



HUMAN RESOURCE BOARD Town of Chilmark

November 7, 2023 **APPROVED** MEETING MINUTES

Board Members Present: Jennie Greene - Chair, Bruce Golden, Don Leopold, Irene Ziebarth, Bob Rosenbaum and Alison Kisselgof – Administrator, Ben Retmier – Employee Representative and Jim Malkin – Select Board.

Tim Carroll, Diana Deblase, Marie Larsen, Adam Petkus (entered at 8:54 AM) and Ryan Rossi (entered at 9:24 AM) were also in attendance.

Meeting called to order at 8:30 AM via ZOOM remote platform, Meeting ID 825 1088 9107

COLA Discussion:

- Alison shared the COLA calculation for fiscal year 2025 (FY25) on screen. She explained that the calculation is a ratio of the Consumer Price Index for Northeast Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers over the last 12 months as compared the previous 12 months. The calculation for FY25 is 4.12%. Alison mentioned that Town COLA policy maximum is 3%.
- Bruce said that last year's COLA recommendation was 3% with a one-time stipend of 4% due to the unprecedented high inflation. Bruce made a motion to recommend a 3% COLA with a 1% one-time stipend for FY25. Irene seconded the motion.
- Jim recounted the history of the Town's COLA policy. He said that if the HRBC recommends a one-time stipend again this year, it would amount to abandoning the Town's policy. Jim suggested that the HRBC recommend the Town's policy be reviewed by the Select Board.
- Don agreed with Jim and recommended that the HRBC stay within the 1-3% COLA guidelines for FY25. He also proposed that there be a discussion on adjusting the Town's policy. Bruce withdrew his motion.
- Bob suggested that the upper range be eliminated and COLA be based on the CPI calculation.
- Ben said that he researched employee salaries and found that the majority of employees had reached their maximum step. If FY25 COLA is 3%, Ben offered that these employees will see a pay reduction. He also mentioned that health insurance prices are going up between 3-5%.
- After further discussion on the ramifications of following or abandoning the Town's COLA policy, a motion was made by Don to recommend a 3% COLA for FY25 to the Select Board. Irene seconded.
- Bruce and Ben both shared their concern that a 3% COLA would not be sufficient.
- Tim mentioned that the health insurance costs may go up by 10% but the actual increase would not be known until February.
- Don suggested asking the consultant for the Compensation & Classification study for guidance and information on how other municipalities have handled this issue. He amended his motion to recommend a 3% COLA and ask the Select Board to revisit the Town's COLA policy. Irene seconded the motion. A vote was taken on the amended motion. Vote: Jennie – aye, Bob – aye, Irene –aye, Don – aye, Bruce – aye = PASSED

Drug & Alcohol Policy Continued Discussion:

- Irene started by saying that she felt that the Town's rules and HRBC process had not been followed as of late, specifically in relation to the Drug & Alcohol Policy and the Compensation & Classification Study.
- Irene went on to say that perhaps the Town needed an HR professional rather than a board of volunteers, but at this time the Town's current laws and procedures regarding Human Resources are the rules set forth and should be adhered to.



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- Irene recounted the process for the drug & alcohol policy to date. She said that a red-lined version of the policy was expected from the Select Board but instead the HRBC received an entirely new policy.
- Irene offered that she, Bob & Bruce had spent a good amount of time in creating and revising the policy as instructed and felt ignored and disrespected by what had occurred. She said this why she had abstained from voting for the Select Board-written policy at the last meeting.
- Irene said that she and Bob finalized the policy that they had written. She went over some of the changes to their policy which incorporated the comments given at the public hearing and joint Select Board meeting.
- Irene also mentioned that the Compensation & Classification Study currently being set up was astray of the HRBC's procedures. She felt that a study did not need to be performed now since the directive in the procedures manual was that a study be done every 5 years and the HRBC did a study 2 years ago.
- Irene made a motion to send this new draft of the drug & alcohol policy to the Select Board. Bob seconded the motion.
- Bob mentioned that the attendance by two Select Board members at this meeting was a violation of open meeting law. Jim explained that the Attorney General had been consulted on this and had said that it was not a violation as long as Marie did not participate in any deliberation. Marie & Tim also elaborated on their understanding of this issue.
- Tim offered that the HRBC bylaw does not require Select Board approval of a policy and therefore the drug & alcohol policy voted on at the last meeting was currently in place.
- Jim suggested that he sit down with a member of the HRBC and Alison to go over policies and procedures so that everybody is clear on HRBC's role in the Town. Some members felt that this had already been done.
- Don summarized what he thought were areas that needed clarity: HRBC vs. Select Board roles in policy making, when votes by the HRBC are decisions vs. recommendations and which body is the deciding factor when questions that arise. Don supported Jim's suggestion of a meeting to clarify HRBC's role.
- Marie apologized for overstepping her Select Board role by writing the drug & alcohol policy, rather than giving suggestion for edits. She said that it was not her intention to devalue the HRBC's work but that she was responding to employees' comments and concerns. Marie added that she was still learning her role as a Select Board member.
- Bob made a motion to withdraw the motion he made at the last meeting to accept the drug & alcohol policy version written by Marie. Don seconded the motion. Vote: Jennie – aye, Bob – aye, Irene –aye, Don – aye, Bruce – aye = PASSED
- Don asked Tim for clarity on whether the HRBC would be a decision-making body in the case of the drug & alcohol policy. Tim answered that it was his understanding that the HRBC would be the decision-making body in this case. Alison shared the HRBC bylaw on screen at Jim's request and members reviewed it.
- Jim suggested that legal counsel be consulted if there was still any question about the HRBC bylaw.
- Jennie said that it was unclear to her from reading the bylaw whether the HRBC is an advisory or decision-making board and would like to hear from legal counsel.
- There was a discussion on whether to vote on the newly written policy before or after talking to legal counsel. Irene made a motion to send the new drug & alcohol policy to legal counsel. Bruce seconded.
 - Jim offered to meet with an HRBC member to go over questions about the newly written policy before sending it to legal counsel. Irene said that she would do so.
- There was a discussion about alcohol at the community center and other town-owned properties.



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- Tim pointed out that the Town already had a policy about the operation of town-owned properties. He recounted that at the HRBC had made a recommendation to the Select Board to require insurance for public community center events with alcohol, which was adopted, but that the HRBC has no jurisdiction over operations of town-owned facilities.
- Jim and Don agreed with Tim – the HRBC is making policy for staff, not facilities.
- Tim said that off-duty employees should be able to attend events with alcohol. It was agreed that the main point of the policy was that alcohol should not be consumed by employees, even off-duty, if they are wearing a Town uniform, driving a Town vehicle/vessel or working in the Town's capacity.

Exit Interview Discussion:

- Irene had asked this topic to be added to the agenda to get some clarity on which type of employees should sit down for an exit interview. She wasn't sure if part-time and contract employees should do so. Specifically, there was a question as to whether Billy Dillon should do an exit interview since he was a temporary, part-time employee.
- Tim did not think that Billy needed an exit interview but one could be done if Irene wanted to talk to him.
- Irene asked the other HRBC members if they thought an exit interview with Billy would be valuable.
- Don felt that the decision was Tim's. Tim said that he would be fine with whatever Irene decided but wanted to make clear that a precedent would be set. Tim offered that interviewing Lenny Jason would be more important since he had worked for the town for many years.
- Jim offered that exit interviews were conducted to learn ways to improve Town operations. He didn't feel that interviewing part-time or seasonal employees would yield useful information.
- Irene concluded that Billy did not require an exit interview. She then asked where she should be sending her completed exit interviews.
- Jim answered that exit interview should be directed to the Select Board and the Town Administrator.
- Don wondered if there were any confidentiality issues with exit interviews. Tim said that exit interviews were HR personnel records which were confidential but pointed out that the information would be useless if confidential to the supervisor and appointing authority.
- Don said that he concern was whether former employees that were already interviewed were told the information would be kept confidential.
- Bob suggested that exit interviews be summarized anonymously at regular intervals, potentially quarterly.
- Tim offered that this was a good question for a consultant and that other policies be reviewed. He felt that the information from exit interviews should be looked at immediately to address any ongoing issues that came up. He also said that there's only been about one interview a quarter in the past year.
- Bob pointed out that employees may be moving to positions in other towns and that they may not want comments given in exit interviews to become public. Irene confirmed that this was actually the case for at least one employee who was interviewed.
- Jennie said that an employee could be leaving due to issues with their supervisor and this information needs to be known by the Select Board. She felt it should be up to the Select Board what information is shared with the supervisor or anybody else.
- Dilly made a suggestion that there be an exit interview policy with specifics about confidentiality and that this information be made clear to the employee being interviewed going forward.



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- There was still some question about who exit interviews should be sent to. Jennie said that the exit interviews should be sent just to the Select Board, since the Town Administrator oversees a lot of people.
- There were suggestions of having town counsel and/or the Compensation & Classification consultant review the policy and also looking at how other towns handle exit interviews.
- Tim mentioned that he has been waiting for months for the exit interview of the former accountant. He offered that the information would be helpful in managing the new accountant. Tim added that exit interview information would be valuable to the current treasurer as well. He felt that the information from interviews needed to be processed in a more timely way so that new employees can benefit from them.
- Jim said that exit interviews would be reviewed by the Select Board outside of public meeting, who will decide what information should be redacted and what would be useful to the supervisor.

Compensation & Classification Study Update:

- Dilly gave an update on the progress of the Compensation & Classification Study working committee.
- Three proposals were received in response to the Request for Quotes (RFQ) – one of which was disqualified for lack of experience. The other 2 proposals were found to be very equivalent when evaluated without cost. When costs were looked at, both proposals were higher than the amount in the warrant article but one was lower than the other.
- Dilly said that references were called and the Select Board moved to enter into negotiations with the Collins Center, who was the lower of the 2 quotes. The consultant is in the process of defining the scope of work.
- Dilly mentioned that the HRBC could help with the process by making sure that all job descriptions are accurate and up-to-date.
- Dilly mentioned that there is a possibility that a contract would be available for the Select Board to vote on at the Select Board meeting that evening.

Approval of Draft Minutes:

- Bruce made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and Irene seconded.
- There was a brief conversation about whether the minutes should be more general. It was mentioned that open meeting law changes in the last few years called for more detail and that recordings are not required to be retained once minutes are approved.
- The consensus was that more detail was better, especially if any legal matters arise. Vote: Jennie – aye, Bob – aye, Irene – aye, Bruce – aye = PASSED (Don's vote was not heard due to connection issues.)

Unanticipated Topics: None

Documents:

- Fiscal Year 2025 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) Calculation
- Alcohol & Drug Policy, new version by Irene Ziebarth & Bob Rosenbaum, November 2023
- Draft minutes from 10/12/23

Meeting adjourned at 9:52 AM

Next Possible Meeting: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 8:30 AM

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Alison Kisselgof, Board Administrator