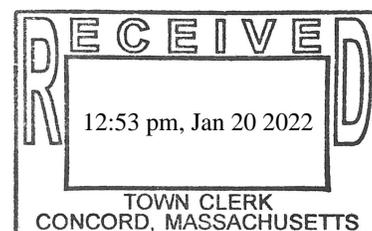


Personnel Study Task Force Agenda
Date: January 24, 2022; 4PM Virtual



Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81023573601?pwd=VHJObDVlTWJQSlEzdURkdjVTZEkdz09>

Meeting ID: 810 2357 3601

Passcode: 029781

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes of January 4th (by roll call)

Member updates of background reading, correspondence, and other matters

Introduction of Mary Flanders Aicardi, Human Resources Practice Leader

Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management

[John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies](#)

University of Massachusetts Boston

Discuss pros and cons of doing surveys and what would we get from doing anonymous survey

Begin Review of Stakeholder interview summaries

Anne: Personnel Board

Bruce: Police Chief, Library Director

Claude's: Citizens

Paul: Concord Public Works Director

Ruth: Select Board, Light Board Director

Pending meeting dates

Monday, January 31, 2022 virtual

Monday, February 14, 2022 virtual

Monday, February 28, 2022 virtual

Monday, March 14, 2022 virtual

Monday, March 28, 2022 virtual

Public Comment

Wrap up of next steps each member will be undertaking: complete stakeholder interviews, study summaries of others' interviews, consider potential questions for employee survey and send to Anne Rarich

Adjournment (by roll call)

PERSONNEL STUDY TASK FORCE – TOWN OF CONCORD, MA
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Date: January 03, 2022
Location: Virtual

Present from the Board: Ruth Lauer (Co-Chair), Anne Rarich (Co-Chair), Claude Cicchetti (Clerk), Paul Macone, Bruce Button.

Others Present: Terri Ackerman – Select Board, Susan Bates – Select Board, Amy Foley – HR Director, Kate Hodges, Deputy Town Manager, Joseph O'Connor – Chief of Police, Karlen Reed – PEG AAC, Mark Howell, Ned Perry, Anita Tekle, John Young.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to Order by Anne Rarich, Co-Chair at 4:01 pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

The group discussed and amended the draft minutes of the PSTF meeting at 4pm on December 20, 2021. Upon a motion duly made and seconded it was voted unanimously by those present to approve the minutes. The group discussed the draft minutes of the 8pm meeting of December 20, 2021 (concurrent with the Select Board meeting.) Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted unanimously by those present to approve the minutes.

3. Discussion

Anne discussed the outreach meetings. Anne confirmed that Paul will meet with the DPW, Bruce will meet with police department, and the Ruth and Anne will both meet with the Acting Town Manager. Members suggested outreach to groups like the Library, the League of Women Voters, and the Concord Business Partnership. Many of these meetings would not occur until March, after we have put together an initial draft of our ideas, with the goal of the final draft in May. The items from other towns that were attached in emails were discussed in brief. Bruce and Claude will separately report on their comments. Paul mentioned that he has been looking at other towns similar to Concord to see what their Personnel Boards and personnel systems are like. Anne has done similar. Paul also looked at those towns that have municipal light plants.

It was agreed that committee members should go forward with their questions to stakeholders. Ruth talked about the potential use of a survey. Kate Hodges noted that she sent the link to the Town's previous surveys to Susan Bates, who will send it to members of the Task Force.

4. Public Comments

Amy mentioned that that the letter to Town employees suggested by the Task Force would be sent out.

Mark Howell talked about the broadband business as well as the Beede Center as being important factors in personnel issues. Anita Tekle said that Concord has more enterprise funds than towns of similar size, as well as more non-unionized employees.

Anita also said that her understanding was that the letter going to employees would come from the Task Force and not the Town Manager. Anita also said that any survey would need to be anonymous. Amy Foley noted that the letter will be from the Task Force and is working with the Acting Town Manager.

Susan Bates suggested focusing on the Personnel Bylaw and coming to some initial conclusions before sending out a survey. Terri Ackerman strongly urged the committee in both the letter and any eventual survey, to focus on the charge, so as to not end up with responses beyond the scope of our charge.

Karlen Reed asked whether such communications from employees would be confidential. Terri Ackerman said that previous such surveys can be done confidentially, but at a cost. Claude agreed with a previous comment from Paul saying that any eventual survey should be focused on our specific charge, be multiple choice questions, and not include any open-response questions.

Amy asked if the letter from the Task Force should go to all employees or just those covered under the Personnel Bylaw.

Terri Ackerman thanked all members of the Task Force for serving on the committee. Mark Howell echoed Terri Ackerman's comments about the difficulty of the role of the Task Force.

Joseph O'Connor clarified that the police department is a highly unionized workplace.

5. Action Items

- Anne is continuing her meetings with Personnel board she will contact LWV to see if we can do a joint open forum, she will also call the Collins center to see if a representative might attend our next meeting to discuss survey questions from the task force.
- Ruth is interviewing Select Board Members, CMLP (with Paul's help), and is meeting with Kerry Lafleur.
- Bruce will handle interviewing the library and police department
- Paul will reach out to DPW, the Fire Department, Alan Cathcart, and will put together a list of cities and towns that have light departments.
- Claude will talk separately with interested citizens who attend our meetings as well as continue his work looking at the Personnel Bylaw with recommendations on what by laws should be changed. He will present this at our next meeting.

6. Future Meeting Schedule

The Board re-affirmed the following schedule of future meetings through the end of the year.

- Monday, January 24, 4pm (Virtual)
- Monday, January 31, 4pm (Virtual)

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Claude Cicchetti, Clerk

Summary of Personnel Board Interviews

All agree that the By-Laws are outdated and all feel that they are a “rubber stamp” for the compensation plans.

Some feel that managers should have an easier way to be a part of the HR management system.

In terms of changes that need to be made, we need to hear from all levels of employees.

More interaction and communication with both residences and employees.

Sense that better technology (HR systems) might allow for more flexibility in managing the overall HR of the town. One member of board is quite familiar with possibilities.

Personnel board tried to make changes in their by-laws in 2000 and were not allowed to for whatever reason.

Some feel there is a role to play but not the one it currently has.

Stakeholder Interview Assignment-- Police Department

Met with Chief O'Connor and Captain Mulcahy.

We discussed a variety of topics and agreed to meet again shortly.

Bruce W. Button

January 19, 2020

From: Paul Macone

Subject: Meeting with Alan Cathcart & Aaron Miklosko

Overview:

On January 13th I met with Alan Cathcart, Director of Concord Public Works and Aaron Miklosko, the Highway and Grounds Superintendent. We met together for some time and then I met with Aaron alone. The total meeting was 2.5 hrs. I had previously sent Alan and Aaron questions we could use as a guide in our discussion (attached.) We touched on some of these questions and it became clear this was going to be a preliminary meeting. We all felt at least another meeting was called for and this will occur soon. The following is a snapshot of some of the discussion. Since I was speaking with two different people, the following is my general sense of responses and opinions, not necessarily attributable to Alan or Aaron individually unless noted. The following relates to the numbered questions:

1. It is known that Alan has years of experience as the Superintendent of the Concord Water and Sewer Division (non-union) and is now the Director of public works (hybrid of union and non-union employees). I learned that Aaron has years of experience coming from the Maynard Public Works department which is entirely unionized, including administrative. Alan and Aaron have a great deal of experience with both union and non-union employees. They both have observed increased competition and challenges with matching comps with neighboring communities (especially given medical plans). Further discussion necessary.
2. For further discussion.
3. (From Alan) Historically, it is his understanding that department heads have been asked to make presentations or provide support for certain recommendations provided to the Personnel Board. With Covid and such it hasn't happened recently.
4. Further discussion to come.
5. Sick Bank-Yes
6. I had a general discussion of this topic with Aaron and he was supportive of funding and offering more development opportunities, as is Alan. Much of this conversation was around offering employees growth in their roles and opportunities that could prepare them for advancement within the organization. Alan believes there should be more support and encouragement for succession planning.
7. After some discussion it was felt a handbook could be helpful.
8. See 6 above

Stakeholder interviews with Select Board
Ruth C. Lauer

I spoke with four of the current members of the Select Board and learned that views are not unanimous.

1. How does the Select Board interact with Personnel Board?

The Select Board appoints the Personnel Board as required by the Town Charter and by enforcing the bylaw it can act in solving employee grievances.

The Personnel Board Chair has the monthly Chair Breakfast to stay in touch.

Selects do not have an interaction except for the Liaison who reports interesting matters as they come up. It has been a passive role. It was noted that a change is long overdue.

The Personnel Board has the major responsibility of presenting wage and compensation information to Town Meeting, not the Select Board.

2. How may that relationship have changed over your tenure on the Select Board?

The relationship has not changed recently but was much more significant in the past.

In recent past a Personnel Board member resigned in frustration when her research on how to make Board activities stronger was not received well by the Board.

Articles 6 and 7 at 2020 and 2021 Town Meetings have brought matters to the attention of the community. Lack of confidence in Town Manager was a component of these petition articles, as was the change in the tenor of civil discourse in national affairs.

The Town needs a stronger board. Non-union employees did not receive salary increases for the past two years.

3. Are you aware of any changes that would benefit the Select Board in its relations with employees?

Select Board participation in Senior Management Team meetings could improve the information exchange. The Personnel Board should meet with the Select Board annually.

Research recommendations for improvements to the Personnel Bylaws. Better inform employees of their rights and responsibilities, perhaps in an Employee Handbook. This could increase the loyalty to the Town. Unions have better access to this in their collective bargaining agreements.

The Task Force should research recommendations to strengthen the Bylaw—such as, fully staffing the Board to make quorum easier, appointing professionals with UpToDate human resources skills or find conduits to that expertise.

4. What improvements/changes could strengthen the Town relationship with its employees?

Better salaries and acknowledgement of employee expertise and successes, perhaps in News and Notices

Employee Handbook

Prohibit termination agreements with gag rule.

Senior Management Team presentations to the Select Board.

5. Regardless of your vote on Article 6 or 7 at 2020 and 2021 Town Meeting, what was the telling argument and/or research that influenced your opinion?

There were good arguments; Charging a Task Force provided more Select Board control.

Preview meetings and Hearings were most helpful to highlight the Personnel Board's capacity to make decisions. The Personnel Board was suspicious and hostile to proposal.

Didn't appreciate being backed into a corner by impassioned petitioners.

Felt the driving force was largely an effort to reduce power of sitting Town Manager.

Concord has long been able to balance the Town Charter with a Strong Town Manager form of government.

6. What help can the Personnel Board provide in the Town's D. E. I. quest?

The Board wants to participate in DEI.

DEI Committee seems to be starting off with interests in holidays and festivals. It might develop as an advocate for employee fairness issues.

9. Both appreciated the task force's interest in better understanding challenges and needs of employees Town-wide. For further discussion
10. Further discussion needed. Generally, both appreciate the complexities of personnel matters that likely require expertise and ongoing training that may be best served by subject matter experts. Both seemed okay with the HR Department taking the lead in such matters.