

## Personnel Board Meeting Minutes

December 17, 2014

First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall

The meeting was convened on Wednesday, November 19, 2014 at 9:00 am

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

Others: Deborah Radway, Director of Human Resources, Kay Zlogar, Trust Administrator, Connie Krueger, Select Board Liaison, John Musante, Town Manager, Nancy Dubin, Chris Crane, Sarah McKee, Jill Palmer, Michael \_\_\_\_ Last name unknown.

Agenda Review/Additions - none

### **Old Business:**

- Minutes of November 19, 2014 meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously after a second "n" was added to Hoffmann.

### **New Business:**

1. Review and consideration of options for leave benefit for regular part time employees working less than 20 hours per week on a year round basis.

As requested by the Board at its November meeting, Ms. Radway made a presentation on options (presentation attached) and cost estimate for 1) a sick leave and personal leave benefit for currently unbenefited part time employees working year round and working an average of 10 hours per week, and 2) the recently adopted Earned Sick Time for Employees law.

The first proposal was based on an analysis of what makes the most sense after an examination of the nature of part time jobs in the Town. The goals were to target the truly committed regularly working part time employees whom the Town relies on year round to supplement the full time workforce, and to provide a personal leave benefit in addition to the sick leave benefit in order to provide greater flexibility to this group of employees. The second option, adoption of so-called Question 4 was also costed out and evaluated as requested by the Board.

Mr. Butterfield asked Board members to comment:

Mr. Scherpa said he was not in favor of either proposal, and had other priorities for expenditure of limited town funds. He also said we did not know the true financial impact of this because school staff were not factored in.

Ms. Woodland inquired how staff settled on 10 hours per week and not 15 hours per week, and was it an average or a minimum of 10 hours. (Answer-there are only about 10 employees who work 15 hours per week year round, and it is an average of 10 hours per week year round)

Mr. Hoffmann stated that the official vote of the Library Trustees would be more in line with the second/Question 4 option in that it would apply to all part time employees regardless of amount of time worked, but that the first option makes more sense and is a better benefit for those that get it.

Mr. Bell stated his preference for the first option.

Mr. Butterfield stated his preference for the 60 hour option and added that the proposal would need some flushing out of language before it can be presented to the Select Board

Mr. Butterfield asked for comments from others present:

Town Manager John Musante- Question 4 made us keenly aware of the issue and need in the Town of Amherst to provide some time-off benefits for part time workers. Question 4 itself does not apply to municipalities

unless they adopt it and do not have a superior alternative benefit. The Town provides that superior benefit to all employees working more than 20 hours per week, so it makes sense to provide a level of benefit to permanent part timers whom we rely on, but not necessarily to the Saturday morning referee who might referee youth basketball games in January. The first option passes the reasonableness test without causing an inordinate administrative burden. These cost estimates are worst case scenarios and assume every part time employee uses the maximum number of hours available to them annually.

Ms. Dubin expressed that it was an acceptable proposal and reflected a lot of thought and hard work, even though it did not provide everything the Library part time employees asked for.

Mr. Butterfield made a motion as follows:

**“I move that the Personnel Board recommend to the Select Board to amend the Personnel Procedures Manual to provide a Sick and Personal Leave benefit to a group of employees currently defined in the manual as Part-Time Without Benefits. This benefit would provide up to 60 hours of Sick and Personal Leave per fiscal year on a prorated “hours worked” basis to part time employees who work an average of 10 hours per week year round. I further move that the Personnel Board ask HR staff to develop appropriate policy language for implementation with the guidance that:**

- 1. it is the Board’s recommendation to enact a change to the Personnel Procedures Manual effective 7/1/15; If enacted;**
- 2. an annual allocation of sick and personal leave benefit will be made to eligible employees, based on total hours worked in the prior fiscal year each July 1 and is available for use thereafter;**
- 3. a maximum of 20 hours per fiscal year may be used for Personal Leave.**
- 4. carry over of accrued hours may occur to a maximum of 120 hours and two years.**
- 5. there will be no payout of accrued but unused hours at end of employment.**
- 6. the definition of Part Time ~~Without Benefits~~ will be revised.”**

The motion was seconded by Ms. Woodland, and passed by a vote of 4 in favor to 1 opposed.

Ms. Kruger stated that she understood that the proposal needs wordsmithing, but it gives a sense to the Select Board of where the Personnel Board is headed on this issue. She said that she and the Town Manager would provide an update at the Board’s first January meeting. It is the goal of the Personnel Board to consider formal language changes at its January meeting, after staff has drafted the language and communicated with department heads.

3. New Hires and Exits Report.

There were two exits and two new hires since the November meeting. The exits were a retirement and an employee starting a business.

Next Meeting scheduled for Wednesday January 21, 2015.

Meeting adjourned at 10:40am.

**Town of Amherst Personnel Board - Summary of Options and Cost Estimate for adding a Sick Leave or Sick and Personal leave benefit for currently unbenefited part time employees.**

Cost of a new 60 hour Flexible Sick & Personal Leave for year round part time employees working average of 10 hours/week	\$26,915
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**Assumptions:**

- Requires a written policy change to the Town of Amherst Personnel Procedures Manual.
- Eligibility: All municipal employees working average of 10 hours per week year round. These are the committed, regular part time employees who devote significant time to town service, but currently receive no benefits. As the only town regionally to provide such a benefit to part time non-union personnel, Amherst would truly be the Employer of Choice for regular part time employment. There are currently 25 eligible employees town wide based on calendar 2014 projected hours.
- They can accrue up to 60 hours of sick or personal leave annually based on total hours worked. A 18.75 hour/week employee will receive 60 hours of Flexible Sick and Personal leave (3 weeks) per fiscal year. This is a more generous and flexible benefit than the earned sick time leave provided by Ballot Question 4.
- Propose to be effective 7/1/15.
- Employees would receive an annual allocation of hours based on total hours worked in prior completed fiscal year. Employees working in all of FY 14 would be immediately eligible to use accrued leave starting 7/1/15.
- Leave may be used for sick or personal use; with 20 hour cap on use of personal leave and a 2 year accrual cap of 120 hours total. No pay out at end of employment.
- Cost Assumptions: All municipal and library currently unbenefited employees with 520 hours worked and wages year round, based on total hours worked in 2014 and using projected 2016 wage rates. Some workers would need to be replaced to maintain program integrity. School employees would not be included. Cost is roughly \$1,000 per employee.

Cost of Adoption of Question 4: for Town of Amherst Employees; undetermined for Amherst Elementary employees.	\$33,278
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**Assumptions:**

- Requires adoption or approval of funding by Amherst Town Meeting.
- Eligibility: All municipal and elementary school hourly workers after 90 days of hire, no matter how sporadically or frequently they work. Currently 156 town/library employees appear to be eligible- all of the above plus youth sports referees, elections workers, call fire fighters; School eligibility and cost estimate TBD, but may apply to subs, tutors, crossing guards, coaches.
- Effective 7/1/15. Accruals start on that date, one hour sick leave earned for every 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours/year; May only be used after 90 days of employment, and only for sick leave. One year of accrued leave may be carried over to subsequent year. No pay out at end of employment.
- Cost Assumptions: All municipal and library currently unbenefited employees with wages in more than one calendar quarter, based on total hours worked in FY 14 and using projected 2016 wage rates.
- Includes replacement cost of Parking Enforcement, Police Library and LSSE workers only. (\$20,532 without replacement).