

Town of Shutesbury
Personnel Board Meeting Minutes
20 March 2019

Present:

Personnel Board Members: Anna Aaron, Ralph Armstrong, Melissa Makepeace O'Neill, Becky Torres

Select Board: Elaine Puleo, April Stein, Melissa Makepeace O'Neill

Finance Committee: Eric Stocker, Jim Hemingway, Bob Groves, Louise Houle, Rita Farrell, George Arvanitis

Taking minutes of three-board meeting: Linda Avis-Scott

(Note: See Linda Avis-Scott minutes for full transcript.)

Guests: Michael deChiara, Leslie Bracebridge, Diane Jacoby, Stephen Schmidt

Personnel Board called to order at 7.20pm

Discussion of upcoming budget (see Linda Avis-Scott minutes for details of this and other discussions)

Pay Equity Initiative:

Michael deChiara reminded the Board of the following proposals made by him in 2018 to address the potential/ongoing inequity in pay rate between contract and non-contract town employees:

1. "That all town employees get the same annual increases, including those with contracts. This would need to be written into all the contracts that are negotiated. This may have started last year. This would go a long way to reducing the discrepancies that result from one person with strong persuasion skills or leverage getting a higher percent raise than someone without these advantages. This would then be a true and authentic discussion about town employees rather than what we have now which is town employees without any leverage on the one hand and those who benefit from negotiations on the other.
2. "I found this motion that I presented to the SB and Personnel Board regarding salary increases. I believe that this was adopted by both bodies, but the Board should check with Linda to make sure:

Suggested Motion re. Regular Review of Job Descriptions

The Select Board recognizes that Shutesbury Personnel Bylaw items 4.1.3 and 4.1.4 requires the Personnel Board to periodically review the duties and responsibilities of town positions (4.1.3) and propose a compensation plan for those positions (4.1.4)

In order to create consistency between town employees that have negotiated contracts with the town and those that do not, the Select Board requests that the Personnel Board conduct these positions and compensation reviews every three years for all non-contracted employees or sooner if deemed appropriate following a vacancy. The Select Board requests that as part of the review process the Personnel Board meet directly with the employee to best understand the scope of the position and to provide an opportunity for feedback regarding compensation levels.

The purpose of this recommendation is to maximize the accuracy of job descriptions and associated compensation. Additionally, the Select Board seeks to minimize the likely divergence in rates of compensation between contracted and non-contracted employees which might result in less frequent reviews." [Michael deChiara]

Becky Torres reports that the above initiatives are included in some current town employee contracts. The equity initiative is well received by all three boards. The Personnel Board will review this matter at its next meeting on 28 March, 2019

Wage Increase for Non-Contract Town Employees:

Discussion of percentage wage increase for non-contract town employees.

Suggested criteria to be applied to wage increase included:

Comparison with surrounding towns

Median household income

Percentage of taxpayers on fixed income

Tax increases, recent and projected

Inflation rate

Cost of living

A wage increase of 3% was approved in a vote by all three boards.

Assistant Town Clerk position:

The Finance Committee left the meeting. The proposed Assistant Town Clerk position was discussed. Anna Aaron referred to the Personnel Board meeting minutes of October 18, 2018 in which it is recorded that "The position of the Assistant Town Clerk would be for one year." In that meeting, the Personnel Board agreed that The Assistant Town Clerk could provide valuable continuity between the current and incoming Town Clerks. Discussion followed on whether the position could, however, be "ongoing." In light of this discussion, the Personnel Board will review the Assistant Town Clerk job description as amended on December 6, 2018. (check this date)

Board of Assessors Staffing:

Stephen Schmidt, Chair of the Board of Assessors, presented an impressive analysis of how the town would benefit from hiring an independent contractor to fill the position being vacated by Ken Holmberg. (See Schmidt letter to the Select Board, dated 3/20/2019.) After discussion, it was agreed that the town would both advertise the position and explore the independent contractor alternative.

Personnel Board meeting adjourned at 9.45pm.

Minutes submitted by Anna Aaron