

September 24, 2020

Personnel Committee Meeting

September 24, 2020, 6:00pm

Remote Meeting – Go to Meeting

Members Present:

Joan Chamberland
Reed Hillman
Joni Light
Mary Blanchard
Sarah Terwilliger
Alice Bieszcak, GovHR

AMENDED

Staff Present:

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator

Mr. Bridges read the following statement: *Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting law, G.L. c. 30A Section 18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Sturbridge Personnel Committee will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation can be found on the Town's website at <https://www.sturbridge.gov/town-administrator/pages/how-access-virtual-meeting>. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen and or watch the meeting either online via the Town's on demand video broadcast, on cable television on channel 191, or dial into the meeting at 774-304-1455, enter 1428# for the meeting number and 12345 for the access code. (This phone number is only active for the public during public meetings). No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the Town's website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of the proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

Chair Chamberland called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Motion: To approve the minutes of December 11, 2019 as written.

By: Mary Blanchard

2nd: Reed Hillman

Roll Call Vote: Joan Chamberland: YES, Reed Hillman: YES, Joni Light: ABSTAINED, Mary Blanchard: YES, Sarah Terwilliger: NO VOTE

Vote: 3-0 (Joni Light abstained, no vote from Sarah Terwilliger)

Motion: To approve the minutes of March 5, 2020, as amended.

By: Mary Blanchard

2nd: Reed Hillman

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Continue Review of Classification and Compensation Study

Chair Chamberland asked the committee if they had any questions on the classification manual that was discussed at the last meeting. Ms. Light thought that the new manual was well written and was pleasantly surprised with the level of detail in it. She also said when people come before the committee to change their descriptions, there is a clear process in place which is good especially when there are no Human Resource Professionals or Legal Specialists. Alice Bieszcak, GovHR said they will receive the manual that will help during updating processes or assessing new positions and they are available by phone for questions. Ms. Blanchard asked about the Administrative Assistant to the Police Department, saying that it says "Executive Assistant", but there is no title for the Administrative Assistant to the Fire Chief. Ms. Bieszcak said the Administrative Assistant to the Fire Chief is recommended to remain the same title and that the remaining Administrative Assistants that are recommended for Grade 3 are suggested to keep the same title including the one in the Fire Department.

Ms. Light asked when this will be implemented. Mr. Bridges said employees have asked when the product will be available and when changes will be implemented and said that this should be discussed and that the outcome of this study could be the base for the next budget. Ms. Light asked when to make it retroactive and agreed that this should be done sooner rather than later. Mr. Bridges said since it is still early in the fiscal year, the town could do it quickly from a retrospective point of view. Mr. Bridges stated that there are two different elements to this which is the compensation plan and the classification schedule and the classification process. Mr. Bridges said the manual asks how the town will go about dealing with the recommended classification and the study asks what has to be done now and said that he wants to get the employees and the Finance Committee the information by giving it to the Board of Selectmen for adoption to make necessary changes and the sooner the better. Ms. Light asked if it was a lump sum and if going forward, the incremental increase would be included and Mr. Bridges confirmed. Ms. Blanchard asked if the money has been appropriated at the last town meeting and Mr. Bridges said at the town meeting, the budget says for future salary increases, money was put aside to deal with any potential settlement of the police contract and any changes to the compensation study.

Motion: To accept the manual and Classification and Compensation Manual as written.

By: Joni Light

2nd: Mary Blanchard

Roll Call Vote: Joan Chamberland: YES, Reed Hillman: YES, Joni Light: YES, Mary Blanchard: YES, Sarah Terwilliger: YES

Vote: 5-0

Ms. Light asked Mr. Bridges if he and the Finance Director would put together the financials and if the Personnel Committee will come together to take a vote on the salary piece of it. Mr. Bridges said the committee has accepted the document with the recommended changes and his next step is meeting with the Finance Committee to tell them the financial impact of it which includes him and the Finance Director putting together an impact statement for the committee to review. Mr. Bridges said part of the process was moving away from the step and grades of the

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Department heads back to a merit pool increase each year. Per Mr. Bridges, the merit going forward would be included in the base for the Department heads. Ms. Bieszcak agreed and said there will be an open range and she recommends a cost of living increase each year to keep up with the market, checking in with towns, and then adding based on merit, an increase to the salary for the Department heads based on their performance review to their base. Per Mr. Bridges, the non-union employees would still be on a step and grade system rate so they would get a C.O.L.A. and then they would move up a step through the range.

Mr. Bridges said his next step is to visit with the Finance Committee and tell them how the new system works, get the information out to the employees, and start looking at implementation. He said they will collect questions from the employees and that the committee should be prepared to answers those. Mr. Bridges said one of the elements of the plan was to provide separation on the Administrative Assistant side with different levels of sophistication on their duties.

Mr. Bridges said that there are some job descriptions that need some tweaking and some that have title changes, which the Personnel Committee will have to adopt. Per Mr. Bridges, there will be a series of administrative acts to implement this and bring it to the Board of Selectmen in addition to any salary adjustments that are necessary and this will be worked on in this next few months.

Mr. Bridges stated that the next steps are meeting with the Finance Committee, sending the information out to the employees for comments and questions, and then send it to the Board of Selectmen for adoption.

Other Business

Chair Chamberland adjourned the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

Motion: Motion to adjourn.

By: Mary Blanchard

2nd: Reed Hillman

Roll Call Vote: Joan Chamberland: YES, Reed Hillman: YES, Joni Light: YES, Mary Blanchard: YES, Sarah Terwilliger: YES

Vote: 5-0

Minutes prepared by: Alex McConnon

Signed: _____

Date approved: 12/28/2020