

## Human Resource Board Minutes 09/14/17

### Human Resources Board of Chilmark Sept. 14, 2017 **APPROVED MINUTES**

Present: Jennie Greene, Chair, Bruce Golden, Steven Flanders, Don Leopold, Jim Malkin, Selectmen's Representative

Not present: Chuck Hodgkinson, Employee Representative, Max McCreery

Public/ Board or Comm. Members:

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

Meeting called to order at 8:02AM

- Ms. Greene opened the meeting.
- The Board reviewed the draft FY18 REVISED WAGE CHART/ W.DOTYstaff document provided by the Accountant.
- Mr. Malkin noted the proposal from the Human Resource Board to the Board of Selectmen was reviewed again at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 12, 2017 and the proposal was discussed.
- Mr. Malkin clarified the original charge and the current state of the compensation review:
  - The original task was to compare compensation in Chilmark to the five island Towns and make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen.
  - The recommendation to the Board of Selectman was to include a plan that put people at appropriate levels of compensation compared to the other island towns.
  - There has been concern that the placement of people on the proposed new chart does not always preserve their current grade and/or step even as it places the person at an appropriate rate.
- Mr. Malkin noted that if the compensation plan is altered to place people at the same step and grade as they are currently in the total increase would be \$130,000 +/- as opposed to the August 22, 2017 approved compensation plan that proposed an increase of \$35,000 +/- and placed people at a step within their current grade that was closest, but no less, than their current rate of compensation. Mr. Malkin requested clarification and asked two questions:
  - Is this what the Board is recommending? And, if so, will this newly proposed idea to place people at their same current grade and step on the new compensation plan compensate people at appropriate levels as compared with all the other island Towns?
  - The Board of Selectmen discussed at their Sept. 12, 2017 meeting the possibility that the BOS would engage the Executive Secretary in a "personal contract". Mr. Malkin asked if the HR Board had a recommendation on this and if so, what would be the terms and conditions of that contract.
- Ms. Greene answered the two questions.
  - The new compensation rates, when people are placed at the same grade & step, have not been reviewed yet and it is possible that the new numbers in the new compensation plan may not result in people being compensated at rates that are comparable to all the other island Towns.
  - Ms. Greene stated her view that the HR Board would like to review the terms and conditions of a 'personal contract' with the Executive Secretary.
- Mr. Leopold clarified the point at which the Board has reached.
  - Mr. Leopold stated it was his understanding that the HR Board has been able to gather the mean rates of pay for each position and has placed the employee currently occupying each position on the new compensation plan at a rate of pay that is closest to the current rate of pay and this may have resulted in a change in step, but not in grade.

- Mr. Leopold continued and stated that staff had returned with the concern that some employees, regardless of number of years of service, had inadvertently been placed at steps that were the same step placement of employees in the same department who had been in service less years.
- Chief Klaren clarified his issue with the current voted proposal and step placement.
- Mr. Carroll was recognized and described the issues and internal disparities that have occurred.
  - Mr. Carroll noted that at the beginning of this process a 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of employees were compensated at 10% below the mean, a 1/3<sup>rd</sup> were compensated at the mean and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> were compensated above the mean. Mr. Carroll noted that what has been accomplished so far is a creation of a compensation plan which has consistent changes and raises the change from grade 7 to grade 12 to 11%.
  - Mr. Carroll further noted that what has not been addressed is the effect on the individual positions and the unintended consequences is that some positions that were already compensated above the mean are poised to receive raises and those positions that are already below the mean may not even be brought up to the mean rate of pay.
- Discussion occurred. Mr. Carroll noted that two positions, Harbormaster and TriTown Ambulance Chief, are currently paid above the mean already and, although they go down a step on the new chart, are to receive a raise in compensation. He further noted that the intended effect, to bring all employees to the mean of all island towns' comparable positions, has not been achieved.
- Mr. Carroll also noted that the compensation rates also are not based on 'full-time equivalents'.
- Mr. Carroll noted the original disparities continue and in some cases the disparity is exacerbated.
- Mr. Leopold inquired whether those positions that continue to be compensated under the mean even in the newly proposed compensation plan are slated for re-grading.
- Mr. Carroll was not sure of the list of those positions that are slated to be regraded and noted that the last consultant, Mary Aicardi of the Edward Collins Center for Management at UMASS Boston, had recommended not combining the grading process with market research because it creates more disparity within the model.
- Discussion occurred about the original 1999 compensation plan and how it was adjusted to fit Chilmark.
- Mr. Leopold asked for input from the Board of Selectmen members.
  - Mr. Doty stated the right thing to do must be done and stated that the employees should be compensated at the mean rate of the comparable positions in all other island Towns.
  - Mr. Doty noted that a resolution must be found very soon in time for a fall Special Town Meeting.
  - Mr. Doty also stated that a person who has worked multiple years should not be reduced in step.
  - Mr. Malkin agreed with Mr. Doty and noted that some people may be unhappy. He noted that employees who go back in step have more steps in front of them and that is a benefit.
- More discussion occurred about the impacts of placing employees at steps that are lower than the step at which they are currently placed.
- Mr. Malkin recommended that steps could be eliminated, recognizing that it would be a drastic change.
- Mr. Carroll noted this format is available to towns but it is not what was voted by the Town originally.
- Mr. Carroll and Ms. Biskis clarified the issue of the chart placement. He noted that the compensation plan was changed, but the disparity in compensation has continued. Ms. Biskis noted the key problem of an employee who is currently paid above the mean but who is at a step 2 and cannot move back enough within the grade to bring them closer to their current compensation (already above the mean) but no less than the current compensation.
- Mr. Carroll noted that the key issue is to look at the mean of the positions as comparable to the mean of all other island towns and talking about steps before the placement of the positions at the mean creates difficulties.
  - He noted that there is a savings to the Town to place people lower on a step but it is not a savings to the employee.
- Mr. Malkin noted the task of identifying the comparability of positions was a key part of the process.
- Mr. McCreery inquired whether a subcommittee should be formed to consider the questions of today.

- Ms. Greene inquired whether Ms. Biskis could look at whether all the positions compare to the mean.
- Ms. Biskis noted the town employees should not be gathering the information for this study.
- Mr. Leopold noted:
  - Some positions need to be regraded.
  - If there is agreement that all employees should be compensated at the mean, then maybe there is the need to place a 'floor' on how many steps an employee may be moved.
- Mr. Doty stated the step and grade system is good and should not be changed. He further noted that he would be willing to work to make this project
- Mr. Carroll noted the part of the Edward Collins Center for Management at UMASS Boston Report statement:
  - *"It also appears that the Town may have used a method of "upgrading" positions to higher grades, in an effort to increase salary, rather than evaluate the structure. This sort of approach is not recommended and leads to inequity and poor morale. It is recommended the Town review all position descriptions to be sure the positions are classified appropriately."*
- Mr. Carroll stated the positions sit on the chart right now and the regrading process is a separate process that addresses changes in a position duties and not to be used to place the positions at the right spot on a new compensation plan.
- Ms. Greene reiterated the Board has already decided to take certain positions off the table to re-grade. Mr. Carroll disagreed with this plan to take the positions off the table for re-grading and place others, that are already compensated above the mean, at grades and steps that are above the mean. He stated that this would result in positions being placed far above the mean with no chance to change that placement due to the Human Resource Bylaw provisions. He stated the HR Board would miss the opportunity to place positions as close to the mean as possible.
- Ms. Biskis stated her agreement with Mr. Carroll. Ms. Christy stated her agreement that the grading process is separate from the periodic revision of the compensation plan to match the mean market rates. She noted the grading process should not be used as a tool to bring positions to a mean rate of compensation.
- Mr. Carroll noted some positions will be not exactly at the mean due to the desire of the Town and that it to be expected. He noted the Harbormaster positon, for example, is more valuable to Chilmark than possibly to other towns.
- Mr. Carroll , Ms. Biskis and Mr. McCreery were tasked with presenting a new proposal on Wednesday, September 20, 2017 at 8AM.
- Mr. Malkin requested that the Board please consider the terms and conditions of a possible contract with the Executive Secretary for the next meeting or the October meeting. Mr. Doty clarified that the position would be for a Town Administrator or Executive Secretary and not Town Manager.
- **Next Meetings:**
  - Wednesday, Sept. 20, 2017, 8AM
  - Thursday, October 5, 2017, 8AM

Meeting adjourned at 9:07AM