

## Human Resource Board Minutes 09/27/17

### Human Resources Board of Chilmark Sept. 27, 2017 **APPROVED MINUTES**

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

Not present: Chuck Hodgkinson, Employee Representative

Public/ Board or Comm. Members:

Staff: Jennifer Christy, Admin. Asst., Ellen Biskis, Town Accountant, Tim Carroll, Executive Secretary, Diana DeBlase, Asst. to the BOS, Pam Bunker, Asst. Assessor, Chief Klaren, Jessica Bradlee, Tax

Collector

Meeting called to order at 8:03 AM

- Ms. Greene opened the meeting.
- Ms. Greene stated her view the Board has a good compensation scale (as recommended to and voted by the Board of Selectmen at the Aug. 22, 2017 meeting) that seems to be working and that the problem is that the grading manual should be thrown out as a way of placing positions on a new compensation chart. She further stated that the Board should look at what the mean is on the island for all comparable positions on island and place the positions at the mean.
- Mr. Malkin reported that the Board of Selectmen, at their meeting on September 26, 2017, discussed the recommendation that was reaffirmed by the Human Resources Board on September 22, 2017: adopt the new pay scale, negotiate contracts with the Executive Secretary and the Police Chief, voted to keep employees at their current step when the new pay scale goes into effect and review descriptions and regrade the Tax Collector, Town Clerk, Sergeant, Super of Streets, Library Asst. Director, Patrolman and Executive Secretary.
  - Mr. Malkin reported that the Board of Selectmen would like to finish this review and move forward with a warrant article for a Special Town Meeting.
  - Mr. Malkin stated that he had concerns with the process of the grading tool use in this process. Mr. Malkin discussed the subjectivity of the grading tool and process resulting in grade description "creep." He disagreed with the use of the tool in order to deal with inequities of wage compensation.
  - Mr. Malkin suggested that the Board, if they feel that the positions that are below the mean, that they recommend to the Board of Selectmen that those positions be brought up to the mean.
- Mr. Flanders stated that he is not happy with the process and does not think the current process is fair to employees or to the Town.
- Ms. Greene stated the grading manual is outdated and that she is concerned with the viability of the grading manual.
- Mr. Leopold inquired what effect the elimination of the grading manual from the process will have.
- Mr. Leopold inquired does it mean that there will be no grade chart or does it just mean that we identify what the market rate is for each position and then decide at which grade each position should be placed.
- Discussion occurred about when the grading manual may be used in the future.
- Ms. Greene and Mr. Golden discussed the need to take the mean for each position island-wide and apply it to our positions in Town.
- Mr. Flanders suggested the Board ask the Board of Selectmen to make the final decisions and make a recommendation to the Selectmen that they raise the positions to within reason.
- Mr. Leopold stated that he sees the following options:
  - Toss out grading and use the wage comparison only.
  - Accept the current wage compensation chart using the mean and then come back as a follow-up to regrade.
  - Use the current process (regrading positions in order to place certain positions on a compensation chart in the correct place). He noted that it seemed there was general dislike for continuing this current process.

- He noted it looked like the Board is to use the wage comparison only and then, possibly come back to regrade.
- Mr. Malkin suggested the Board review the “personal rate” area of page 8 of the HR Bylaw and page 4 of the HR Bylaw. He suggested the Board use this compensation study to adjust the compensation where it is needed and be finished with the project.
- Mr. Leopold made a motion: given our current deliverable-the wage and compensation recommendation- the Board move to finish the wage and compensation study, make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen and, subsequently, address the use of the grading manual in the future. Mr. Flanders seconded the motion. There was no more discussion. All ayes.
- Ms. Greene recapped the discussion to state that the Board is to make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen and stated that the rate is based on the mean rate for that position.
- Mr. Leopold asked when personal rates will be utilized. More discussion occurred.
- Mr. Carroll questioned the use of the term of “personal rate”. He noted that personal rate term has been used to describe the rate of employees whose position on the grade and step scale was reduced but the person has already been paid more.
- Mr. Carroll further noted that up to now the Board has discussed the mean as an average of a range. He noted some employees may be 1 year employees, 8 year employees or 20 year employees, and by using a “personal rate” based on solely the mean you will be shifting everyone to the average and those employees that have been here less time will move up the steps and those employees that have been here less time will move down in step or stay where they are.
- Mr. Carroll stated that if the mean is applied to the range (the grade) then it will work.
- Mr. Carroll stated that the grading tool is a useful tool in the case of a new position and where it is important to maintain internal equity and structure. The compensation study is a tool that applies external equity. Mr. Carroll stated that there is value in keeping the grading manual for when it is specifically needed.
- Ms. Greene stated that there is no consistency in the way the grading is done and it depends on the day and the person and this is why it is not a useful tool.
- Ms. DeBlase stated the grading manual may be of use when there is a position that does not have hardly any comparables.
- Ms. Greene agreed that the grading manual may have some use but that it did not have value for the purposes of the compensation study and introduced subjectivity.
- Mr. Malkin asked what to do next now that the motion is passed (given our current deliverable-the wage and compensation recommendation-the Board move to finish the wage and compensation study, make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen and, subsequently, address the use of the grading manual in the future). Mr. Malkin asked for clarification, if you have a mean for each position, then where are they placed on steps within the compensation chart. Mr. Malkin inquired what does it mean in terms of compensation and the required funding needed to be requested at Town Meeting to fund this change back to July 1, 2017.
- Mr. Flanders stated that step would come next. He stated that he would recommend going back to the original recommendation. Mr. Flanders remembered that to be placed within 10% of the mean. He recommended leaving this decision to the Board of Selectmen.
- Mr. Carroll clarified that the easiest way to arrive at a compensation chart that will provide a mean rate for each position, given the time-constraints, is to take the mean rates for each position and find the grade that most closely captures that average mean rate and then place the position on that grade. He further stated that he had originally suggested a number of weeks ago that the best way to do this is to first create a chart that encompasses the mean rates within the grades and then place the positions on the chart.
- The Board looked over the various charts from the last few weeks.
- Mr. Carroll confirmed that the chart produced by him for the Sept. 20, 2017 meeting is using only the August 22, 2017 data.
- Mr. Carroll stated it would be helpful for the Board to identify which positions should be adjusted from those listed on his chart (from Sept. 20, 2017).
- Mr. Leopold stated that one way to do this is to identify positions that are under a certain amount:
- More discussion occurred regarding the validity of the data and compensation at the mean rate compared with all island Towns or a recommendation that shows compensation at other rates below the mean or above the mean. More discussion occurred regarding whether to adjust salaries to within a certain range or
- It was noted that three positions (minus the Police Chief and Executive Secretary) are compensated below 10% below the mean and needed to be looked at:
  - Police Sergeant
  - Superintendent of Streets

- Library Asst.
- Ms. DeBlase noted the BOH administrative Asst. should be addressed.
- Ms. Greene and Mr. Malkin noted that the supervisors of the BOH administrative asst. has notified the Board that they do not wish to review the position and regrade the position.
- Mr. Carroll noted that the BOH administrative assistant is undercompensated, in his view, but that he understands the BOH has the decision.
- Discussion occurred about at what percentage point below the mean the positions that are undercompensated should be addressed.
- Mr. Flanders stated 10%.
- Mr. McCreery stated he could not state a position on the topic.
- Mr. Golden stated that some other positions look like they need addressing.
- Mr. Leopold stated that if the Board looked at positions that were compensated at below 5% below the mean then it would add the Tax Collector and the Shellfish Constable to the list that needed to be looked at. He decided he could support that idea.
- Mr. Carroll noted that if the Board does not review any position within a 10% range then it will affect a 20% range, above and below the mean. Mr. Flanders stated nothing could be done about over-compensated employees.
- Mr. Carroll stated that there is the ability to adjust for overcompensation, compared to the mean, through placement of the position at a grade that reflects the mean on the new compensation chart and noted that this is what is being done for the other two categories of positions: those that are compensated at the mean and those that are compensated below the mean.
- Discussion occurred about review of position descriptions.
- Mr. McCreery expressed concern with further review of position descriptions.
- Ms. Greene stated that island position descriptions would need to be viewed for three positions. Ms. Greene distributed her notes on various positions.
- Ms. Bradlee asked for clarification and stated her feeling that the Tax Collector should be included in a review.
- Mr. Golden stated that if 5% is used then more employees will be happy.
- Ms. Bunker stated that the "finance team" should be all compensated equitably.
- Ms. Greene asked for a motion that would reflect a decision about the range beyond which positions would be looked at. Mr. McCreery asked for clarification on the direction of the Board.
- Mr. Golden moved to look at the positions for those below 5% below the mean (5).
- Discussion occurred about position comparability.
- Mr. Malkin stated he would like a final recommendation by the Tuesday, October 3, 2017 Board of Selectmen Meeting stating where the positions should be moved to on the new compensation chart and the financial implications (in aggregate or individually) of that recommendation.
- Ms. Greene inquired how the Board would like to review how the positions below 5% below the mean compensation are comparable to other island positions.
- Mr. Leopold suggested not starting again from scratch and accept the previous studies that indicate comparability.
- Mr. Golden stated that he would agree with that with the exception of the Sergeant position.
- Discussion occurred regarding the Sergeant position description. It was noted the Sergeant position is "second in command."
- Mr. Golden moved to place the Sergeant position to within 5% of the mean and all other positions are to be placed at the mean. Mr. Golden expressed dissatisfaction with the subjectivity of the decisions.
- Mr. Leopold and Ms. Greene confirmed their understanding that all positions would move to the mean and the Sergeant would move to within 11% and 5% below the mean. Mr. Golden stated that they are correct in their clarification of the motion.
- The motion was seconded.
- Mr. Leopold noted he did not have enough information to clearly understand the comparability of the Sergeant position description.
- Mr. Malkin stated his view from speaking with the Police Chief that it would be a valid decision to bring the Sergeant to within 5% of the mean.
- No more discussion occurred. 5 ayes.
- Ms. Greene restated the motion to be that the Board recommends that the Sergeant position move up to 5% below the mean and everybody else will go up to the mean.

- Mr. Carroll offered to partner with Ms. Greene to provide a written recommendation as per the motion by Friday, September 29, 2017. This was agreed to do so that a final statement for the Board of Selectmen could be voted on Friday, September 29, 2017.
- It was decided to have a meeting at 8AM on Friday, September 29, 2017. It was decided to not meet on Thursday, September 28, 2017 and cancel that meeting.
- **Next Meetings:**
  - Thursday, September 27, 2017, 8AM, CANCELLED
  - Friday, September 28, 2017, 8AM

Meeting adjourned at 10:15AM