

December 28, 2020

## Personnel Committee Meeting

December 28, 2020

6:00 p.m.

Remote Meeting – Go to Meeting

### **Members Present:**

Reed Hillman  
Joni Light  
Mary Blanchard  
Sarah Terwilliger

### **Absent:**

Chair Joan Chamberland

### **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.

Mr. Bridges called the meeting to order at 5:52 p.m.

**Motion: To approve the minutes of August 20, 2020 as amended.**

**By: Reed Hillman**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Joni Light**

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

**Vote: 2-0 (Chair Chamberland absent, Ms. Blanchard and Ms. Terwilliger abstained)**

**Motion: To approve the minutes of September 24, 2020 as amended.**

**By: Reed Hillman**

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**2<sup>nd</sup>: Ms. Blanchard**

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

**Vote: 4-0 (Chair Chamberland absent)**

#### **Consideration of Deputy Chief's Position for the Sturbridge Fire Department**

Chief Grasso, Fire Chief, reported that with the vacancy left by the retirement of Mary Lou Volpe, he proposes to reallocate those funds to the position of Deputy Chief/Fire Inspector for the Town of Sturbridge. Per Chief Grasso, this position would be responsible for overseeing and assigning the inspections and overseeing the Fire/EMS training. Chief Grasso plans to reorganize the department and proposed a \$90,000 salary for the Deputy Chief position.

**Motion: To spend more time reviewing the documents for this request and to revisit at a later meeting.**

**By: Reed Hillman**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Ms. Blanchard**

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

**Vote: 4-0 (Chair Chamberland absent)**

#### **Consideration of Food Service Coordinator Position for the Council on Aging**

Leslie Wong, Council on Aging Director, said this is new a position funded through their federal grant which is a yearly grant that is issued based on the number of seniors in town. Ms. Wong requested this new position saying it would be 10 hours a week overseeing the food service. Per Ms. Wong, this position would be grant funded through the Elder Care Grant and oversee the food services provided at the Senior Center.

**Motion: To approve the position with the accompanying the job description.**

**By: Reed Hillman**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Ms. Blanchard**

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

**Vote: 4-0 (Chair Chamberland absent)**

#### **Continue Review of Classification and Compensation Study**

Mr. Bridges reported that there has been a couple of changes to the study, a request for a title change of "Finance Administrative Assistant" to "Finance Clerk", and the "70<sup>th</sup> Percentile Adjusted for 2020 COLA" recommendation. Mr. Bridges stated that he would like to go to the 70<sup>th</sup> Percentile because there is not a big difference from the 60<sup>th</sup> Percentile in terms of implementation but it does provide a greater range for the employees (including the hourly employees) to move up to a salary scale. Mr. Bridges also expressed concern with the Department Heads salary structure.

Ms. Blanchard was concerned with the Recreation Director and Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator's salaries, saying they are large sums. Mr. Bridges said that a difference

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with those is the number of hours and whether or not they are hourly or salary. Per Mr. Bridges, the scale also depends on whether or not an employee has night meetings, weekend activities, and other factors that cause them to work longer than 35 hours a week.

Ms. Blanchard asked about the employee's hours and Mr. Bridges said for hourly employees, it is their rate per hour saying that it is a difference between the current hourly rate and the new hourly rate and multiply that by the amount of hours that the town asks the employee to work, which is where the adjustment comes from.

Ms. Light asked if the Economic Development position is staying an hourly position or going to salary and Mr. Bridges confirmed salary saying that because of the amount of events and other activities, their schedule would tend to that instead of having to adjust their schedule.

Ms. Light asked why the Board of Selectmen vote on salary increases needs to be retroactive by July 1, 2021 instead of immediately. Ms. Light said she does not think that it should go back to the beginning of the year and that going forward next year, their salaries could increase appropriately. Per Ms. Light, with the majority of the year over and only a few months left of the fiscal year, it should be pro-rated because the year is almost over.

Mr. Hillman asked if the 70 Percentile numbers that Mr. Bridges presented were the consultant's numbers and Mr. Bridges confirmed. Mr. Hillman also asked if the committee recommends approval of the 70 Percentile with the positions and if it will drive expectations amongst other employees for their own status. Mr. Bridges confirmed that he will probably get questions and requests from other employees but it is part of the process.

**Motion: Movement of approval of the revised compensation plan at the 70 Percentile range with the Recreation Director and Tourism Coordinator positions amended to reflect 37.5 hours effective the first of the calendar year or approval of the Board of Selectmen, whichever comes first.**

**By: Reed Hillman**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Mary Blanchard**

Ms. Light asked that the motion also include her question of when this becomes retroactive and how much of that money will be paid to them as of that date. She also requested that the date could be brought to the Board of Selectmen at an upcoming meeting.

**Motion: Movement of approval of the revised compensation plan at a 70 Percentile range with the Recreation Director and Tourism Coordinator positions amended to reflect 37.5 hours effective approval of the Board of Selectmen.**

**By: Reed Hillman**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Mary Blanchard**

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

**Vote: 4-0 (Chair Chamberland absent)**

Mr. Bridges stated that the next topic was for the Executive Employees, Department Heads, and Supervisors who are generally on salary and right now are on a step and grade plan which is the same as the traditional hourly employees. Per Mr. Bridges, there was concern from employees that they were not moving through the salary range when someone new was hired to a position. Mr. Bridges explained that

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this plan was created so that employees would not fall behind their cohorts. Mr. Bridges showed the committee the Current Pay Plan for Exempt Employees and the New Pay Plan for Exempt Employees and explained the Cost of Living Increase (COLA), the Step Movement, and the Merit Increase and explained to the committee that the new plan has the COLA and Merit Increase in it. Mr. Bridges said the Department Heads will see less of an increase on their salary than they have seen in the past several years unless the Merit and the COLA are more substantial than they currently are.

Ms. Terwilliger asked about consistency in the public sector. Mr. Bridges said based upon the few adjustments that they have to make in the salary ranges for the department heads, he thinks the practice puts us in them in the market. Mr. Bridges stated that he is concerned about the Department Heads seeing less increases than they have in other years if this plan gets adopted by the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Hillman asked if Mr. Bridges checked this plan with the consultant and Mr. Bridges said that she formed it both ways and that he has a recommendation on which one to pursue. Mr. Bridges said if they are going to go with a salary range for the department heads, the COLA and the Merit get added to the base and that gets them through the salary range. Per Mr. Bridges, for the hourly employees, they get COLA and the step which moves them through the salary range.

Ms. Terwilliger asked about the Merit and Mr. Bridges explained that there is a Merit budgeted for each Department Head and that he can award up to that maximum per person. Ms. Blanchard asked about the lump sum double Merit, saying if the Board of Selectmen adopted the plan, the lump sum Merit would be gone and Mr. Bridges confirmed. Mr. Bridges explained how this could be done by adding that percent to the base for the rest of the year and prorating the employee a check for the first half of the year. Mr. Bridges explained the importance of a way for an employee to work through the salary range and Ms. Light agreed.

**Motion: To adopt the Classification and Compensation Study.**

**By: Reed Hillman**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Mary Blanchard**

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

**Vote: 4-0 (Chair Chamberland absent)**

### **Other Business**

NONE

**Motion: Motion to adjourn.**

**By: Mary Blanchard**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Reed Hillman**

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

**Vote: 3-1 (Chair Chamberland absent)**

Minutes prepared by: Alex McConnon

Signed: Joan H. Chamberland Date approved: 3-2-21