

Personnel Board Meeting Minutes
January 08, 2014
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall 9am

The meeting was convened on Wednesday, January 08, 2014 at 9am

Present: Tony Butterfield, Chris Hoffmann, Charles Scherpa, Rebecca Woodland and Ron Bell

Others: Deborah Radway, Director of Human Resources; Kay Zlogar, Trust Administrator; John Musante, Town Manager; David Ziomek, Assistant Town Manager; Sharon Sharry, Library Director; Sanford Pooler, Finance Director, and a woman who identified herself to Kay Zlogar as "Mrs. Poula".

Agenda Review/Additions- None

Old Business: None

- Minutes of December 2013 meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously.

New Business:

- *Non Union Compensation Study Update:* The Chair opened the meeting by acknowledging receipt of a final draft report from the Consultant, and expressing that the Personnel Board had not had an opportunity to preview the report and was not expecting to vote on it at this meeting. He further drew attention to specific statements in the report worthy of note, including:
 - Section II -The Compensation strategy and philosophy is about the positions.
 - Section VIII - Findings and Recommendations is about the employees.
 - The draft FAQ contains the right questions and answers.
- Presentation by Sandy Stapczynski, Principal of Human Resources Services, Inc.
 - Report includes a comprehensive study of 50+ positions, including analysis and data collection.
 - Incorporates a compensation philosophy of Amherst as an Employer of Choice in Western MA. The data comparison is statewide but we have stated we want to be a leader in western MA and the play plan is structured around this statement.
 - The classification plan has 10 grades, each with 11 steps and a 28% spread between Step 1 and Step 11. Steps are 2.5% each. It is a traditional step system.
 - Internal equity was looked at but the external market comparison revealed a pay plan out of date and the focus was more heavily weighed towards the market than internal comparisons. In general, the job descriptions were up to date and well written.
 - Benchmark rating occurred for each position reviewed internally and the structure did not require much movement of positions in the classification scale but the market data collected was extensive.
 - More market data was collected for this study than is the norm. It was difficult to match Amherst positions to other communities, there was not 100% matching because every community is set up differently. The consultant used benchmark-if 75% of a job is comparable to that in another community it was used.
 - The labor market in Massachusetts is changing. Salaries are increasing faster now than three years ago. Amherst fell behind the market and this plan restores salaries to be competitive with the market.
 - In the compensation plan, entry level salaries increased at every grade. The #1 finding of the report was that entry salary rates for non-union positions are, in some cases, 20% below the market. Compression was alleviated between managers and employees, especially in the middle grades.
 - FY 14 data was used with a few noted exceptions. The proposed plan is ready for FY 15 implementation and does not require an additional cost of living increase.
 - The Town needs to adopt a policy and adhere to applying a cost of living increase in each subsequent year. If the economy fails again, the Town has the option of alternating steps and COLA.
 - Classification of positions follows a proven methodology, and is more a blend of science and

experience than an exact science. 14 factors in the rating system. Plans are usually a blend of internal and external equity, but for this study external equity was weighed more heavily.

- It is important to not keep adding steps. Stick to the 11 step plan. When employees reach the top step they should receive a COLA each year starting in FY16.
- The cost to implement the recommendations in the report for FY 15 is about \$82,000 and represents an increase of 2.2% to the personnel services budgets.
- Members encouraged the Consultant to clearly articulate the compensation philosophy and suggested some formatting and grammatical improvements to the Consultant.
- Preparation for January 15 conversation with non-union employees—The Chair will facilitate the conversation. Focus should be on receiving staff feedback and input rather than making a presentation. Need to articulate the avenue for appeals to the proposed classifications.
- The Select Board will be anticipating a recommendation from the Personnel Board on February 24th.
- New Hires and Exits Report- There was one retirement (DPW Water Division Director) and one new Hire (DPW Laborer) since the December meeting.
- Schedule of upcoming meetings-Wednesday February 5, March 19 and April 16, 2014.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45am.

Deborah Radway
Notetaker