

City Council – Action Request Form

Date: April 12, 2022

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Ben Rowe, Assistant City Manager
 Johnnie Taylor, Assistant City Manager
 Dr. Marquis H. Barnett, Human Resources Director

Council Action Requested:

Resolution Suspending the City of Winston-Salem COVID-19 Vaccination Incentives and Testing Policy

Strategic Focus Area: Service Excellence

Strategic Objective: No

Strategic Plan Action Item: N/A

Key Work Item: N/A



Summary of Information:

Last month, City staff provided an update on the implementation of the City’s COVID-19 Vaccination Incentives and Testing Policy to the Community Development/Housing/General Government Committee. The following table and chart present key metrics (as of March 17, 2022) that staff are tracking to measure the effectiveness of the policy.

Number of City Employees Vaccinated	1,944
Percent of City Employees Vaccinated	86%
Amount Paid out in Full and Partial Vaccination Incentives	\$1.8 million
Number of Employees Who Have Submitted Proof of Booster	612
Amount Paid out in Booster Incentives	\$114,900
Number of Unvaccinated Employees Who Continue to Submit to Weekly Testing	301
Number of Unvaccinated Employees Who Have Tested Positive for COVID-19	81
Number of Unvaccinated Employees Who Have Received Disciplinary Action	34

Committee Action:

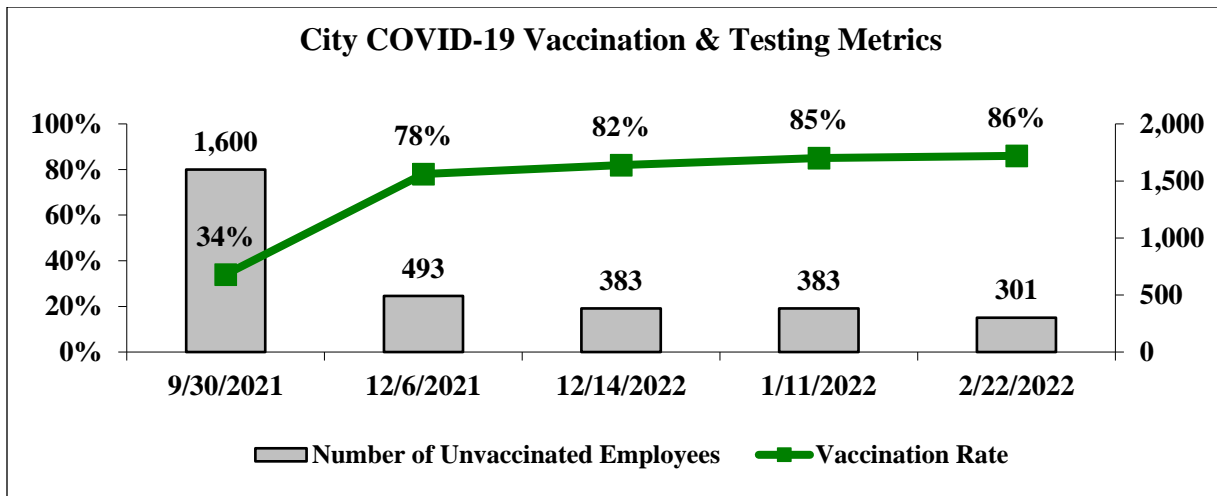
Committee _____

Action _____

For _____

Against _____

Remarks: _____



During the discussion, Council Members requested additional information about the community vaccination rate, positive cases among vaccinated City employees, feedback from local experts, and the status of the policies for the state’s ten largest cities. The following are staff’s responses to the Council Members’ requests.

1) What is the vaccination rate in Forsyth County?

The vaccination rate among all ages in Forsyth County is 62%. For adults 18 and over, the vaccination rate in Forsyth County is 72%.

2) How many vaccinated City employees have tested positive for COVID-19?

From the inception of the policy, the Human Resources Department has tracked the number of positive, unvaccinated employees through the mandatory testing requirement; however, the department has not tracked positive, vaccinated employees.

3) How is the number of unvaccinated employees disbursed across the City organization?

While the Human Resources Department can track this data, the City’s legal staff has advised that providing this information could violate HIPPA.

4) What is the status of the policies for the ten largest cities in North Carolina?

The following table notes the measures that are still active in the other cities’ policies. Attached to this information item is a table that provides a more detailed comparison.

City	Masking Required	Vaccination Incentives (% Vaccinated)	Mandatory Testing
Charlotte	NA	Yes (NA)	No
Raleigh	No	Yes (78%)	No
Greensboro	No	No (90%)	No
Durham	NA	Yes (70%)	Yes (Unvaccinated)
Winston-Salem	No	Yes (86%)	Yes (Unvaccinated)
Fayetteville	No	Yes (NA)	No
High Point	NA	Yes (NA)	Yes (Unvaccinated)
Cary	No	Yes (73%)	No
Wilmington	NA	NA	NA
Chapel Hill	NA	Yes (90%)	Yes (Unvaccinated)

5) Ask local medical experts about the effectiveness and need for on-going testing.

City staff have reached out to Dr. David Priest, Senior Vice President and Chief Safety, Quality and Epidemiology Officer with Novant Health, to seek his insights on mandatory testing. He noted that while experts do not know how long immunity will last for the vaccinated or those who have had COVID, they have some degree of protection. He stated he would favor no longer testing those individuals. This also would be in line with current CDC guidelines in communities with low COVID activity. He noted that the City will have to be nimble enough to reinstitute measures like indoor masking when the community experiences increases in cases in the coming weeks.

As of March 22, 2022, the 14-day positivity rate in Forsyth County was 2.5%, down from 4% in early March. In addition, the number of cases per 100,000 residents over the last 14 days in Forsyth County has dropped from 74 in late March to 62 in early April.

Considering the decrease in the positivity rate and COVID-19 cases, City management has drafted the attached resolution that would suspend all provisions of the City of Winston-Salem COVID-19 Vaccination Incentives and Testing Policy as follows.

- Mandatory testing for unvaccinated employees would cease upon adoption of the resolution.
- The City would suspend the requirement that all new hires must be fully vaccinated. This change would apply to those employees hired after the adoption of this resolution.

- Vaccination financial incentives no longer would be available starting on April 25, 2022.
- All other provisions of the City of Winston-Salem Vaccination Incentives and Testing Policy would be suspended upon adoption of this resolution.
- The Mayor and City Council have the authority to reinstate provisions of the policy, as needed, to ensure a safe workplace if any variants cause increases in the positivity rate, cases, and other metrics that indicate a resurgence of COVID-19.