



HUMAN RESOURCE BOARD

Town of Chilmark

NOVEMBER 14, 2022 **APPROVED** MEETING MINUTES

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

Staff: Alison Kisselgof – Administrator, Jessica Bradley – Tax Collector, Dawn Barnes – Treasurer, Kara Shemeth – Board Administrator, Diane (Dilly) DeBlase – Administrative Assistant to Select Board.

Meeting called to order at 2:00 PM via ZOOM remote platform, Meeting ID 857 5472 1224

Continued FY2024 COLA Discussion:

- Bruce said that there was only information from two other island towns about their FY2024 COLA increases – Tisbury had voted to approve a 6.9% COLA increase and West Tisbury has proposed a 4.4% COLA increase. He felt that Chilmark had no choice but to go beyond the 3% COLA cap to meet needs due to inflation.
- Irene agreed with Bruce's comments about the town needing to go beyond the COLA cap of 3% but wondered how much higher.
- Jennie agreed that, due to the high inflation, COLA would need to go higher than the 3% cap and offered her support of a 3% COLA + 4% inflation adjustment.
- Bruce asked if the 1-3% COLA rule was part of a by-law and what the advantage of offering a COLA that isn't as high as the calculated COLA (7.52% by the town formula) but instead offer a combination of COLA and inflation adjustment.
- Jennie said that the 1-3% COLA Rule was just a recommended procedure.
- Dawn said that the advantage of a combination of COLA + stipend vs just higher COLA is that the stipend would not be permanently embedded in the town's budget. She added that a stipend alone or too high could cause lower salaries in the following year, especially for the ~68% of town employees that are stepped out of the pay scale. Dawn also mentioned that health insurance rates have risen 3%.
- Jim asked if employees that are stepped out of the pay scale receive longevity.
- Dawn replied that those employed 10 years or more did get longevity but this did not cover all employees that have stepped out. She also mentioned that several employees were hired at steps 3 or above in their grade, which would cause employees to step out of the pay scale before reaching longevity.
- Dilly asked if anyone had spoken with town counsel about the implications of the inflation adjustment stipends. Jennie answered not to her knowledge but didn't feel that it was necessary. Jim offered that the stipend would just be treated as salary for tax purposes.
- Alison reiterated Dawn's concern about the possibility of some employees getting a lower paycheck in the following year. She added that the COLA calculation is based on the previous twelve months inflation, so a marked reduction in inflation may cause the following year's calculation to be in the negative. Alison said that the 5% COLA + 2% stipend could minimize this issue.
- Don referred to the different COLA scenarios that Ellen had calculated and distributed to the Board. He found the income calculations difficult to understand beyond the two year estimations. He said that the issues of lower salaries in subsequent years was a fair point. He offered that the 4% COLA + 3% inflation adjustment stipend made the most sense to him and made a motion to recommend this to the Select Board.
- The motion was seconded by Bruce and, with no further discussion offered, a vote was taken.
Vote = Jennie – aye, Bruce – aye, Don – aye, Irene – aye

- Jim said that, if a letter could be sent to the Select Board right away COLA could be discussed at the meeting on the following day. Alison offered that she would write the letter directly after the meeting.

Documents:

Payroll Scenarios at 3% COLA + 4% Stipend / 5% COLA + 2% Stipend / 7% COLA

Next Possible Meeting:

- Thursday, December 1, 2022 at 8:30 AM

Meeting adjourned at 9:53 AM

Minutes Respectfully Submitted: Alison Kisselgof