



HUMAN RESOURCE BOARD

Town of Chilmark

NOVEMBER 3, 2022 **APPROVED** MEETING MINUTES

Present: Bruce Golden, Jennie Greene - Chair, Irene Ziebarth, Don Leopold, Jim Malkin.

Staff: Alison Kisselgof – Administrator, Tim Carroll – Town Administrator, Ellen Biskis – Accountant, Jessica Bradley – Tax Collector, Dawn Barnes – Treasurer, Ebba Hierta – Library Director, Jonathan Klaren – Police Chief, Jennifer Christy – Town Clerk.

Meeting called to order at 8:33 AM via ZOOM remote platform, Meeting ID 832 3738 9943

FY2024 COLA Discussion:

- Jennie mentioned that inflation this year has been so high that there is a question on whether Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 COLA should follow the current policy, which states COLA increases should be between 1-3%.
- Don said that COLA is a fixed cost to the town forever and wondered if there was another way to be fair to the employees but fiscally responsible for the town.
- Jim offered that the COLA policy was instituted because one year the COLA was less than 1% but the costs on island were increasing. In an effort to balance the minimum of 1%, a cap of 3% was agreed upon.
- Dawn said that the Board should take into consideration that a large number of employees are at the top grade and step. COLA would be their only increase in pay.
- Ebba said that she agrees with Don's concern about COLA being permanently part of the town's budget but offered that the cost of living does not go down either. She added that the potential labor pool is mostly down island and she's been told by job applicants that the cost of gas due to inflation is prohibitive.
- Dawn said that she looked over historic COLA increases and a 3% increase was only used twice since the current policy was put in place, so the policy made sense up until now. However, this year's calculation is over 7%, which is more than double the cap of 3%.
- Jen asked if there is any information about what other island towns are going to do. No data was available at the time of this meeting to share. She also agreed the points raised by Dawn and Ebba.
- Don offered concern that COLA was being used to offset salaries which are too low and felt this issue should be addressed outside of COLA.
- Don wondered if a combination of COLA and one-time bonus could be given and asked Dawn if this was possible. Dawn suggested looking at other town pay structures and possibly change the pay steps instead. She mentioned that this suggestion stems from the fact that recent employees have been hired at step 3.
- Don offered that there are two different items that need to be addressed: analysis and possible adjustment of the pay scale and COLA for fiscal year 2024. His recommendation would be to give an inflation adjustment in addition to a COLA increase.
- Bruce liked the idea of an inflation adjustment and offered that a COLA higher than 3% could also be considered.
- Tim agreed that COLA should not be used to address base pay issues. He mentioned that a one-time bonus may leave employees with less in their paycheck the following year.
- Jennifer asked if there were tax implications with a one-time bonus. It was unclear if there were but Jennie offered that perhaps the one-time bonus could be given over time to avoid taxation of a larger sum.
- Tim said that the bonus could be split over the year but that an anti-spiking provision would prevent the increase from being included in retirement fund calculations.

- Jim suggested that the recommendation to the Select Board should stay focused on addressing the issue of hyper-inflation currently faced. He agreed the one-time stipend could be paid throughout the year.
- Don would like to look at the budgetary implications before deciding FY2024 COLA. Ellen offered to provide budget numbers if she was given scenarios to calculate.
- The Board decided to get budget calculations for the following scenarios: 3% COLA + 4% one-time inflation adjustment, 7% COLA, and 5% COLA + 2% one-time inflation adjustment.
- The Board will meet again next week to finish the discussion regarding COLA, after getting Ellen's projections.
- Dawn said that she would talk to the retirement board to see if splitting the one-time stipend into monthly installments would avoid the anti-spiking provision.

Library Director Request – Re-evaluation of Circulation Assistant Position:

- Ebba said that the wage scale for the circulation staff is significantly below the rest of the island, which is making it difficult for her to fill positions. After six week of advertisements this spring, the library did not receive a single applicant and had to cut summer hours as a result.
- Ebba mentioned that she could hire at step three according to the by-law but that this rate isn't even high enough. She said that Edgartown Library had been hiring for the same position in the same timeframe at a rate of almost \$4 an hour higher.
- Ebba said that the library board is requesting that a comprehensive analysis of rate scale be performed. In the meantime, she is requesting to hire circulation assistants at step five, which would make the pay scale comparable to other towns. In addition, she felt that the current circulation staff's pay would need to be raised.
- Ebba mentioned that the library budget would support these increases without asking for more funds from the town because money was saved by reduced staff and hours over the summer.
- Alison offered that the FY 2022 compensation study supports what Ebba has said, that the library circulation assistants are paid less than the other towns.
- Bruce asked if there was a downside to starting an employee at step five – would it be unfair to others? Ebba answered that she did not think so. She offered that the circulation staff is being paid less than the janitor but the position has higher educational requirements and technical skills.
- Don said that this brings up procedure questions again and that the Board needs to improve the pay scale evaluation process to avoid future requests for increased starting wage. He supports Ebba's current request.
- Bruce made a motion to recommend to the Select Board to raise the starting circulation assistant salary to step five. Don seconded. _Vote = Jennie – aye, Bruce – aye, Don – aye, Irene – aye. PASSED
- Tim asked if the job listing would be re-advertised. Ebba said that she has a potential candidate and time is of the essence but she would re-advertise if it was required.
- Jim reiterated Don's comment that the process needs to be looked at so these pay scale increases aren't done on an ad hoc basis.
- Tim mentioned that the motion approved did not include raising the rate of the current employees.
- Ebba said that she had two current circulation employees – one employee is at a lower step than five and another who has been working for the library for five years is at step five. She didn't feel it was fair to bring in a new employee at step five and leave current employees at their current rates.
- Don said that changing the current employees' steps should be part of a more comprehensive review of the positions and declined to vote today on the topic.
- Irene offered that Ebba was entitled to request a review and that the Board should undertake a study. Others agreed with Irene that a review should be performed.

Exit Interview Process Continued:

- Don had requested that this topic be included on the agenda but, upon reflection, believes this topic should be included in an overall review of processes. He said that the topic did not need to be discussed at this meeting.
- Tim asked that any copies of exit interviews be sent to him. He specifically is looking for Melanie Becker's exit interview.

- Irene mentioned that she still needed to perform the exit interview for Tracey Cooney.

Janitorial Position Grade Discussion Follow-Up:

- Tim asked if the Board would review the janitor job position. He said that the town may need to hire additional janitorial staff or a contractor due to the addition of the fire house and EMS buildings, which are expected to add ~8 hours more work a week. The previous fire house did not have a janitorial staff. The current janitor cannot take on any additional hours.
- Tim would like to increase janitor position pay to be competitive in the job market.
- Irene said that she would review the janitor job description and report back the Board.

Open Position Update – Maintenance Supervisor of Buildings:

- Tim said that The Maintenance Supervisor of Buildings position has been advertised three times and received one applicant who later withdrew.
- Tim mentioned that there was one other interested party but this person made a counter offer involving re-organization of the job responsibilities and salary. Tim said that he and Bill Rossi would be reviewing the counter offer; if accepted, there would be a need to hire a part-time janitor.
- Tim offered that, at this time, a cleaning services is being used in all town buildings except the library and police station, which are covered by the janitor. He also said that town highway laborers have been covering gutter cleaning and similar tasks and Michael Hull is covering building maintenance.

Compensation Study Positions Omissions Follow-Up:

- Alison created a list of positions that were not included in the compensation study last year because they were part-time. She contacted other towns to get job descriptions and pay scales. A summary of compensation as compared to other towns was created and distributed.
- Alison went over the positions and how they compared to other towns. All positions' pay scales were comparable to the other towns except dog officer and highway employee. Alison recommended further review of dog officer and highway employee positions.
- There was a discussion about the dog officer position. Tim said that the Select Board had previously voted to change this position to Animal Control Officer as required by the state. This position needs to be updated in the town records.
- Tim offered that the highway department employees were originally seasonal but this wasn't the case in the past year. Tim said it would be helpful if someone from the Board could meet with him and the Superintendent of Streets Keith Emin to discuss a plan for the coming year.

Review and Approval of Draft Meeting Minutes:

- A motion to approve the 6/9/22 minutes as presented was made. The motion was seconded and passed by unanimous vote. Bruce abstained because he wasn't present at this meeting.
Vote = Jennie – aye, Irene – aye, Don – aye PASSED
- A motion to approve the 9/7/22 minutes as presented was made. The motion was seconded and passed by unanimous vote. Irene abstained because she wasn't present at this meeting.
Vote = Jennie – aye, Bruce – aye, Don – aye PASSED
- Irene did not have a chance to review the minutes of 9/14/22 or 10/6/22 so it was decided to approve these minutes at the next meeting.

Documents:

Draft meeting minutes from 6/9/22, 9/7/22, 9/14/22 and 10/6/22

FY2024 COLA Calculation

List of Omitted Positions from FY2022 Compensation Study

Summary of Compensation of Omitted Positions from FY2022 Compensation Study

Next Possible Meeting:

- Thursday, November 9, 2022 at 8:30 AM

Meeting adjourned at 9:53 AM

Minutes Respectfully Submitted: Alison Kisselgof