

Personnel Board Meeting Minutes  
February 13, 2013  
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall, 9:00am

The meeting was convened on Wednesday, February 13, 2013 at 9:00am

Present: Flo Stern, Charles Scherpa, Chris Hoffmann, Ron Bell and Tony Butterfield  
Others: Diana Stein, Select Board Liaison, Deborah Radway, Director of Human Resources & Human Rights, Kay Zlogar, Trust Administrator and John P. Musante, Town Manager

Personnel Board Chair Ms. Stern opened the meeting with a review of the agenda. There were no changes. The Board recommitted to its 9am meeting time at future meetings.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Minutes

The Minutes of the December, 2012 meeting were reviewed with clarification that the meeting with non union employees would be on March 20, 2013 at 9:00am, with the Personnel Board meeting prior to then on same day at 8:30am, and for the Board to sustain its regular Wednesday schedule. The meeting minutes were unanimously accepted.

New Business:

The Board discussed the framework for its March 20 meeting with non union employees. Ms. Stern asked Mr. Musante for an overview. Town Manager reviewed his FY14 proposed budget that is posted on the town website and reported an overall budget picture that is improving but is still tight. The budget projects level funded state aid and overall budget growth of 3% with level services. The Town Manager also reported that this will be the second consecutive year of no premium adjustments for our self insured health insurance plan, based on good claims experience. Built into the level services budget are reasonable allocations for step increases and a COLA for all employee groups, including a 2% COLA for non-union. This allocation is consistent with, but not below, the market.

The Town Manager is also looking to recommend a health insurance premium holiday because of healthy reserves in the Health Insurance Trust. The Insurance Advisory Committee is scheduled to consider the request for the premium holiday this afternoon. Mr. Scherpa inquired about the alternative of actually lowering the rate vs. granting a one month premium holiday. Mr. Musante replied that the magnitude of the Trust balance led him to recommend the holiday. He recommends not lowering the rates so that we actively avoid the scenario the town faced 5-6 years ago when it had to increase the rates mid cycle because of unanticipated high claims. Mr. Butterfield agreed that large trust fund reserves can be looked at with some skepticism and that lowering the reserve through the premium holiday is safer than lowering the rate altogether.

The Town Manager also recognizes the sacrifices made by non union employees with regards to past years' COLAs. He is open to considering methodologies for reviewing and /or adjusting compensation but has not formulated a plan for doing so.

Ms. Stern stated that she would like to see the non union personnel get more than a 2% COLA as she has been telling them that they were going to get more, and it should be added to the base.

Action:

Mr. Butterfield made a motion to endorse the Town Manager's recommendation of a 2% COLA increase for non union staff in FY14, and encouraged the Town Manager to consider additional sources of compensation for non union employees. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bell. The vote for four in favor and one opposed (Ms. Stern, based on the lack of clarity of additional sources of compensation).

Ms. Stern asked that light refreshments be served, and that the room setup include no barrier of separation between the Personnel Board and non union staff (e.g.tables).

**Director's Report:** There have been three new permanent hires and three exits since December meeting. One of the new hires is a long term temporary employee at the Jones Library who was able to be hired full time into a different position at the Library. One of the exits was the retirement of Ken Isabelle, longtime DPW employee who will be missed.

The Director reported that the Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Administration and the UMASS office of Workplace Learning and Development were collaborating to offer a Supervisory Leadership and Development course at the Jones Library for public sector supervisors and managers from around western Mass. There are 14 Town of Amherst staff enrolled in the 6 week class. Additionally, UMASS offers the course each semester on campus and the Town has 4 more DPW supervisors in the course at UMASS starting in March.

The Director reported that she and Rachel Bowen, Assistant Director of HR for ARPS would together attend 2 career fairs at UMASS in February-the ALANA diversity outreach career fair and the University's Career Blast career fair. The purpose is to increase exposure to the Town and Schools as work places, and to recruit for specific jobs, internships and work study projects.

Mr. Scherpa inquired about the status of his request for an employee/retiree e- newsletter. Ms. Zlogar suggested Open Enrollment would be a good opportunity to solicit retiree email addresses. Mr. Scherpa suggested a volunteer at the Senior Center could compile the newsletter, with staff assistance. It's on the list of HR to do's.

#### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m. Next meeting is at 8:30am on Wednesday, March 20.

Respectfully submitted,  
Deborah Radway

Handouts: Minutes of the December 2012 meeting

New Hires and Exits