



Town Of Walpole

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PERSONNEL BOARD

Albert DeNapoli, Chair
Phil Hinds
Joseph Moraski
Ann Ragosta
John Sheppard

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MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 17, 2015

A meeting of the Personnel Board was held on Tuesday, November 17, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in Room #116 of the Town Hall. The following members were present:

Albert DeNapoli, Chair
John Sheppard
Phil Hinds
Joseph Moraski
Ann Ragosta

Also: Thomas Gregory, Asst. Town Administrator
Valorie Donohue, Human Resource Administrator

MINUTES:

Motion was made by Mr. Moraski and seconded by Ms. Ragosta that:

The Minutes of October 13, 2015 be approved.

Motion was voted 3-0-2 (Mr. DeNapoli and Mr. Hinds both abstained due to not being present at that meeting)

Motion was made by Mr. Moraski and seconded by Mr. Sheppard that:

The Minutes of November 3, 2015 be approved with noted changes.

Motion was vote 4-0-1 (Mr. Hinds abstained due to not being present at that meeting)

FY2017 BUDGET REQUEST:

Motion was made by Mr. Hinds and seconded by Mr. Moraski that:

Recommendation for the FY2017 Personnel Board budget is level funded.

Motion was voted 5-0-0, unanimous.

DOCUMENT SUBMITTED BY MR. MORASKI:

Mr. Moraski would like to have his seven page rebuttal sent to Labor Counsel. After receiving the memo from the Town Administrator pertaining to the Wage and Salary Study and COLA discussion, he is confused as to the duties and responsibilities of the Personnel Board. The opinion of Town Counsel is that the Town Charter trumps the Personnel By-laws. The wording in the Town Charter and the Personnel By-laws are conflicting. He stated that the members need to know what is the Personnel Board's authority and responsibility, send his written rebuttal to Town Counsel for interpretation. Town Administrators prior to Michael Boynton had past history, both Michael Boynton and Jim Johnson does not.

Ms. Ragosta stated that she also has questions to ask of Town Counsel, their previous response made no sense to her. Why does the Personnel Board sign the Personnel Action Forms if the Town Administrator has the authority, we need an objective interpretation of the wording in both the Charter and By-laws.

Mr. DeNapoli stated that the Town Administrator does the day to day duties, ultimate authority.

Ms. Ragosta states that she doesn't feel comfortable with the memo from Jim.

Mr. DeNapoli stated that there is a need to clarify the big issue, invite Town Counsel to go over with the Board members.

Mr. Johnson stated that it would be Labor Counsel; he had three attorneys come to the same decision. He stated that he would send the document to Town Counsel and/or Labor Counsel. He further stated that he needs the Personnel Board to vote on the COLA for the budget process.

Mr. Moraski stated that the funding for the COLA should be under a Personnel Board Article not in the budget.

Mr. Johnson stated that the current system has been in place since 2000 and it has been working fine. He is concerned that the non-union employees will unionize.

Mr. Moraski is concerned that they receive the Personnel Action Request forms after the fact; he wants to receive the forms before the effective date of the action.

Mr. Hinds request that we schedule a meeting at a future date to discuss all these issues and get on with what needs to be done tonight. We are having 3 different conversations going on here at one time. A decision needs to be made for the budget.

Motion was made by Mr. Sheppard and seconded by Mr. Hinds that:

The Board will table this discussion to a future meeting and keep the current process for this fiscal year.

Discussion –

Ms. Ragosta stated that the only thing she has say on tabling the discussion is why would it delay the budget process, where is the downside to put the funding in an article?

Mr. DeNapoli stated that to change budget process needs to be an article.

Mr. Moraski stated that we are asking for \$88,970 to sprinkle in the budget, defray certain salary expenses. Money should come out of the Personnel Board article.

Motion was voted 4-0-1 (Mr. Moraski abstained)

WAGE & SALARY STUDY & COLA DISCUSSION MEMO:

Mr. Johnson's memo mentions the survey results, the Finance Director position should be reviewed and to have the Board explore the possibility of compensating this position at a level closer to what other towns in Boston Metropolitan area are compensating this position. The memo also mentions that the Consultant is recommending that the Salary schedule should be reduced to 12 or fewer steps; COLA based on certain factors that include the Employment Cost Index, increases negotiated as part of the Town's union contracts and the Consumer Price Index. The impact would be on 93 of the 939 employee who work for the Town of Walpole which equates to 9.68% total funding \$88,971. He is recommending that the Board vote to 2% COLA Adjustment for FY2017 which would be a fair and equitable pay level for those employees who are covered on the wage schedule. He also included, with his memo, the COLA from the Employment Cost Index, Consumer Price Index, and Walpole's historical increase for the period of FY2012 – 2017 and listing of 26 towns with their projected COLA increases for FY2017.

Ms. Ragosta stated that employees have benefited over the years with 2% COLA and 2% step giving them 4%, salary schedule is benefiting everyone.

Mr. Johnson stressed that the majority of the employees are at the top step, they will only be receiving the COLA. We are talking about 21 employees that are in the steps. He further stated that the Board could decrease the % between steps from 2% to 1%; however it would be a long process. He assures the Board members that we will work on reviewing and revising the schedule for fiscal year 2018. We will work on this over the next 12 to 15 months.

Mr. Gregory stated that by eliminating or decreasing the % between steps would have the employees being paid less than what is marketable.

Mr. Ragosta stated that Walpole is competitive, no problem in attracting people for positions.

Mr. Moraski stated that he does not have a problem with most of the schedule, to reduce the steps in the salary scale, pay for performance, eliminate use of COLA and CPI, emphasize pay based on performance; we need to look at the Town of Danvers' pay system. He does not like the step system, management paid to meet objective determined by the Board of Selectmen, rewarded by meeting performance. He would like to see the performance evaluation form when he receiving the personnel action forms reflecting a step increase. He is not arguing Mark Morse's (Consultant) findings but the policies and procedures. He also wants to keep the Town Administrator position on the schedule as stated in Article 2 of the Personnel By-laws, not eliminate as suggested by the consultant.

Motion was made by Mr. Hinds and seconded by Mr. Sheppard that:

The Board recommends a "General Increase" of 2% for FY2017 salary schedule.

Motion was voted 4-1-0, Ms. Ragosta voted no

Motion was made by Ms. Ragosta and seconded by Mr. Sheppard that:

The meeting to be adjourned – time 9:00 p.m.

Motion was voted 5-0-0, unanimous.

Next scheduled meeting Tuesday, December 15 at 7:00 p.m.