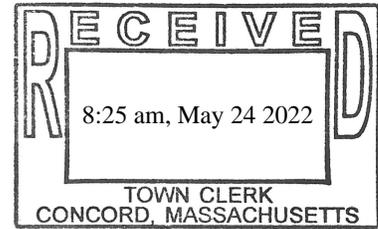


PERSONNEL BOARD
TOWN OF CONCORD, MA

MEETING MINUTES

January 26, 2022

Location: Video Conference Call



Present from the Board: Nancy Crowley, Bill Mrachek, Jim Richardson

Others Present: Amy Foley, Human Resources Director; Stephanie Oliver, Assistant Human Resources Director, Kate Hodges, Deputy Town Manager; Dave Wood, CMLP Director; Kerry Lafleur, Interim Town Manager; Joe Repoff, Assistant CMLP Director; Kaari Tari, Town Clerk; Terri Scofield, HR Systems Analyst

1. Call to Order

Mr. Mrachek called the meeting called to order at 5:15 pm.

- Roll call: Nancy Crowley: present; Jim Richardson: present: Bill Mrachek: present

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Mrachek presented the draft minutes from the 11/30/21 Board meeting. There were no questions or comments regarding the minutes.

Mr. Richardson made a motion to approve to 11/30/21 meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Crowley seconded the motion.

- Roll Call Vote: Ms. Crowley: yes; Mr. Richardson: yes; Mr. Mrachek: yes

Mr. Mrachek presented the draft minutes from the 12/29/21 Board meeting. There were no questions or comments regarding the minutes.

Ms. Crowley made a motion to approve to 12/29/21 meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Richardson seconded the motion.

- Roll Call Vote: Mr. Richardson: yes; Ms. Crowley: yes; Mr. Mrachek: yes

3. Classification Actions

Ms. Foley provided an overview of the classification process and described the positions to be classified.

Senior Department Clerk

Ms. Foley explained that in the past there was a limited status position, but that the Town Clerk's Office has continued to grow and needs a full-time position.

Documents Used or Referenced at the Meeting:

; the Interim Town Manager approved creation of the position. Town staff went through the standard classification exercise (point factor system), and the position fell nicely into Senior Dept. Clerk title and grade of AC-3. Ms. Foley explained that the draft job description has been

provided for context to back up the classification. The Personnel Board does not need to approve the job description, that is done by administration; final modifications may be made as it is put in place.

Mr. Richardson made a motion to assign the Senior Department Clerk to the AC-3 salary grade; Ms. Crowley seconded the motion.

➤ Roll Call Vote: Ms. Crowley: yes; Mr. Richardson: yes; Mr. Mrachek: yes

Administrative Projects Manager and Executive Assistant to the Town Manager

Ms. Foley explained that there have been staffing changes in the Town Manager's Office, and that the Interim Town Manager and Deputy Town Manager have been looking at the department structure and determining needs going forward. They would like to redesign an existing position and return to a previous model where there is an Executive Assistant position. The current Administrative Manager position is a re-work of an old Executive Assistant position. The Administrative Projects Manager will focus more on projects, etc. and the Executive Assistant will be more front-line. The Administrative Projects Manager would be in the MP-2 grade (same as Administrative Manager) and the Executive Assistant position would be in the AC-6 grade. Mr. Mrachek asked if either of these positions will be involved in "green card" process, and Ms. Foley replied yes. Mr. Mrachek commented that it was a critical part of what needs to be done in the Town Manager's office. Ms. Foley said that there has been a shift in work particularly since the pandemic, with the administration of Zoom meetings, etc.

Ms. Crowley made a motion to add the Administrative Projects Manager to the MP-2 grade and the Executive Assistant to the Town Manager position to the AC-6 grade. Mr. Richardson seconded the motion.

➤ Roll call vote: Mr. Richardson: yes; Ms. Crowley: yes; Mr. Mrachek: yes

4. Recreation Incentive Program Proposals

Mr. Mrachek thanked the Recreation staff involved in responding to the Personnel Board's questions and asked the Board for comments. Mr. Richardson agreed with Mr. Mrachek's sentiments. Ms. Crowley commented that she thought Recreation staff did an excellent job with the presentation, that it seems like a lot of work, but that they have a handle on it. Mr. Mrachek commented that the 60-day timeframe seems too long and suggested that they consider doing an off-cycle payroll and asking vendors to submit data/materials weekly rather than at the end of period. Ms. Foley responded that the Town does sometimes do an off-cycle payroll, that she thought 60 days would be the outer limit and that the procedures behind this are already formulated. The RecTrac software used by Recreation collects information as they go, and instructors have access to forms that are easy to use. Ms. Foley noted that in the public sector, off-cycle payroll is more complicated because of the bi-weekly warrant. Mr. Mrachek said he thought there might be a better choice of words than "resolution of alleged policy discrepancies" and suggested that they find a way of expressing that if someone has a question, this is where you go. Ms. Foley responded that it was a good point, and that they were trying to honor the Employee Appeal Procedure, but would consider different wording.

Mr. Mrachek asked for public comments (there were none).

Mr. Richardson made a motion to approve the proposed Recreation Incentive Pay policy with knowledge and understanding that there may be slight changes to the wording as discussed. Ms. Crowley seconded the motion.

➤ Roll Call Vote: Ms. Crowley: yes; Mr. Richardson: yes; Mr. Mrachek: yes

5. Town Meeting 2022 – Development of Warrant Articles

Ms. Foley said that after the Board discussed potential articles at their last meeting, she sent an email to employees to advise that this was under discussion and invite comments/feedback. She said there was a response from an employee asking that leave accrual particularly related to Family Sick Leave be reconsidered because it does not work with software. Ms. Foley said that the HR Department has had similar experiences, but clarified that she is not proposing to make those changes now. She said that there was some other feedback received related to holidays. She is very aware that some state legal holidays are religious in nature and do not reflect the diversity of employees. Sometimes employees would like to take time off for other holidays (not on the schedule) and need to use personal leave, which is intended to address any leave not covered elsewhere, or have been allowed to flex their schedules. Ms. Foley said that she has thought about where language could be added to ensure supervisors are encouraged to authorize leave for other observed holidays; she thinks it could be addressed in policy without changing the Bylaw, which focuses on language Town Meeting approves. All Board members confirmed their support of this approach. Ms. Foley was not aware of any other employee discussion related to the proposed warrant articles. Ms. Foley said that since the Board saw these materials, she has put them in form of draft warrant article; and that she made one other change to Patriot's Day to match state law (3rd Monday in April). Ms. Foley suggested the Town Moderator and Town Counsel be consulted on how best to show the changes, but can work with the Board and Town Counsel to put it in final form.

Mr. Richardson made a motion to authorize the Personnel Board Chair to work with staff to submit a warrant article for 2022 Town Meeting that reflects the proposed amendments to re: holiday, vacation and bereavement leave sections of the Personnel Bylaw. Ms. Crowley seconded the motion.

➤ Roll Call Vote: Ms. Crowley: yes; Mr. Richardson: yes; Mr. Mrachek: yes

Ms. Foley explained that the second warrant article is a standard article regarding the ratification of classification action.

Ms. Crowley made a motion to authorize the PB chair to work with staff to submit a warrant article for 2022 Town Meeting that presents classification actions for ratification. Mr. Richardson seconded the motion.

➤ Roll Call Vote: Mr. Richardson: yes; Ms. Crowley: yes; Mr. Mrachek: yes

Ms. Foley shared a section of Personnel Bylaw (6.3) describing periodic review of the Classification and Compensation Plan, and explained that Concord reviews the Compensation Plan annually, not just every three years as required in the Bylaw. She clarified that annual review and adjustments are not the same as a full classification and compensation study; a comprehensive study is not the only way to review pay rates. Senior managers regularly review market data, and comparable communities. It used to be easier to compare based on list of comparable communities, but the world has changed and the job market is competitive. Towns that never were considered comparable to Concord are raising their salaries and luring employees away. The Consumer Price Index is one factor, but it can go up or down and is not the only factor; Town budget is always a significant factor. Ms. Foley explained that the Town is recommending that all ranges increase by 3%.

Mr. Richardson asked if Concord participates in surveys with peer groups as is common in the private sector. Ms. Foley replied that the Town does participate in a lot of surveys, and that some are formal like a classification and compensation study. Mr. Mrachek added that the concept of total compensation (salary plus benefits) may or may not be significant, but that it has always been his impression that municipalities offer nice benefit packages, which is harder to compare to the private sector. Ms. Foley replied that Concord has not been as competitive in the area of health insurance, because Concord's contribution to health insurance is less than other towns. She explained that it has been a business decision and that for many years, the Town Managers have felt that the more responsible approach is to keep contributions lower and offer more competitive salaries because health insurance costs keep going up, which makes Concord costs harder to control. She added that this approach has put the Town in better position financially, but it is an issue that comes up in the context of recruitment. Mr. Mrachek commented that this is an area in which Personnel Board members have some experience with and may be able to provide some assistance. Ms. Foley agreed that was worth discussion as the role of the Personnel Board is considered.

Ms. Foley explained that the proposal is for a 3% increase across the board; with further increases for certain electrical positions (9%); and increases to reflect Swim-Fitness Specialists and Human Services ranges to reflect new state minimum wage.

With regard to the electrical positions, Ms. Foley explained that the Town is recommending splitting two of the ranges because of differences in the working conditions, hazards and market for certain types of positions, specifically lineworkers and electrical management. For example, Ms. Foley said that it did not seem to make sense for the meter technician range to go up more than 3%, whereas the lineworker range has fallen behind the market, so the Town is recommending a 9% increase to the range there. The working conditions and hazards for lineworkers make those positions stand out. The proposal also increases electrical management ranges by 9%. Ms. Foley said that the Town is challenged by the fact that they have different types of operations that are funded differently, and some that compete with private sector (like the Light Plant), which is very different from traditional municipal employees. The Town had previously separated the electrical positions based on market differences, but that is not an allowable factor under the Massachusetts Equal Pay Act (MEPA). MEPA does permit differences

in compensation based on other factors, such as working conditions. Ms. Foley said that it was a difficult decision to make a different increase recommendation than other positions, but the talent pool for these positions is shrinking and light plant operations are critical.

Mr. Mrachek asked the Board for questions or comments. All Board members agreed that Ms. Foley did a great job of presenting the information.

Ms. Foley added that the Board may have heard that the Town has fallen behind in terms of compensation. The proposed Classification and Compensation Plan actions are an important step to address that, but how employees move within the ranges is a separate issue that will need to be discussed.

Mr. Richardson made a motion to authorize the Personnel Board chair to work with staff to submit the warrant article for the 2022 Town Meeting that reflects the proposed Classification and Compensation plan amendments which incorporates changes outlined in the amended meeting handout. Ms. Crowley seconded the motion.

➤ Roll call vote: Ms. Crowley: yes; Mr. Richardson: yes; Mr. Mrachek: yes

Ms. Foley noted that in upcoming meetings the Board will need to discuss plans for a comprehensive classification and compensation study. Mr. Mrachek noted that he thinks Personnel Board members, with relevant experience, could bring real value to the study and hopes they will have that opportunity.

6. Personnel Study Task Force

Mr. Mrachek asked about the employee survey. Ms. Lafleur said that it was still in the infancy stage. She said she knows there is interest in doing a survey and that it is something she is interested in as well. She thinks it would be a good opportunity to get feedback and focus on initiatives we might take. Mr. Mrachek commented that the Personnel Board probably has good ideas to add in this area.

7. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

8. Adjournment

Ms. Crowley left meeting, so there was no longer a quorum. Mr. Mrachek and Mr. Richardson agreed to sign off the meeting at 6:25 pm.

Documents Used or Referenced at the Meeting:

- Draft minutes of 11/30/2021 12/29/2021 meetings
- Draft job descriptions related to classification actions
- Recreation Incentive Pay Proposal
- Draft Warrant Articles

Minutes approved 4/13/2022