



# HUMAN RESOURCE BOARD

## Town of Chilmark

### April 6, 2023 **FINAL MEETING MINUTES**

Board Members Present: Jennie Greene - Chair, Bruce Golden, Don Leopold, Irene Ziebarth, Bob Rosenbaum and Alison Kisselgof – Administrator.

Jim Malkin, Tim Carroll, Ann Wallace, Katie Carroll, Dilly Deblase, Susan Murphy, Ryan Rossi, Ben Retmier, Marie Larsen, Jennifer Christy, Sean Slavin, Ellen Biskis, Anna McCaffrey, Vicki Divoli and Jessica Bradley were also in attendance.

Meeting called to order at 8:31 AM via ZOOM remote platform, Meeting ID 860 3151 2864

Jennie opened the meeting and welcomed Bob as a new member of the Board.

#### **Fire Dept. Administrative Assistant Pay Increase Discussion:**

- Don said that a staff member reached out to him with concerns that the increase in the Fire Dept. administrative assistant pay did not follow procedure because it was not done within the budget cycle. He suggested that previous meeting minutes and documents be reviewed to see if the process is defined clearly. If not, then Don suggested that consultant or work group should review and determine a clear process.
- Bruce offered that he was disappointed that the guide for grades & steps was abandoned, which he felt was less arbitrary than the current system. He said that the guide could be modified if necessary.
- Jennie said that modifying the guide was tried and did not work. She felt that the grading guide was unfair since results could be influenced by mood. Other members agreed that mood did factor in when grading using the guide.
- There was a review of the process by which the Fire Dept. administrative assistant pay was increased.
- Ben offered that previous reviews of the Tri-Town Ambulance grades involved a point system. He didn't understand why this process was not used for grading the Fire Dept. administrative assistant and did not feel the grade increase was done fairly. Ben mentioned that the Fire Dept. administrative assistant was now at the same grade as patrolmen and paramedics. [Ben had to leave the meeting due to an emergency call.]
- Katie thought that the Fire Dept. has followed the correct procedure. She said that the grade increase for the Fire Dept. admin. Assistant was now at the same level as other administrative positions in the Town.
- Jim said that he didn't recall when the previous grading process was abandoned. He went on to say that the department head should have to explain why a regrading of a position would be necessary, not the affected employee. Jim agreed with Don that the previous minutes should be reviewed and recommendations be made going forward.
  - Dilly mentioned that some administrative positions were hired at a lower grade and were now at grade 9 because of higher training.
  - Don said that the Fire Dep. Administrative assistant grade change was already done and should not be revisited. He suggested to review current policy to make sure it is clear and also fair. If the review reveals the policy to be inconsistent, then a consultant or working group



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should review and make recommendations for improvement.

- Jennie asked if the rest of the Board agreed to Don's approach, which appeared was the case. Jennie asked that Irene and Don work with Alison to review current procedure.
- Bruce offered to help if needed.

### **Tri-Town Ambulance Administrative Assistant Job Description:**

- Jennie said this topic would be discussed at a later date since Ben had to leave the meeting.

### **Grade Review of Town Administrators & Local Building Inspector:**

- Tim said that the Town needed to hire a local building inspector. The current inspector leaves on June 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Tim also mentioned that the Building Dept. administrator was currently at grade 7, which was below the pay seen in the marketplace. He would like to the position to be raised to grade 9 since it is comparable to the Fire Dept. administrative assistant position. He also mentioned that other administrative positions below grade 9 should be raise to be equitable.
- Jim said that there was a time pressure to figure out the grading system since the Building Dept. urgently needs to hire but also reminded that the budget process just finished and the Town has fiscal responsibility. He suggested that the review of the compensation process be done as quickly as possible.
- Susan offered that the current process is an example of approval creep and wondered what was driving it – whether it be Town policy or the comparison to other island towns. She did not feel there was any urgency. Susan mentioned that the fiscal year (FY) budget for 2024 was established and felt no changes should happen until the next budget cycle and after the policy is straightened out.
- Jennie said that comparing jobs to other island towns is part of the Town's policy. Susan did not feel this was a good policy and supported its review.
- Dilly agreed that there was urgency to grading the positions in the Building Department since it could affect the ability to fill the positions.

### **Compensation Study Consultant Discussion:**

- Tim recommends the hiring of a consultant to review the Town's whole classification plan. He said that consultants have more experience and tools to do so and they are independent of the Town and its politics.
- Tim went on to say that over the years the compensation chart has shifted but not necessarily due to relationship of positions. He felt a consultant could examine this carefully in relation to the rest of the island and the Commonwealth.
- Jennie asked if there was funding to hire a consultant. She also offered that a consultant would need to be able to compare island prices, not Western Massachusetts, which was a problem with the last consultant.
- Tim answered that funding could be established at a later date but that the scope of work could be worked out now. He mentioned it had been 15+ years since a professional reviewed the Town's compensation plan.
- Don suggested that he and Irene do their policy review first and see what expertise would be needed. Jennie agreed.
- Tim offered that a draft of a request for proposal could be written while the HRBC looks over procedure.



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#### **Compensation Working Group Discussion:**

- Don said that this topic had already been touched upon in previous discussions and there was nothing further to talk about.

#### **Procedures Manual Addition - Alcohol Usage on the Job:**

- Jim said that there have been some issues regarding use of Town vehicles which makes it clear that the Town needs to tighten up its policy. In addition, some concerns have been raised in relation to alcohol. He mentioned that some alcohol related problems were due to illness and should be dealt with appropriately following guidelines and legal procedures. In instances where illness is not a factor, a policy needs to be in place. Jim mentioned that he asked Labor Counsel to recommend a draft policy based on other municipalities in the Commonwealth. The resulting policy was distributed to members prior to the meeting as well as shared on screen during the meeting.
- Bruce was surprised that this hadn't been discussed before and that a policy was not already in place.
- Tim said that there is a policy but is it not clear. Jim offered that the policy needed to be updated to include recent concerns.
- Bob said that the policy in place at the airport includes drugs and that they should be included in the Town's policy as well. There was a brief discussion about drugs that should be addressed.
- Tim said that the policy would require a public hearing so that there was time to refine it. He suggested making a draft to discuss at the next HRBC meeting.
- Jim suggested that members combine the language of his draft and the airport's policy. He said that final language should be reviewed by Labor Counsel and that there was some urgency to get the policy in place.
- Irene offered to work on this draft policy with Bob. Bob agreed.
- Tim asked about the timing of advertising the public hearing. Jim felt it made sense to advertise now.

#### **Approval of Draft Minutes:**

- Irene had some minor corrections to the minutes from 10/6/22. A motion was made to approve the minutes with corrections and seconded. Vote: Jennie – aye, Bruce – aye, Irene –aye, Don – aye = PASSED
- A motion was made to approve the minutes from 12/1/22 as presented and seconded.  
Vote: Jennie – aye, Bruce – aye, Irene –aye, Don – aye = PASSED
- A motion was made to approve the minutes from 2/1/22 as presented and seconded.  
Vote: Jennie – aye, Bruce – aye, Irene –aye, Don – aye = PASSED

#### **Unanticipated Topics:**

- Irene mentioned that she has been unable to contact Tracey Cooney for an exit interview. She requested contact information.
- Dilly suggested that an exit interview be done for Martina Mastromonaco with respect to the Fire Dept. administrative assistant.
- Ellen wasn't sure that Martina needed an exit interview if she was changing positions but offered it could perhaps just be a meeting to facilitate a transfer of knowledge. She said that Kara Shemeth should also be interviewed. She wondered if there was a process by which information is passed on to the next employees.



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- Tim said that there would also need to be an exit interview for Billy Dillon, who is the departing local building inspector.
- Jim offered that Ellen's point about transfer of information was well taken. He wasn't sure if this was part of the exit interview and supported its inclusion. Jim mentioned that Melanie's exit highlighted the need for knowledge transfer.
- Don mentioned that transfer of knowledge was one of the recommendations that resulted from his process study. He said that another recommendation was clarifying the onboarding process. Don supported the idea of knowledge transfer process but wasn't sure it was within the purview of the HRBC.
- Susan asked about Martina's removal from payroll for the Fire Dept. administrative assistant since Katie had resumed the position but was not listed as the person employed.
- Dilly offered that Katie still needed to do some training regarding smoke detectors, which would be important to the position.
- Susan also felt that Jeremy should have been in attendance at the meeting where his staff was discussed. Jim & Jennie agreed. Tim offered that Jeremy should have been informed of this.

Meeting adjourned at 9:24 AM

**Next Possible Meeting:** Thursday, May 4, 2023 at 8:30 AM

### **Documents:**

- Draft Tri-Town Ambulance Administrative Assistant Job Description
- Draft Alcohol Policy
- Draft minutes from 10/6/22, 12/1/21 & 2/1/23

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Alison Kisselgof, Board Administrator