



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 DECEMBER 15, 2015

A meeting of the Personnel Board was held on Tuesday, December 15, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in Room #116 of the Town Hall. Phil Hinds was unable to attend. The following members were present:

Albert DeNapoli, Chair
John Sheppard
Joseph Moraski
Ann Ragosta

Also: Thomas Gregory, Asst. Town Administrator
James Johnson, Town Administrator

7:15 Meeting called to order

MINUTES:

Motion was made by Mr. Moraski and seconded by Mr. Sheppard that:
The Minutes of November 17, 2015 be approved with noted correction.
Motion was voted 4-0-0

Motion was made by Mr. Moraski and seconded by Mr. Sheppard that:
The Minutes of December 3, 2015 be approved.
Motion was voted 4-0-0

TOWN CHARTER vs. PERSONNEL BY-LAWS:

Mr. Moraski and Ms Ragosta met with Town Administrator Jim Johnson certain aspects of the Personnel By-laws and Town Charter. Mr. Moraski stated that it is his belief that the Personnel Board is the screening committee to Town Meeting and its members oversee the plan. Mr. Moraski stated that he and Ms. Ragosta believe that the wording in the Town Charter and Personnel By-laws conflict with each other. They assert that the Personnel Board members are there to provide check and balance function as to the implementation of the Personnel By-laws. They are aware that Kevin Feeley, Labor Council will be coming to the January 12th meeting; Mr. Moraski feels that Ilana from Town Council should also come to the meeting since she is the one who wrote the opinion about the purported conflict which they believe exists.. Mr. Johnson stated that Kevin lives nearby and that he is the one who provided the opinion to Ilana. Ms. Ragosta stated that the Charter contained wording pertaining to the Compensation & Classification Plan which covers both the Personnel By-laws and the salary schedule and that Counsel's interpretation pertained to the salary schedule only. Both Mr. Moraski and Ms. Ragosta feel that there should be a Charter change to clarify what the plan is referring to. It was discussed that the Personnel Board unanimously adhered to the wording in the Personnel By-laws in the situation of the rate of pay for both the

Deputy Police Chief and Lieutenant. Mr. DeNapoli acknowledged that the Police Chief stated that the Deputy pay should be more than that of the Lieutenant under him. Mr. Moraski stated that the Lieutenant has been in this position for 25 years; he is at the top step of range, the Deputy would gain with experience. Mr. Moraski said that he is not interested in revisiting the salary that was approved for both the Deputy and Lieutenant; but he wants to correct the wording in this situation going forward. In addition to doing a revision to the Town Charter there should also be a revision of the Personnel By-laws.

Mr. Moraski stated he is not an advocate of the step system. He stated that the Consultant mentioned that some towns do not have steps in their salary schedule and that the Consultant had recommended that the 3 bottom steps of Walpole's salary schedule could be eliminated. Mr. Moraski stated that when he was on the Personnel Board back in the late 70's the salary schedule was min/mid/max. Merit increases were based on performance. The Personnel Board members did the salary surveys.

Ms. Lawson a Finance Committee member stated she has listened to the discussion this evening and that the way she understands it that there are three things to consider:

1. Need to discuss with Town Counsel who makes decision
2. Do you want to have Deputy paid less than the Lieutenant? Who decides – the Board of Selectmen or Personnel Board?
3. Once you figure out who is the deciding body; does that Board have flexibility?

Ms Ragosta stated that she feels that Walpole has a good employee staff here; employees seem happy to work here; they stay a long time and there is longevity.

Mr. Moraski agreed that back in the 70's it was difficult to work with the merit system. Now there are more professional managers and staff. Walpole went from elected Treasurer/Collector to Finance Director; he is concerned that the step system doesn't give a chance to reward employees. He stated that under the step system if you receive a rating of outstanding to satisfactory performance you receive the same increase, there is no mechanism to do anything differently. He feels that the Danvers model works, which basically states that if you don't meet the objective you don't get a raise.

Ms. Donohue informed the members that she had contacted the HR Director in Danvers to inquire about their system in salary increases. The HR Director emailed Danvers model to her; she will forward the email to the board members.

Ms. Lawson inquired as to how the Danvers's model solves the problem. She feels that the employee's that make high salary are based on longevity with the town.

Mr. Moraski stated that the MMA survey shows Walpole's salary range is dead center. He supported the 2% adjustment that will be recommended to Town Meeting. He does not want to see Walpole lose being in the middle of the average. These are key management positions and the employees understand pay is based on performance. The schedule contains both management and non management positions. Mr. Moraski believes that if you remove the managers to min/mid max and keep the non managers in the steps; it would be possible if someone received an outstanding performance evaluation they could recommend more than a 2% raise. The staff consists of dedicated public employee and a revision needs to be made to also provide for flexibility.

Mr. Snuffer stated that if the issue to Town Counsel/Labor Counsel who will be coming in on January 12th, will need to clarify who reports to whom, he wants to be at meeting. He also stated that some positions are under contract, and feels that if there were more individual contracts will retain quality people.

Mr. Moraski is not in favor of individual contracts.

Mr. Gregory stated that he is concerned with no steps and pure merit performance system. The public sector knows everyone else's salary. The survey showed that Walpole's maximum pay is in middle of the range and if the schedule is revised to provide that any increase is based solely on performance, people will leave Walpole's employment.

Mr. Moraski stated that this type of system will be for upper level manager such as the Police Chief, Fire Chief, DPW Director and Assistant Town Administrator.

Ms Ragosta feels that there should be five steps after 5 years you reach top step. She advocates for a tighter range of steps 1 – 5.

TOWN REPORT:

Ms. Donohue will draft Town Report for Personnel Board for next meeting.

PERSONNEL ACTION REQUESTS – All were approved.

Motion made by Mr. Sheppard and seconded by Ms. Ragosta

Meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Motion was voted 4-0, unanimous.