

Human Resource Board Minutes 09/07/17

Human Resources Board of Chilmark Sept. 7, 2017 **APPROVED MINUTES**

Present: Jennie Greene, Chair, Bruce Golden, Steven Flanders, Don Leopold

Not present: Jim Malkin, Selectmen's Representative, Chuck Hodgkinson, Employee Representative, Max McCreery

Public/ Board or Comm. Members:

Staff: Jennifer Christy, Admin. Asst., Police Chief Jonathan Klaren, Ellen Biskis, Town Accountant

Meeting called to order at 8:02AM

- Ms. Greene opened the meeting for discussion.
- Ms. Greene noted that although the Board had sent the proposed plan to the Board of Selectmen for their meeting on August 22, 2017, where the Board of Selectmen approved a motion to accept the compensation plan as presented and send the plan to the fall Special Town Meeting for Town Meeting vote, an error was found in the Executive Secretary position data used to create the plan and there is a need to review the plan.
- Two issues were discussed:
 - Does the wage scale, as accepted by the Board of Selectmen on August 22, 2017, capture all the positions in Town at grade levels with a range of steps whose bottom and top step are the mean of the bottom and top steps of all other island towns for those comparable Town positions.
 - Is it desirable and/or necessary to incorporate all positions in Town on the wage chart or is it preferred to have some positions compensated via a "special rate" or via a "personal contract".
- It was noted that the placement of current occupants of positions on the new compensation plan, at the step closest to where their compensation is currently for FY18 but no lower and without changing a grade level, has resulted in proposed changes to compensation that may not be reflective of the mean compensation at which their position is paid island-wide.
- Discussion occurred and it was attempted to determine how a plan could be devised that has grades representing the mean rates, both low and high, incorporates all or most positions, and provides for future growth.
- Discussion also occurred regarding the appropriate strategy and process whereby the wage of employees currently occupying the positions are accurately selected on the new chart. Ms. Biskis noted that this placement should not be arbitrary, but based on a consideration of the mean and the step that employee currently occupies.
- Mr. Leopold noted three issues:
 - A compensation scale has been devised, but the "office-holders" are not matched up properly to the scale. When the office-holders were matched up on the scale inequities appeared such as how to deal with tenure.
 - There are two or three senior positions for which the current proposed plan does not work and there is a need to address this.
 - There is the issue of "ceilings".
- It was noted that there is no current issue with the number of steps on a compensation plan and most agreed that there does not appear to be a need for a compensation plan which has more than 8 steps.
- It was clarified that the point made is that when a compensation plan has been devised, with grade levels which encompass the mean wages for those positions in those grade levels, the next step should be to place current employees at wages on the compensation plan which are at the mean wage but no lower with a consideration of the former and current grade level, tenure and the overall structure of the positions in Town. It was noted that the currently proposed plan places each employee on the new compensation chart at a step within the same grade that is as close to what that

employee is already compensated for FY18, but no less, and not at a grade and step that necessarily represents the mean level of pay for that position. Discussion occurred about the intent and purpose of the study.

- Mr. Leopold summarized the discussion to say, the task appears to be to determine the mean rate of pay for a position and then make sure that the Town's office-holder for that position makes the mean rate of pay and if the office-holder already makes more than the mean rate of pay then the Town is not going to "bump" them back and if they're making under the mean that amount under the mean is made up by placing them at the appropriate place on the new plan.
- Ms. Christy noted that the summary provided by Mr. Leopold seemed correct and noted that re-grading was proposed to address the issue of certain employees' wages being still under the mean on the new chart.
- Ms. Greene noted the need to consider the percentage change between grades.
- Mr. Doty noted the need to find closure and quickly. He further noted that the proposal needs to be brought before a Special Town Meeting in October 2017.
- Mr. Doty noted that "personal contracts" are viable option for Executive Secretary and Police Chief positions. He noted contracts for these positions often include a 3 year length, for example.
- Mr. Doty noted the change from a mostly volunteer EMT TriTown organization to a full paramedic TriTown organization. He noted the difference in the TriTown Chief position compared to other Towns.
- Mr. Doty noted that the bylaw states that when a position is regraded and it raises a grade then that position goes to back to the step that is closest to what the position was currently compensated but no lower. However, the positions are not being re-graded. Mr. Doty inquired why the positions are not staying at the current steps that they are currently at.
- Chief Klaren stated he also had an issue with the placement of police department employees at the steps on the new compensation plan. Chief Klaren stated the positions are not being re-graded, it is just the compensation plan being updated and noted they are separate processes.
- Ms. Greene noted the Board must consider the cost to the taxpayers when reviewing how to go forward.
- Mr. Leopold inquired whether it is fair to say that the charter of the committee was to make sure that the all of the current employees are compensated at or above the mean rate of pay for that position as compared to comparable positions in all other island towns. He further stated that it looks like the mean was found for each position and now the issue is how to deal with the fact that the placement of the positions on the new chart does not perfectly place each position at the mean.
- More discussion occurred about the topic of contracts for "senior" positions.
- Chief Klaren noted that the police department employees have a collective bargaining agreement with the Board of Selectmen and may not accept the compensation plan as approved.
- Discussion occurred about whether employees should be placed on a new compensation plan at the step at which they are currently placed within the same grade.
- Ms. Biskis was asked to provide a calculation of what the cost would be to the Town if each position was placed on the new wage chart at the same step the person currently occupying the position is at for FY18.
- Mr. Leopold described two separate tasks: the re-grading of positions and the placement of employees on the new compensation chart that is closest to the mean rate or the same step as on the current chart.
- **Minutes:**
 - The minutes from August 3, 2017: Approved with one change.
 - The minutes from August 10, 2017: Approved as written.
- **Next Meetings:**
 - September 14, 2017, 8AM
 - October 5, 2017, 8AM

Meeting adjourned at 9:08AM