

Personnel Board Meeting Minutes
May 21, 2014
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall 9am

The meeting was convened on Wednesday, May 21, 2014 at 9am

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

Others: Deborah Radway, Director of Human Resources; Kay Zlogar, Health Trust Administrator.

Agenda Review/Additions- None, although Ms. Radway indicated that the Town Manager would be requesting initial classification of a new position-Social Worker- at the June meeting.

Old Business: None

- Minutes of March 19, 2014 meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously.

New Business:

- Ms. Radway introduced a discussion of an update to the part time non benefited wage schedule, (although a draft schedule was not reviewed). The existing plan was evaluated with the following observations:
 - The plan was last updated 9/1/2008 when the state minimum wage increased to \$8.00
 - There has been no inflation or CPI adjustment factor since
 - There are 8 levels of pay each with 10-20% between levels
 - Each level has 7 steps of 5% per step, attempting to mirror the basic tenets of the non-union salary schedule at the time.
 - The pay range from \$8 to \$31/hour and accommodates just about every part time need
 - There are about 250 part timers on plan (plus tax work off and detail cops);
 - Departments administer plan according to their own budget capabilities (some give annual step increases, some give no step increases, some are mixed).
 - Departments choose desired pay amount and then classify their temp staff accordingly.
 - 97% of temporary employees are in Levels 1-5;
 - 30% of the 56 individual wage rates have no one currently in them
 - Regular part time non benefited staff have highest pay rates
 - LSSE, Student Firefighters highest annual turnover
 - LSSE, Fire, Police, Library Senior Center, dominate part time schedule

Ms. Radway asked for the following goals to be considered. After discussion, these goals were agreed to by the Personnel Board:

- Main goal is to increase the minimum wage to \$9 in FY 15 and \$10 or \$10.50 in FY 16 (following lead of legislature/US Government).
- The plan should remain affordable to Town and its departments.
- Efforts should be made to minimize the implementation cost- the purpose is to increase the minimum wage and not to grant a pay increase to all part time non benefited employees.
- No one's pay should be cut.

Ms. Radway additionally asked the Board for guidance on the following programmatic considerations:

- Should a draft plan consolidate the total number of grades or steps? **YES**
- Should the plan mimic the non-union comp plan regarding size of steps? **YES as much as possible**
- Should there be a commitment to annual COLA? **NO. Instead, there was unanimous interest in a longevity program to reward long time regular non benefited staff.**

Mr. Scherpa offered that the existing plan with the first two Levels eliminated altogether might achieve our stated goals. Ms. Radway agreed to return in June with a version of Mr. Scherpa's suggestion and a version that consolidates other pay levels in a similar manner.

Discussion of FY 15 Work Plan:

1. Mr. Butterfield led this discussion with a suggestion that the Personnel By-Law itself might need to be updated with regard to its (outdated) statement:

It shall be the policy of the Town of Amherst to guarantee equal opportunity to all qualified applicants and to all employees with respect to initial appointment, advancement, compensation, and general working conditions without regard to age, race, creed, color, sex, national origin, or physical condition.

Since the By-Law was created in 1995 additional protected classes (gender, sexual orientation) have been added by state or federal law.

2. Mr. Butterfield also suggested the Board could look at the Personnel Procedures Manual to determine where we might do a better job injecting statements about workforce diversity and inclusion.
3. Ms. Radway cited the need to also update the Personnel Procedures Manual to reflect changes and clarifications to existing policies and procedures that have occurred since the March 2012 update, and the exodus of the DPW Supervisors from the group.
4. Mr. Scherpa suggested the Board solicit comment about any proposed changes from other town employees prior to sending any suggested changes to Select Board. Changes to the Personnel Bylaw must also be approved by Town Meeting.
5. Performance Management System—as a logical next step after the non-union compensation study, Ms. Radway asked that the Personnel Board consider and offer suggestions regarding an enhanced and updated performance management system and tool in FY 15. The existing tool is from the 1980's and not used for non-union personnel at top step. Now with more than 60% of non-union staff receiving a step increase in FY 16, it is the right time to look at a more beneficial tool and process. Ms. Woodland inquired about the use of 360 degree reviews (not done) and stated the amazing benefit of their use. She also stressed the importance of not only having a new tool, but also training evaluators in giving and receiving feedback, and managing through the performance cycle—if we're going to make changes, make the system well-structured so they are meaningful and useful. We should not just substitute one form for another. Personnel Board members agreed to make this a priority for FY 15.

- Schedule of Upcoming Meetings: June 18 at 2pm, plus a hold on July 16 and August 20 for meetings *if necessary*.
- New Hires and Exits Report- There was one Exit and no new hires since the March meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:10am.

Deborah Radway & Kay Zlogar
Notetakers