

Texarkana, Ark., employees will no longer amass sick-leave hours beyond the state-mandated limit, but they may keep all the hours they have accrued.

The city Board of Directors on Monday unanimously voted to change city personnel policy to ensure that in the future, no employee can bank more than 90 days of sick leave, the maximum dictated by state statute. The new ordinance freezes sick-leave accrual for any employee now above the limit, which the city will enforce from now on.

For years, employees have been allowed to bank more than 90 days of sick leave. The result is more than 400,000 hours of accrued sick leave worth about \$9.2 million, according to Mayor Allen Brown, who recently raised the issue as one of his first official acts since taking office Jan. 1.

Before the vote, Ward 2 Director Laney Harris asked Brown whether the new policy would increase sick leave taken by employees. Brown said he did not think so, adding that a lot of overtime on the payroll—sometimes paid to employees covering for others who are sick—is a more significant issue.

In other business, the board unanimously approved changes recommended by the city Planning Commission regarding wrecker services. Wrecker services must now attain a conditional use permit to operate within certain commercial zones.

The board's next meeting is scheduled for March 18.