

Personnel Board Meeting
Tuesday, March 5, 2024 4:00 PM
Great Plain Room, Needham Town Hall

Minutes

Attendance

Personnel Board

Vivian Hsu, Chair
Joseph Herlihy, Vice Chair
Rita Vogel, Member
John Burns, Member
Mark Fachetti, Member

Staff

Tatiana Swanson, Director of Human Resources
Taylor Donaldson Jhurani, Asst. Director of HR
Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager

Call to order, roll call and remote participation disclosure

Mr. Herlihy opened the Personnel Board meeting at 4:01 pm. Members introduced themselves.

Proposed Wage Rates for Non-Represented Staff FY2025 – FY 2026

Ms. Swanson presented the proposal to increase wages for non-represented employees for Fiscal Year 2025 by 3% and Fiscal Year 2026 by 3%. She explained that these wages are fair based on other communities and market research, as well as being reflective of the Town's effort to keep represented and non-represented groups consistent with increases.

Mr. Herlihy made a motion to recommend the proposed wage rate increases for non-represented employees. Mr. Burns seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed, motion passed unanimously.

Town Clerk Transition

Ms. Swanson provided an overview of the Town Clerk transition document, explaining that it was drafted in 2000 and the Town previously approved a similar transition for the Town Clerk.

Ms. Fitzpatrick added that, generally speaking, there is a set salary for Town Clerk positions and that, in other towns, Town Clerks are appointed positions. She explained that the salary from the year 2000 was adjusted for cost-of-living increases to get to the proposed amount for Fiscal Year 2025.

Mr. Herlihy made a motion that the Board vote to recommend the proposed Town Clerk transition plan. Mr. Burns seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed, motion passed unanimously.

Personnel Policies – Update: Bereavement Policy

Ms. Swanson outlined the updates to this personnel policy to be more inclusive of changing traditional family composition and to expand the circumstances for which employees may take leave to grieve.

Ms. Fitzpatrick emphasized that Town believed and updated policy would better support employees in these difficult times.

Mr. Herlihy made a motion that the Board vote to approve the recommendation; Mr. Fachetti seconded; All in favor, no opposition; Motion carries unanimously.

Update on Human Resources Activity

Ms. Swanson provided updates on the Human Resources team including additional policy updates on social media as these platforms have been increasingly important to communicate with others. This is currently being drafted and will be ready for review at the next Personnel Board meeting.

Ms. Swanson provided a hiring update for the Board, sharing how many positions the Town has hired for and how many employees have left the Town since the last Board meeting.

There was discussion around current open positions and interviews.

Ms. Swanson added that the most notable open positions now are Director of Library; Director of Administration, Public Works; Community Trainer, Youth & Family Services to expand mental health resources in the Town.

Ms. Swanson explained that the HR team is working with a consultant team on diversity initiatives with focus groups planned to understand and gauge what staff believe we're doing well and the improvements needed from the staff's perspective. There was great success with a recent event with LGBTQIA+ Activist and speaker Trevor Boylston where staff had an opportunity to learn about his story and ask questions. There is also an upcoming film screening of "Subjects of Desire," a film about Black women beauty standards in North America. The team is hosting a screening of the film and Q&A session with producers in early April. Ms. Swanson listed other DEI initiative the Town has embarked on, such as ensuring job postings are as inclusive as possible, utilizing accessible links and colors, masking PII for hiring managers to reduce bias, including the EEO statement on all postings, and adding the accommodation statement on all public-facing materials.

Ms. Fitzpatrick noted that the Town has also adjusted processes in Park & Rec to ensure inclusion, such as saving spots for parents who are not in front of computers.

Ms. Swanson noted that the HR team is also working on a formal onboarding process and employee experience, involving all parties. In parallel, we are formalizing the intern program to get departments to think about this experience and how to best support their newest team members.

Meeting Minutes for Approval:

Ms. Vogel stated that these minutes were very helpful as a new board member to look back on and review. Ms. Swanson noted that we are trying to get caught up on minutes so we can go forward from here.

Mr. Herlihy motions to approve meeting minutes on 4/11/22; Ms. Hsu seconded. All are in favor of the motion. None opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Herlihy motions to approve meeting minutes as listed on the board meeting agenda: 6/16/22, 10/19/22, 12/14/22, 1/4/23, 1/18/23, 4/13/23, 6/15/23, 7/31/23, as subject to corrections of grammatical errors. Mr. Fachetti seconded. All are in favor, none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

Any other business

No other business.

Ms. Fitzpatrick added that hybrid meetings are encouraged, if needed.

Adjournment

Mr. Burns motions to adjourn the Personnel Board meeting. Mr. Herlihy seconds the motion. All are in favor of the motion. The meeting is adjourned at 5:03 pm.

Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, April 24th at 4 pm in Town Hall.