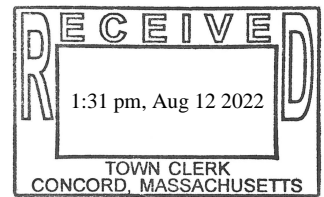


PERSONNEL STUDY TASK FORCE – TOWN OF CONCORD, MA
MEETING MINUTES



Date: July 25, 2022 4 PM

Location: Hybrid, 141 Keyes Rd. Conference Room

Present from the Board: Ruth Lauer (Co-Chair), Anne Rarich (Co-Chair), Paul Macone.

Not Present: Bruce Button

Others Present: Erin Mulcahy, Nancy Crowley, Personnel Board; Bill Mrachek, Personnel Board; Elizabeth Cobbs, Personnel Board; Terri Ackerman, Select Board; Alan Cathcart, Public Works Director; Anna Trout, CPW; Ned Perry, Karlen Reed, Anita Tekle, Amy Foley, Human Resources Director; Kerry LeFleur Town Manager

1. Call to Order

After a long struggle to cope with the faulty Zoom set up, the Personnel Study Task Force meeting was called to Order by Co-Chair Anne Rarich at 4:30 pm. Personnel Board Chair Bill Mrachek called to order the Personnel Board meeting.

2. Approval of Minutes

Upon a Motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED (by roll call) to approve the Minutes of July 11, 2022.

Ruth Lauer	Aye
Paul Macone	Aye
Anne Rarich	Aye

3. Correspondence or Updates

Ruth Lauer reminded the task force and audience that at the previous meeting Anita Tekle had volunteered to help by writing and compiling a report for the task force. She has begun work.

Anne Rarich stated that she had begun to draft an invitation to all Employees to the Public Forum. She and Ruth have arranged to meet with the new Select Board member, Mary Hartman, to bring her up to speed on task force activities.

4. Open Discussion on Personnel Study Task Force Final Report to Select Board

Anne stated that the purpose of the joint meeting is to provide background information and a notion of task force progress to bring the Personnel Board up to speed on our activities. She asked if there were any questions that came out of the information packet provided. Personnel Board Chair Bill Mrachek stated that he had four areas on which he would like to know more about Task Force thinking: 1) Has the Task Force developed any thoughts for a new Personnel Board Charge? There was a resounding “No”. Should that be determined to be something to be pursued, the responsibility would lie with the Select Board, Town Manager, and Personnel Board itself.

2) Did the Task Force pursue any aspect of ATM 2021 Article 7, to transfer Personnel Board powers to the Town Manager or designee? Task Force responses included: there was exploration of the Article and a resulting commitment to retaining the Personnel Board functions; acceptance that flexibility will be required as well as provisions that enable the Personnel Board to act without the vote of ATM.

3) If the Personnel Board might need to do its own survey of Employees, are there any lessons learned from the Task Force survey? Comments included: Erin Mulcahy has skills to offer; The Town has access to software to help in this; the task force developed its questions on the basis of getting a “snapshot” of the current situation from the Employees living it; structurally, do not clump varied questions into one as it prevents clear answers; limit the focus of the survey as there are many options and purposes. PSTF is very pleased that 50% of Employees responded to our survey.

4) Did the Task Force research other towns' bylaws and best practices? Responses included: "Yes!" The task force read extensively on issues of addressing human resources in the 21st Century; we heard from professionals at the Collins Center at UMASS Amherst; we consulted with Mass Municipal Association.

New Personnel Board member Louisa Cobbs stated her opinion that our human resources issues seem to be systemic and that the Personnel Board seems to get bogged down in them. In her opinion, there needs to be an opportunity to embrace big issues and to make people feel welcome, valued, and remembered. This is a partnership. She stated that there should be a "to do" list that includes org charts, workflow, bringing the Town website up to date, addressing Employee health insurance concerns, and insuring transparency.

Nancy Crowley stated that the intention in providing volunteer service to the Town is to help, but service on the Personnel Board has gotten boring and very lonely. It has been difficult to have full membership of 5. Over the years the Board has been interested in and willing to do more for the Town but have been prevented by the so-called demands of confidentiality and privacy. Paul Macone stated that the task force has always supported the role and activities of the Personnel Board, noting that it can only be as good as what it is given to work with.

5. Pending Meetings

August 8, 2022	4PM, hybrid	141 Keyes Rd Conference Room
August 29, 2022	1PM, hybrid	Public Forum at Light Plant, 1175 Elm St.
September 6, 2022	4PM, hybrid	Select Board meeting room confirmed
September 19, 2022	7PM, hybrid	Town House, report to Select Board

6. Public Comment

Select Board Liaison Terri Ackerman stated that she is pleased that the boards are meeting jointly and that exchanges of views provides a breath of fresh air. She stated that finding sufficient people to staff the varied kinds of boards and committees is a problem. She further noted her concern with learning that there has been a 50% "churn" or turnover of Employees in the past five years. She asked for source of that information. Paul Macone stated that on behalf of the Task Force, he had asked HR Director Amy Foley for information on benefits-eligible new hires, separations that were not retirements, and new positions created in the past five years. After 5 weeks with no response, he withdrew the request and very quickly got the information from the Retirement Department. HR Director Amy Foley stated that if she got a request in writing, she would provide the information. Terri Ackerman stated that she would formally make the request.

Anne invited the Personnel Board to attend the August forum.

7. Adjournment

The PSTF Joint Meeting with the Personnel Board was adjourned at 5:30pm by roll call.

Upon a Motion duly made and seconded, it was
VOTED (by roll call)

Ruth Lauer	Aye
Paul Macone	Aye
Anne Rarich	Aye

Respectfully submitted,
Ruth C. Lauer, Clerk pro temp
Approved: August 8, 2022