commissioners approve the program, employees would receive the incentives before Christmas, Burton said.

The commission used a show of hands to show the majority was in favor of moving ahead.

'Rare opportunity'
Assistant County Adminis-

trator Kevin Knutson told commissioners that the American Rescue Plan was a "rare opportunity to catch up on things they've wanted to do."

The plan is legislation signed by the president on March 11 that provides \$1.9 trillion to assist in pandemic recovery and create resilient communities. Pinellas County's share is \$189 million.

The money can be used to pay for eligible expenses starting March 3. A commitment to spend the money must be made by Dec. 31, 2024 and the money must be spent by Dec. 31, 2026. An interim performance report must be filed by Oct. 10 and a quarterly financial report by Oct. 31 with an annual performance plan due every Dec. 31.

Lara Wojahn, program manager for the American Rescue Plan, said the county would get the money in two shares — the first \$95 million by August of this year and the second \$95 million by Aug. 2022.

The county must use it or lose it by Dec. 31, 2026, she said.

Wojahn went over eligible categories in which money can be spent, including public health, negative economic impacts, services to disproportionately impacted communities, premium pay for frontline workers, lost revenue replacement and water, sewer and broadband infrastructure.

The county estimates its lost revenue is about \$25 million for a time ending Dec. 31, 2020. Expenditures in the lost revenue replacement has a maximum flexibility and can be used for almost any general government purpose, Wojahn said, including capital improvement projects.

The county proposes to spend \$15-20 million on accelerated road projects, including road resurfacing and \$1-4 million on cybersecurity.

Spending in the public health category include \$10-15 million and includes money previously allocated from reserves to pay for a coordinated access model for mental health and the sheriff's mental health

for employees

units. Staff also proposed to spend \$8-10 million for hardware and software for public health facilities, such as the Department of Health — Pinellas buildings.