

**TOWN OF CONCORD PERSONNEL BOARD
AGENDA**

November 22, 2022

12:30 p.m.

Via Zoom video conference:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87565406852?pwd=bUt4TTJWS2xOR255dWk5dFJzV0dVUT09>

Dial: 833 548 0282 US Toll-free

Meeting ID: 875 6540 6852

Passcode: 971563

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Finalize Presentation of Recommendations to Select Board re Personnel Study Task Force Report**
3. **Public comment**
4. **Adjournment**

Materials will be available at: <https://concordma.gov/452/Personnel-Board>

Aggregated Comments/Suggested Edits

PERSONNEL BOARD'S DRAFT PRESENTATION TO THE SELECT BOARD

On 11/20/2022, the HR Director sent Personnel Board members a draft document that had been prepared by Liz Cobbs based on discussion at the Board's 11/17/2022 meeting. The PB members were asked to send comments/recommended edits only to the HR Director for aggregation and distribution for discussion at the 11/22/2022 meeting. This document relays the responses; it is being posted on the Town's website just prior to distribution to Board members.

Liz Cobbs – No comments submitted (she prepared the draft)

Nancy Crowley - I think the information for the SB meeting that we worked on Nov17th, has been well done in Liz's draft. I think some change in format by you and we should be ready for our meeting.

Kate Ryan – Suggested the following edits:

A. **Overall Impression:**

We would like to thank the members of the Personnel Task Force for the extensive review and analysis that they have provided in their final report. This impressive body of work will serve as a major contribution to the Town in clarifying the Personnel Board's future, as part of the integral workings of Concord Town Government. Their hard work is appreciated by the Personnel Board.

The PSTF report serves as a resource ~~great source of information~~ to help guide the Select Board, the Town Manager, the Personnel Board and other Citizen Boards to support a more meaningful role for the Personnel Board ~~that is firmly integrated into the oversight of non-~~ unionized town employees. The final report ~~is filled with information intended to give all concerned additional data and information to use to~~ is a first step towards reshaping the work of the Personnel ~~B~~board; to better serve the Town Manager, Human Resources Department and improve the landscape for Town employees in their work to and to help create a more robust and positive work environment that will enhance employee recruitment and retention efforts. ~~of new employees and retain existing employees.~~

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C. **Work Plan Details:**

Using the PSTF's report, the Personnel Board has identified major focus areas for the Select Board to concentrate their efforts. ~~where the Personnel Board should concentrate~~. In addition, we have prioritized elements within each focus area identifying "high/medium/low" priority assessments [please see explanatory chart below].

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Area of Focus 2 – Governance: The Personnel Board recommends adherence to requirements stipulated in the current Personnel ByLaw. ~~and we~~ The Board supports an evaluation and ~~necessary~~ changes to the Personnel ByLaw to meet the needs of the employees and the Town of Concord in a rapidly changing employment market (note that these actions would also consider the Town Charter and the Mass General Laws that apply).

Area of Focus 3- Human Resources: The Personnel Board ~~recommends~~ supports ~~that~~ the current work with the third party vendor (GovHR) for comprehensive review of Compensation, Classification and Benefits of non-union ~~ized~~ employees ~~has been initiated~~.

Area of Focus 4- Employee Relations: The Personnel Board recommends ongoing engagement to address employee satisfaction with Town governance and build confidence that there are efficient, effective, and transparent ~~and known~~ processes for feedback.

D. Personnel Board Comments:

As with any project, ~~all parties may~~ not all parties may agree with the data or information presented, ~~not~~ nor with the conclusions reached. In this Personnel Board memorandum, there are two primary topics to mention briefly:

- 1) Town turn-over statistics vary with time, but we accept that the retention trend for Concord and many public and private institutions has been ~~challenged~~ challenging during the pandemic years. The Personnel Board would like explore our role, if any, in supporting the Town Manager and HR Department in efforts to improve recruitment and retention of Town employees. We would like to focus on the challenges of recruiting and retaining employees as a role that the Personnel Board, and perhaps other Town Governance committees and boards can seek to improve. Noting that the current Administrative Code provides for monthly reports from HR on appointments to positions under the Wage and Salary Classification plan, data updates would be a high ~~which may allow the Personnel Board an opportunity to assist HR and the Town Manager in priority to ensure that we are~~ identifying and addressing the key challenge areas appropriately.
- 2) Employee surveys, as with many survey tools, can be a challenge, both in the creation of the survey and how it is conveyed to employees, and how data is collected and ~~how data is then~~ shared. The Personnel Board does not have 100% confidence in the employee survey that was conducted by the PSTF as part of their research efforts. In advance of any future surveys, we suggest recommend that the Town Manager have an employee survey guidance document prepared to govern/manage future surveys and subsequent sharing of data obtained.

Bill Mrachek – Upon discussion with staff, Bill supported consideration of reframed descriptions of action items contained in the charts.

Staff Suggestions –

- We suggest that the wording be reframed to convey a positive and impartial tone. The current wording suggests that the Personnel Board agrees with each item as described; however, the Board hasn’t discussed the details and interpretations behind many of these topics. It might help to rename the “Identified Deficiency to be Addressed” column to “Subjects to be Addressed” and reword each item to focus on the subjects. This reframing isn’t meant to deny deficiencies, but to assist the Board in its focus.
- We suggest the Board consider listing “elements” at the beginning of each section, rather than next to particular subjects, as multiple elements may need to be considered for each topic. This approach might assist the Board in keeping all of these factors in mind when considering their approach to resolving each item.
- We suggest addition of a subject to be addressed under the Governance section that focuses on identifying the Personnel Board’s current and future role and authority (charge).

Stakeholder Elements		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Select Board ➤ Personnel Board ➤ Town Manager ➤ HR Director ➤ Citizens ➤ Employees 	
Subjects to be Addressed		Priority Level
1.	Informing employees re: Bylaw changes	High
2.	Availability of Personnel Board information packets on Town website	High
3.	Personnel Board’s knowledge & level of involvement with employee complaints	High
4.	Reports from HR of key metrics consistent with Personnel Board’s role/charge	High
5.	Frequency of joint meetings between Select Board/ Personnel Board	High/Medium
6.	Employee understanding or knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. roles of Town Manager/Personnel Board b. Compensation & Benefit Plans c. Personnel policies in general d. how to file a grievance 	Medium
7.	Reporting to town citizens of basic employment data	Low

Authority Document Elements		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Massachusetts General Laws ➤ Town Charter ➤ Personnel Bylaw ➤ Personnel Board Charge 	
Subjects to be Addressed		Priority Level
8.	Personnel Board's current and future role and authority based on M.G.L., the Town Charter, Personnel Bylaw, its Charge, Stakeholder interests, and operational needs <i>(Note: this is a key component in assessing other subjects)</i>	High
9.	Personnel Board's process for reviewing and updating the Personnel Bylaw <i>(Note: PB will seek guidance to ensure that the 12/6 deadline to identify a general idea for a Warrant for Town Meeting can be met, and consequent final deadline in January)</i>	High
10.	Frequency and scheduling of regular days/time for Personnel Board meetings <i>(Note: we have initiated a regular calendar and posting of meeting minutes.)</i>	High
11.	a. Job classification and reclassification process b. Frequency and elements of classification system review <i>(Note: GovHR has been hired and a Compensation & Classification Review is underway)</i>	High High
12.	Personnel Board's role in review of benefits and recommending changes	
13.	Job Description content and updates	Low
14.	Information from Human Resources to Personnel Board for meeting preparation and action	High

Systems Elements		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Personnel Policies & Procedures ➤ Compensation & Benefits ➤ Classification Plan 	
Subjects to be Addressed		Priority Level
15.	Transparency, clarity, and accessibility of Personnel policies & procedures	High
16.	Method for seeking employee input/opinions on compensation, benefits and other policies impacting them	High
17.	Evaluation of compensation and whether it is competitive with other municipalities <i>(Note: should be addressed in current work with GovHR)</i>	High

Personnel Board Presentation to Select Board

28 November 2022

The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize the Personnel Board's recommendations for areas of focused action, in response to the Personnel Task Force (PSTF) final report.

A. Overall Impression:

We would like to thank the members of the Personnel Task Force for the extensive review and analysis that they have provided in their final report. This impressive body of work will serve as a major contribution to the Town in clarifying the Personnel Board's future, as part of the integral workings of Concord Town Government. Their hard work is appreciated by the Personnel Board.

The PSTF report serves as a great source of information to help guide the Select Board, the Town Manager, the Personnel Board and other Citizen Boards to support a more meaningful role for the Personnel Board that is firmly integrated into the oversight of non-unionized town employees. The final report is filled with information intended to give all concerned additional data and information to use to shape the work of the Personnel board, improve the landscape for Town employees and to help create a more robust and positive work environment that will enhance recruitment of new employees and retain existing employees.

B. Process to Support Tangible Outcomes:

- 1) Establish a prioritized plan: We have prioritized key areas of focus in the document that follows.
 - We would like to confirm, however, how this strategic action plan gets certified: is it by the Select Board? The Town Manager? Personnel Board, the PSTF or citizens more generally?
- 2) Confirm the goals:
 - Goals should be confirmed with objectives for each major task, milestones to be met and timelines for action.
 - Are these goals to be set and managed by the Personnel Board? Select Board? Town Manager? What is the coordination we should expect?
- 3) Task Management:
 - Once agreed upon, is task management the responsibility of the Town Manager? The Select Board? The Personnel Board?

C. Work Plan Details:

Using the PSTF’s report, the Personnel Board has identified major focus areas where the Personnel Board should concentrate. In addition, we have prioritized elements within each focus area identifying “high/medium/low” priority assessments [please see explanatory chart below].

- Priority Code: High = to be completed in the next 6 months
 Medium = to be completed in the next 6-12 months
 Low = to be completed in next 12-24 months

Area of Focus 1- Communication: The Personnel Board recommends enhanced communications across the town related to personnel governance, employee engagement and transparency of Personnel Board information.

Elements	Identified Deficiency to be Addressed	Priority Level
Personnel Board	Employees not well informed re: By-Law changes	High
Personnel Board	Information packets should be available much longer on Town website (transparency)	High
Personnel Board	To be informed of employee complaints (not general issues)	High
Town Manager	HR not providing Monthly Reports	High (reporting required for adequately informed Personnel Board).
Select Board	Lack of joint meetings between Select Board/ Personnel Board	High/Medium (note meeting set 11/28, but more consistent meetings required)
HR Director	Employees lack of understanding or knowledge of: a. roles of Town Manager/Personnel Board; b. Compensation & Benefit Plans c. Personnel policies in general d. how to file a grievance	Medium
Citizens	Increase of reporting to town citizens of basic employment data	Low

Area of Focus 2 – Governance: The Personnel Board recommends adherence to requirements stipulated in the Personnel ByLaw and we support an evaluation and necessary changes to the Personnel ByLaw to meet the needs of the employees and the Town (note that these actions would also consider the Town Charter and the Mass General Laws that apply).

Elements	Identified Deficiency to be Addressed	Priority Level
Personnel Board ByLaw	Personnel Board has failed to engage to review and update the Personnel ByLaw	High (note: PB will seek guidance to ensure that the 12/6 deadline to identify a general idea for a Warrant for Town Meeting can be met, and consequent final deadline in January).
Personnel Board	Failing to meet regularly, no set meeting date/time	High Note that we have initiated a regular calendar and posting of meeting minutes.
Personnel Board	a. Job classification and reclassification shortcomings b. frequency of classification system and elements of review are not being met.	High High Note: GovHR has been hired and a Compensation and Classification Review is underway.
Personnel Board Charge	Personnel Board is not meeting the PB Charge- i.e. reviewing benefits and recommending changes	
	Job Description Shortcomings	Low
HR Support for Personnel Board	There is a rubber stamp issue with the Personnel Board; without consistently receiving meeting materials in advance, with monthly data updates, decisions become a rubber stamp	High

Area of Focus 3- Human Resources: The Personnel Board recommends that the current work with the third party vendor (GovHR) for comprehensive review of Compensation, Classification and Benefits of non-unionized employees has been initiated.

Elements	Identified Deficiency to be Addressed	Priority Level
Personnel Policies & Procedures	Lack of transparency, clarity, and accessibility concerns from employees	High
Compensation and Benefits	Need for employees to feel their input/opinions are sought on compensation, benefits and other policies impacting them	High
Classification Plan	There is a perception that turnover and vacancies can be attributed to lack of competitiveness vs. other municipalities	High (Note: should be addressed in the current work with GovHR)

Area of Focus 4- Employee Relations: The Personnel Board recommends ongoing engagement to address employee satisfaction with Town governance and build confidence that there are efficient, effective, transparent and known processes for feedback.

Elements	Identified Deficiency to be Addressed	Priority Level
Responsiveness	There is concern that timelines to address employee concerns are inadequate.	High
Performance Feedback	There appears to be a low degree of trust in the town Human Resource department.	High
Work-related Issues	There appears to be inconsistent use of performance feedback for non-unionized employees, with slow timelines and variable quality in the feedback provided.	High (note: Year-end performance feedback can be normalized at this time of year)

D. Personnel Board Comments:

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- 1) Town turn-over statistics vary with time, but we accept that the retention trend for Concord and many public and private institutions has been challenged during the pandemic years.

We would like to focus on the challenges of recruiting and retaining employees as a role that the Personnel Board, and perhaps other Town Governance committees and boards can seek to improve. Noting that monthly data updates would be a high priority to ensure that we are identifying and addressing the key challenge areas appropriately.

- 2) Employee surveys, as with many survey tools, can be a challenge, both in the creation of the survey and how it is conveyed to employees, how data is collected and how data is then shared. The Personnel Board does not have 100% confidence in the employee survey that was conducted by the PSTF as part of their research efforts. In advance of any future surveys, we suggest that the Town Manager have an employee survey guidance document prepared to govern/manage future surveys and subsequent sharing of data obtained.