

Personnel Wage Board

May 6, 2015

Town Hall

5:30 PM

Committee Members in attendance:

Gary Whitehouse, Vivian Pitts, Nancy Bacher, Thom Freeman

Staff in attendance:

Mary Beth Bernard, Marsha Armando, Bill Keegan

Other in attendance:

Lisa Sinkus

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 p.m.

Discussion:

-Compensation Review

Mary Beth Bernard stated that the Personnel Bylaws are normally Article 6 in the Town Meeting Warrant, but for the Spring 2015 meeting, the "Non-Union Managerial & Seasonal Pay Plan" is the Article in its place. The positions for the Pay Plan will not be discussed specifically at Town Meeting, but Mary Beth will be available to answer any questions. She further explained that the negotiations with the Steelworkers Union remain ongoing.

(5:36pm –Thom Freeman arrive)

Mary Beth noted that she is still looking through employee files and trying to create a salary book in order to have readily available documentation regarding each employee's salary. Gary Whitehouse asked how the Town's wages compare with the negotiating positions.

The spreadsheet shown at the meeting will be emailed to Thom Freeman, as he will be reading this Article at the Town Meeting. Mary Beth had met with the Town Moderator and Town Clerk, and clarified that any Bylaw that is not changed carries forward to the next Fiscal Year.

A question was asked about who can attend the negotiations, and if members of the PWB attend. Mary Beth stated that if someone's position is related to any of the mandatory subjects of bargaining, then that person needs to be at the negotiations table. She is hopeful for a resolution prior to Fall Town Meeting with any changes probably retroactive to July 1, 2015.

Mary Beth has spoken with a consultant who had previously written a 6-step pay plan. The Town will hire him to assist in the process of developing a pay plan for the Town.

Mary Beth also stated that through MMPA, it is possible to retrieve salary information out, as towns put in their compensation information and then are able to take information out to compare. She asked the committee for input regarding comparable communities to use in this study.

Gary Whitehouse suggested using the list that had been used previously as a starting point. Mary Beth had a survey that the Town of Sharon had completed to show what towns they used for comparison. Suggestions included Sharon, Canton and Walpole.

Mary Beth noted that criteria for searching with the MMPA website include populations, as well as Town contiguity.

Ms. Bernard stated that she is trying to find the HR Audit done in 2013, as there was a \$10,000 grant to perform the audit. She was informed by the consultant that the audit was never completed, as the HR Director at that time did not get back to the consultant.

Gary Whitehouse said that the whole compensation package, including working conditions and “perks”, needs to be looked at and not only the salary.

Mary Beth also mentioned that Foxborough is looking at lateral transfers for police, although this study will not be addressing police salaries. Additionally, she noted that civil service had not been done correctly since 2007, so she has been working to organize that piece.

-Policies Review

Mary Beth Bernard handed out the Tuition Policy at a couple of negotiations and is starting to introduce the self-evaluations. The evaluations will only affect the 9 (nine) non-union people. The DPW and Steelworkers’ unions will have a slightly different version and the document will be given to the Library Union to see if they will implement.

Nancy Bacher stated she was under the impression that Bill Keegan is not a fan of performance appraisals. It was expressed that he does appreciate the performance appraisal, but not the merit system as it was originally presented. Mary Beth stated that the evaluations will be done annually at this time.

Gary Whitehouse asked Mary Beth Bernard what the evaluation and salary increase policy was in Westwood. She responded that there was a percentage range increase utilized for some time, but the town did not budget for the pool. That was then collapsed and step increases were implemented, which was easier to predict and budget for the future.

Thom Freeman asked if annual evaluations are currently performed; the response was no, they are not done. Mary Beth stated that they would like 2 (two) evaluations per person; One is a self-assessment and one by the supervisor. Nancy Bacher stated she finds self-evaluation appraisals to be an opportunity for someone to let their manager know what they do all year, as some supervisors are not aware.

(6:09pm –Bill Keegan arrive)

Bill Keegan stated that a self-evaluation is sometimes hard to do, but it is useful to show where an employee has assets and show where one can use improvement. It is helpful to hear from others and receive feedback. Mary Beth is hopeful that the feedback will be useful instead of reactionary. She further stated that employees want to know about opportunities from within their own organization.

-Other

Regarding the Water & Sewer Article, there has been an agreement, so there should not be any controversy.

Library job descriptions have not been updated since 1995, so will be seeking new descriptions, especially as the environment of libraries has changed. Mary Beth would like the Personnel Wage Board to look at the job descriptions once received.

Thom Freeman noted that those involved with the Steelworkers Union do not have experience with municipal government, so that could be a reason for the length of time of working on agreement. Bill Keegan said he worked with the same union in Seekonk, so they do have experience with municipal government. That was also a multi-faceted group, but not as diverse as Foxborough. It was also confirmed that the employees are not part of the union until a contract is signed; the employees have not yet paid dues because they are still bargaining. When asked if it is conceivable that the employees could back out and join the rest of non-union employees, Bill Keegan stated that could be one of the possibilities. Currently, they are looking for a one-year contract, but because it is currently so late in the process, another possibility is a 2-year contract.

-To Do

Board Members are to provide thoughts on comparison communities. The current list utilized will be emailed to all Board Members.

-Approval of Meeting Minutes

Minutes were reviewed by Board Members.

Nancy Bacher made a motion to Approve April 8, 2015 Minutes as edited. Gary Whitehouse seconded the motion. Motion passed 4 yes- 0 no – 0 abstain.

Next meeting scheduled for June 3, 2015 at 5:30pm.

The Meeting ended at 6:33 p.m.