

Minutes Personnel Board Meeting Thursday, April 16, 2026 5:00pm

Present: Veronica Richter, Kathy Salvador, April Stein

Absent: Hayley Bolton, Ann Brigham, Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil

Quick recap

The Personnel Board meeting focused on discussing the COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) increase, which was set at 2.59% and scheduled to take effect July 1st with a Fall review planned. April raised concerns about the small increase given current inflation rates, but the group agreed to let it proceed as planned rather than making immediate changes. The Board then discussed plans to meet with town employees before the end of the fiscal year to gather input and review job descriptions and hours, with Kathy and Ann volunteering to serve on a subcommittee to conduct these reviews. The group also briefly discussed the upcoming town meeting where Veronica offered to deliver the personnel board report, and they noted the need to find and record minutes from a previous brief meeting with Brennan in March.

Next steps

- April: Ask Hayley about the date of her next regular staff meeting in May to explore the possibility of the board meeting with employees at that time. <https://tasks.zoom.us?meetingId=F2xfEptNTOasrC429Xvrtg%3D%3D&stepId=d36da271-39dc-11f1-8213-82c43442723b>
- Kathy: Draft minutes for the brief March meeting and check notes for the exact date; April to confirm date if found in personal notes. <https://tasks.zoom.us?meetingId=F2xfEptNTOasrC429Xvrtg%3D%3D&stepId=d36da61b-39dc-11f1-a4f7-82c43442723b>
- April: Write the personnel board report for town meeting, circulate to the committee for feedback, and coordinate with Veronica for presentation. <https://tasks.zoom.us?meetingId=F2xfEptNTOasrC429Xvrtg%3D%3D&stepId=d36da7e5-39dc-11f1-9032-82c43442723b>

- Veronica: Present the personnel board report at town meeting, using the draft provided by April. <https://tasks.zoom.us?meetingId=F2xfEptNTOasrC429Xvrtg%3D%3D&stepId=d36da970-39dc-11f1-bd89-82c43442723b>
- Ann and Kathy: Serve on the subcommittee to review employee job descriptions, hours, and wages after the full board meets with employees; report findings back to the full committee. <https://tasks.zoom.us?meetingId=F2xfEptNTOasrC429Xvrtg%3D%3D&stepId=d36daade-39dc-11f1-b3d4-82c43442723b>
- April (or relevant member): Schedule a full board meeting with town employees before the end of the fiscal year, aiming for May and avoiding member vacations. <https://tasks.zoom.us?meetingId=F2xfEptNTOasrC429Xvrtg%3D%3D&stepId=d36dac1f-39dc-11f1-bb9e-82c43442723b>
- April: Inform the committee if/when the date of the March meeting is found to assist Kathy with drafting minutes. <https://tasks.zoom.us?meetingId=F2xfEptNTOasrC429Xvrtg%3D%3D&stepId=d36dad65-39dc-11f1-99f4-82c43442723b>

Summary

COLA Adjustment Discussion Meeting

April expressed concern about the 2.59% COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) being too small and suggested considering an increase to 3%. She mentioned having a question out to AJ on the Finance Committee about voting to increase the possibility to 3%. The meeting appeared to be checking on quorum status before proceeding with a few agenda items.

COLA Adjustment Discussion Meeting

April raised concerns about rising grocery costs and discussed a potential COLA adjustment, citing a 0.9% increase in Massachusetts CPI to 3% and referencing a previously voted 2.59% COLA. The group agreed that while the financial impact would be minimal, they should maintain the current 2.59% rate for July 1 and review it again in the Fall with more comprehensive data. Veronica and Kathy supported the decision to avoid making immediate changes to avoid complications.

Board Meeting Updates Discussion

The group reviewed the meeting minutes from March 2nd, which Kathy had prepared, and the group approved them. April mentioned the need to determine a time for the board to meet with employees.

Town Employee Planning Meeting

The group discussed planning a meeting with town employees before the end of the fiscal year. They agreed to meet once before vacation periods in June and again in September to finalize their thoughts. The meeting would include department heads and approximately 15-20 employees, though they noted not everyone would be available due to other work commitments. They decided to potentially align their meeting with Hayley's regular staff meeting in May to avoid adding extra meetings for employees.

Town Government Changes Discussion

April announced her vacation plans from May 30th to June 13th, spending the first two weeks at Cape Cod. The conversation then shifted to reflecting on changes in town government over the years, with Veronica sharing her experience as town clerk from the late 1980s until she had children and cared for her husband's grandmother. April noted how the town's administrative structure has evolved, particularly in the last year with some tumultuous changes.

Employee Engagement and Board Updates

April, Kathy and Veronica discussed the benefits of engaging with employees and gathering their perspectives. April mentioned plans to step down from the board in June and highlighted the positive progress of the finance committee. They also touched on the board's potential for professional growth and making significant changes.

Town Employee Job Review Committee

The group discussed forming a subcommittee to review job descriptions and wages for town employees, with Kathy agreeing to join the subcommittee alongside Ann and Hayley. April noted that having a younger town administrator with fresh perspectives could help identify gaps in current processes. The subcommittee will review employee job descriptions and hours before returning to the full committee to discuss findings and potential wage adjustments.

Town Meeting Planning Discussion

April and Veronica discussed arrangements for the upcoming town meeting, with Veronica offering to deliver the personnel board report if April prefers not to. Kathy raised a question about whether to document a brief March meeting with Brennan, and the group noted they should review meeting records. April also mentioned that the Finance Committee has started meeting in person, suggesting this could be considered for future meetings while still allowing public access.

Town Revenue Generation Discussion

The meeting focused on discussing revenue challenges for the town, with April highlighting that property taxes are the only revenue source and mentioning a missed opportunity for a major solar project that could have generated half a million dollars annually. The group discussed potential uses for a state-owned building near Lake Wyola, including ideas for a cooperative, restaurant, conference center, or athletic facilities like pickleball courts. Kathy suggested the town could generate revenue by selling unused town properties, and the group agreed this was a good idea. The conversation ended with confirmation of the next meeting scheduled for the May 21st at 5 PM.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15pm

These minutes were prepared using the AI Companion.

Due to technical difficulties, there is no recording for this meeting.