

Personnel Board



Town of Upton

Massachusetts

Meeting Minutes of July 16, 2012

Location: Emergency Operations Center, Fire & EMS Headquarters, 20 Church Street

Members Present: Chairman Mike Goodwin, Debbie Amorelli, Bob Carnegie, Dave Scribner, Seema Kenney

Members Not Present: Tom Giblin

Others Present: Town Manager & Personnel Coordinator Blythe Robinson

The meeting was called to order at 6:49 pm.

The first agenda item taken up by the Board was the position description for “Reserve Firefighter.” The Board welcomed Fire & EMS Chief Ron Goodale. The Town Manager stated the Chief put together the job description and then she and the chief put it into the (Personnel Board’s) format. The intent is not for this position to be paid a stipend like other call firefighters but only to be paid the hourly rate when they work. She did not go through the rating process to recommend a grade since it should match the call firefighter’s grade.

The Chief then provided the background on the reasons for this position: the town currently limits the number of call firefighters at 24. As call firefighters are hard to come by, his only option is to keep their application on file then call them with an opportunity open us. This position would create a place to them while waiting for a stipend position to open.

Second, the state mandates retirement at age 65 whether career or call. However, these folks can be kept on in an administrative capacity until age 70, allowing us to take advantage of their knowledge. They will be paid for training and can perform support-type functions such as running the communications room and driving vehicles to the scene, especially in the daytime. They will operate outside the “hot zone” because they are no longer covered as firefighters by the town’s insurance but they are covered as “comp employees” similar to EMTs.

Another way the department could use this position, for example, would be dive-rescue. We have no dive-rescue team; divers are hard to come by. These people will have to be trained as a firefighter in some aspects such as CPR & first responder, and meet the qualifications. The Chief summed it up this way: just as there are divers who will never pull a line into a building, there are some firefighters who will never put on a dive suit and get into the water. This position will allow provide folks with specialized skills to use them.

43 The Town Manager then said she did not attempt to grade this position and it is meant to be a
44 “catch all” of the roles a person in this capacity could do.

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46 Following review, upon motion by Bob Carnegie, the Board voted unanimously to approve the
47 position description as submitted with a Grade E (to match the grade on the position of Call
48 Firefighter).

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50 Next, the Board held an election for Chair as required by the Personnel By-Law. Upon motion
51 by Chairman Goodwin, the Board unanimously appointed Town Manager Blythe Robinson as
52 Chair for purposes of reorganization. Chair Robinson then opened nominations for the successor
53 Chair for the ensuing year. Deb Amorelli nominated Mike Goodwin. The chair then called for
54 any other nominations. As there were none, the Board voted unanimously to close nominations
55 upon motion, followed by a unanimous vote to appoint Michael Goodwin as Chair. Chairman
56 Goodwin then moved to rescind the motion appointing Blythe Robinson as Acting Chair and the
57 vote was unanimous.

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59 By unanimous consent, the Board tabled the minutes from the May 9, 2012 meeting.

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61 The next topic was the Electronics Use/Social Media Policy. After a brief discussion on how to
62 proceed, the Board recommended that the Town Manager circulate the Kopelman & Paige-
63 supplied policy to the Department Heads to share with their personnel and to provide feedback to
64 the Board.

65
66 As an informational item, the Town Manager updated the Board on the status of the new payroll
67 tracking system. The Board thanked Seema for creating an Excel spreadsheet some time ago that
68 is helping greatly with this transition.

69
70 The Board next reviewed the revisions to the Personnel By-Law document following May’s
71 Town Meeting actions and adopted it after discussing minor formatting changes.

72
73 The discussion then turned to the word “probationary” in the Personnel By-Law as first brought
74 up in the Board’s May 3, 2012 meeting. Deb and Bob offered to go through the by-law and
75 locate all references to that word and to offer an alternative. The Town Manager would then
76 draft the article for a future town meeting.

77
78 Seema then started the initial discussion on the FY14 Classification and Compensation Survey.
79 She said it would become effective in FY15 so the work would be done in FY14. Every 5 years
80 we are required to complete this study. The three studies done thus far have been done with
81 consultants. The last one started about this time of year with the discussion about from whom to
82 obtain bids and the method for getting a consultant hired. The Board then recessed while two
83 members’ vehicles were moved due to the Jaws of Life training being conducted.

84
85 Seema then provided an approximate timeline of having a request for proposal that will go out
86 next summer (2013) and have the contractor chosen by about October so the contractor could be
87 finished by February (2014). She then provided an overview of the history of the first three
88 studies the town completed.

89
90 Lastly, the Town Manager reported they had 11 employees sign up for long-term disability
91 insurance that is completely employee paid which has 180 days' coverage following the end of
92 the short-term disability coverage. She also said that the insurance company offered employee-
93 paid spousal life insurance coverage of \$10K and additional life insurance up to \$300K and those
94 are being offered right now. She also reported that about 25-27 employees signed up for the
95 Flexible Spending Account that became effective July first.

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97 Ms. Robinson also sought examples, particularly from Bob and Deb, of employment applications
98 from which she could update the Town's out-of-date form.

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100 Finally, the Chair officially welcomed the Board's newest member, Dave Scribner.

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102
103 Upon motion by Deb Amorelli, the meeting adjourned at 8:29 pm.

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105 Documents used: A) Position Description – Reserve Firefighter; B) Position Description – Call
106 Firefighter; C) draft Social Media Policy; D) draft Electronic Communication Policy; E) draft
107 Personal Social Networking Policy (supplied by Kopelman & Paige); F) Personnel By-Law; G)
108 previous Classification & Compensation surveys; H) MMPA's Benchmark Titles Salary Survey

109
110 Respectfully submitted,

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112 Michael E. Goodwin, Chair

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