

**Whately Personnel Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 22, 2021
Town Offices
Open Session via Zoom
6:00 p.m.**

The open session of the Personnel Committee of the Town of Whately was called to order on March 22, 2021 at 6:02 p.m. by the Chairperson, Keith Bardwell. Also present via zoom was Personnel Committee Members Thomas Mahar, Susan Baron, Joyce Palmer-Fortune, Elizabeth Orloski, Town Administrator Brian Domina, and Administrative Assistant Amy Schrader.

Review and vote on the meeting minutes of February 22, 2021.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the February 22, 2020 minutes. Vote was unanimous. Roll call vote: Keith – yes, Joyce – yes, Thomas – yes, Susan – yes, Elizabeth – yes.

Review, discuss and vote on cost-of-living adjustments for FY22

Brian informed the Committee that they have an updated CPI form for New England and North East divisions. COLA information was gathered from a few of the surrounding comparable towns. A few towns COLA information has not been decided at this time. FRCOG's COLA assessment was determined based on a FY22 wage/salary report study which showed wage/salary deficiencies. Brian reviewed the COLA information with specific attention to surrounding towns, FRCOG's COLA adjustment, the school district contractual increases, and the town's previous COLA adjustments. The Committee had a brief discussion regarding potential COLA adjustments and how those adjustments would impact the Town's budget. The Committee reviewed the FY20 Cost of Living allowance projections. After a brief discussion, a motion was made to recommend a 2% COLA for FY22. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Susan – yes, Keith – yes, Thomas – yes, Elizabeth – yes, and Joyce – yes.

Review and discuss updated salary survey information and requests received since the last meeting. Discuss and vote on any salary adjustment recommendations for FY22

Brian informed the Committee that they received a salary adjustment request from the Assistant Assessor, Cynthia Herbert. Fred Orloski (Board of Assessor Chair) and Cynthia Herbert (Assistant Assessor) virtually appeared before the Committee to discuss this request. Fred Orloski reviewed and discussed the comparison of assessing staff wage 2021 document with specific attention to surrounding town's comparisons, FRCOG's wage/salary report results, position title similarities/differences, training classes, longevity, and the FRCOG salary surveys 2015-2021 percent increases. The analysis reviewed shows that this rate should be increased from \$22.82 to \$26.50 per hour. This amount is based on the average salary of the town's listed on the assessing staff wage 2021 document. Cynthia Herbert (Assistant Assessor) thanked Fred for his input and felt that Fred covered her salary increase request appropriately.

Keith Bardwell (Personnel Committee Chair) stated that the Town does not consider longevity when evaluating wage/salary increase requests. The Committee had a brief discussion regarding surrounding town comparison concerns, job qualification differences, and customer service

complaints. The Committee had a brief discussion regarding the FY21 wage/salary report with specific attention to Conway and Shelburne. Shelburne recently hired a new Assistant Assessor at a lower rate and Conway Assistant Assessor position job title is not comparable. Fred Orloski (Board of Assessor Chair) discussed the possibility of reducing Cynthia's hours for the purpose of workload adjustments. The Committee questioned how reducing the hours would impact the job responsibilities when "regular" job responsibilities resume in 2022? Fred stated that the hourly reduction would not affect any future job responsibilities.

After much discussion, a motion was made to recommend increasing the Assistant Assessor position to \$26.50. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Joyce – no, Elizabeth – yes, Thomas – yes, Susan – yes, and Keith yes.

Keith Bardwell (Highway and Building Superintendent) informed the Committee that the next wage/salary request to discuss is the Highway and Building Superintendent. At this time, the Personnel Committee decided to have Joyce Palmer-Fortune become the meeting Chair. Keith Bardwell reviewed his wage/salary request with specific attention to surrounding towns salary comparisons (Hatfield and Deerfield), job title similarities/differences, previous wage/salary increase, job responsibilities changes, future town projects, and town building maintenance challenges. Keith suggested reviewing the FY20 salary adjustment and/or reviewing FRCOG's wage/salary report. The Committee had a brief discussion regarding winter roads and regular roads salaries, town comparison concerns, redefining job positions, the highway department budget, potential town project workload conflicts, job positions separation, and job description review. Keith Bardwell requested that the Personnel Committee consider separating the Highway and Building Superintendent salaries to ensure that the Highway Superintendent portion of his salary stays current with other comparable towns. A motion was made to table this discussion until more information was provided. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Thomas – yes, Joyce – yes, Susan – yes, Elizabeth – yes.

Review and discuss information on Juneteenth (new state holiday)

Brian informed the Committee that he reached out to Shelley Poreda (School's business manager). Shelley stated that there has been no decision at this time. Other towns/cities are making decisions based on union negotiations and/or delayed deciding. A motion was made to table this discussion. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Roll call vote: Thomas – yes, Susan – yes, Joyce – yes, Keith – yes, and Elizabeth – yes.

Discuss future work of the Personnel Committee (personnel policies, job descriptions, employee handbooks)

Keith Bardwell (Personnel Committee Chair) informed the Committee that this is a topic that annually appears on the agenda. Due to the COVID19 pandemic, updating these policies was put on hold. The Committee had a brief discussion regarding updating the Personnel Policies with specific attention to potentially hiring an outside consultant, current town employee's assistance, and employee's workload. The Committee requested that Brian research possible funding sources to hire an outside consulting firm to assist with updating the town's personnel policies and present it at the next meeting.

Items not anticipated within forty-eight (48) hours of the meeting

None

The Personnel Committee's next meeting date is April 5, 2021.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Schrader - Recording Secretary