

Town of West Boylston Personnel Board
Minutes of Meeting
December 9, 2019

In Attendance:

Personnel Board Members: Larry Chism, Chairperson, Vanessa Kuzmanovski, and Christine Mazeika, Nancy Lucier, Town Administrator and Mary Aicardi, Edward J Collins Jr Center for Public Management.
Personnel Board Member Laura Carney was unable to attend.

Mr. Chism called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

- I. Approval of the Minutes from the December 2, 2019 meeting. Ms. Kuzmanovski made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Chism seconded, so moved.
- II. Wage Study Update/Status

Mary Aicardi from the Collins Center explained that since the last Personnel Board meeting on December 2nd, she and Ms. Lucier have made some updates to the Classification and Compensation Study. The changes include an added Grade Level, moving Department Assistants up a grade keeping them a Grade above Board Secretaries.

Ms. Lucier stated that based on today's rate, a 2% increase would cost the Town \$ 16,000. The cost to implement the adjusted rate based on the new scale would be \$ 17,000. A portion of the study states, "In those instances where a position is significantly below the market, the Collins Center recommends an implementation step be applied, which reduces the cost of implementation but still provides an increase".

Ms. Lucier will be presenting this to the Selectmen on December 16, 2019 at their 6:00 p.m. meeting. Mr. Chism will attend for support and any questions as well as any members of the Personnel Board. Ms. Kuzmanovski suggested that Ms. Lucier include the back story of the process of getting to this point.

Ms. Mazeika asked why an employee's years of service was not being taken into account. She offered to provide a chart based on most employee's hire date. Ms. Aicardi said "no". Ms. Mazeika then gave some examples: two library assistants – one having worked for 30+ years and one having been there for 10 years. Both will be placed on the same Step with no regard for years of service.

Ms. Aicardi stated that the placement of employees on their Steps was based on today's market and not based on years of service. She stated that in being realistic, rebuilding counts as a success. She also pointed out that all employees are getting at least a 3% increase, some are getting more.

This discussion continued for some time with Ms. Lucier pointing out that no employees are leaving because the Town offers good jobs and good benefits. Ms. Mazeika pointed out that with this new 12 Step Compensation Schedule (23 years), that it will take many current employees more than 23 years to reach the top step. Ms. Aicardi said that the Study is about position, pay scale and not individuals.

Mr. Chism and Ms. Kuzmanovski both agreed that it is at the point where this has been done so many times that it is now this plan or nothing. If the Study is not approved by the Selectmen, it

would be comparable to throwing it in the trash. Ms. Aicardi agreed that if employees were not happy they would have moved on, it is time to move forward.

Mr. Chism agrees with Ms. Aicardi, he likes the job description and pay scales. If we tried to make employees whole we would get lost.

Ms. Kuzmanovski asked about individualizing it for current employees. Ms. Aicardi said that it would be like going down a rabbit hole. This is what a Classification Study is.

The plan would be to implement this as of July 2020. Ms. Mazeika asked how the budget would be prepared. With these figures or after Town Meeting? Ms. Lucier said that the budgets would begin with 2%.

Mr. Chism asked Ms. Lucier whether or not she could get this passed by the Selectmen?

Ms. Lucier said that she would present at the next meeting. Ms. Aicardi said that it was important to present a unified presentation. Ms. Mazeika did not feel like she could endorse the Study. Mr. Chism said that the Study was not designed to promote equity that was not a variable. It is about job descriptions and a pay scale. He agreed with Ms. Aicardi saying that getting into individual positions won't work. Mr. Chism commented that people were hoping and may be disappointed.

Ms. Mazeika also questioned why this was not being presented to the employees.

Ms. Aicardi suggested getting this in place with a COLA at July 1 and the step increases either January 2021 or July 2021. She said this is about creative ways to minimize costs.

Ms. Lucier commented that when was the last time anyone received a 3% increase?

Mr. Chism stated that Ms. Mazeika is not wrong but that we can't individualize. Ms. Kuzmanovski stated that this was an opportunity to move forward.

Once again Ms. Mazeika tried to explain the chart using years of service. Ms. Aicardi said that this doesn't take into account the market. Mr. Chism asked how many employees are currently at the top step and Ms. Aicardi replied half.

Ms. Aicardi stated the results of the Study were:

- No one's pay is cut.
- Everyone is receiving at least a 3% raise.
- Everyone has room for future growth.

Mr. Chism asked Ms. Lucier if there were vacancies, would the Town be able to recruit for these positions based on how we remodified the wage scale. Ms. Lucier said yes.

Ms. Kuzmanovski made a motion to present the Classification and Compensation Study to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Chism seconded. Ms. Mazeika is the Employee Representative and has no vote. The motion passed.

The Study will be presented to the Selectmen at the meeting on December 16, 2019. Ms. Aicardi will be present with the Personnel Board there for support. Ms. Kuzmanovski asked if employees would be there. Ms. Lucier said probably. Ms. Kuzmanovski asked if the employees

would be able to ask questions. Ms. Aicardi said that this is a presentation. Mr. Chism said that we will not entertain questions from employees. Ms. Lucier said that it is either this or nothing.

According to Ms. Lucier it will be presented to the Board of Selectmen, then to Department Heads who will give the Study to the employees. Ms. Aicardi thought this was a good plan.

Mr. Chism stated that if there is a shortfall with the study it is that this was not designed to present equity, it was designed for job descriptions and wage ranges. Ms. Lucier added the possibility for growth.

Ms. Aicardi pointed out that the entry level pay is currently \$ 12.70 for custodians and will now be \$ 15.00. Mr. Chism agreed that this was a good example to use during the presentation to focus on the positive. Ms. Aicardi said that with newer employees there will be equity and that we can't fix everything. There are equal step increases. Mr. Chism agreed that Ms. Aicardi should address the sensitivity of these issues and deliver the positives of the Study. Ms. Aicardi agreed using the custodians for example. Mr. Chism said that she should give 2 or 3 examples and address what Ms. Mazeika brought up and that this was a sincere effort and this is where we landed.

Ms. Kuzmanovski made a motion to adjourn at 7:15 p.m. Mr. Chism seconded.