

Personnel Board Meeting  
Wayland Town Building -- Selectmen's Meeting Room  
Meeting Minutes  
September 5, 2013

Members Present:

N. McCarthy (NM); N. Willard (NW); P. Schneider (PS); J. Green (JG); M. Peabody (MP)

Also present: John Senchyshyn

NM called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Public Comment:

None

Discussion of Town Administrator Dismissal

NM asked what concerns the Personnel Board (PB) had about the termination of Town Administrator (TA) Fred Turkington and what action the PB should take. NM stated that no one had called her prior to the dismissal to ask for her advice or inform her of the decision. MP stated that usually the relevant committee chair or department head would call the PB chair in advance with difficult employee issues or terminations. MP stated that she was concerned the PB had not been consulted, and she was concerned about a possible open meeting law violation. JG stated that she was concerned that the BoS agenda did not accurately reflect what was discussed in the meeting. PS stated that while the BoS had no obligation to consult the PB about the termination, he would have hoped that they would at least consult with the Chair. NW said he was concerned this would reflect poorly on the town's reputation.

NM stated that she was concerned about the number of priorities that had been set for the TA and the difficulty of JS getting everything done, as well as the loss of institutional knowledge and the impact on employee morale. She asked how the PB could learn from this incident and whether the PB should consider drafting a policy on how to conduct terminations in a professional manner.

NW stated that he disagreed with those who were saying that it was good for Mr. Turkington to have been fired without cause. The members discussed "without cause".

JG asked if there was any written policy about the role of the PB or others in the selection of the new TA, and stated that the PB's first priority should be ensuring that the search committee is broad. The members agreed that NM would reach out to BoS Chairman Doug Leard prior to the upcoming BoS meeting to communicate the PB's recommendation that a broad search committee be used, including the PB, and getting broader input.

NM stated that she was concerned about JS's workload and the impact on the HR functions. JS stated that his focus would need to be on fall town meeting and the town's day-to-day business, as well as 5 contract negotiations beginning around January, town center issues, and the DPW

building. He stated that he could not realistically accomplish all of the goals that had been set out for the TA.

PS stated that we should add working on a termination policy to a future agenda.

The members discussed reviewing the TA job description and town by-laws.

JS stated that an open meeting law complaint had been filed.

JG stated that she would like to see the PB show support to the department heads. JS stated that overall he did not sense any serious morale problems at this time.

NM asked if there was any additional public comment.

Cynthia Hill stated that she believed it was a conflict of interest to have the same person in the role of Assistant TA and HR Director because it makes it difficult to report problems with the TA to the HR Director.

Dave Watkins asked about an interim TA and whether any lawsuits had been filed. He stated that the PB should consider putting language in any termination policy it developed to address individuals voicing opinions/providing commentary about terminations. He was concerned that individuals stating their own opinions could lead to liability if the individuals are thought to be spokesmen for the town.

#### Annual Report

JS stated that this agenda item would be skipped.

#### Starting Wage Rate - Administrative Coordinator - DPW

JS stated that this would be Step 5 out of 10 steps on the C-15 scale in the SEIU bargaining unit. The rate is \$43.193. The candidate was set to start the following Monday, subject to approval of the PB on the wage. The group discussed the candidate's background and the wage rate.

PS moved to approve the hiring of the candidate at the Step 5 rate on the C-15 SEIU scale. MP seconded the motion. Five members having voted in the affirmative, the motion passed.

#### Department Heads - Succession Planning

PS noted that the PB had changed an earlier draft of the agenda to read "Succession Planning" rather than "Aging Report" and that "Succession Planning" should be used in the official meeting records.

JS distributed a "Department Heads Aging Summary" with a breakdown by age of the top 22 senior staff positions. He explained that under the municipal retirement system rules, individuals 55 and over with 10 years of service are eligible retire, so at least half of the current department heads could turn over in the next 5 years. JS stated that some departments have a logical second-in-command who could move up upon the retirement of the department head, but others had only

one professional position so the town would need to look to the outside because no one in a town position would have the relevant expertise. NM stated that we should start thinking about how to capture the institutional knowledge of these department heads.

OPEB Committee Report:

MP stated that the Committee had been reviewing the Segal report from the actuarial firm that had made recommendations about how much money to put aside to pay the unfunded liabilities for retiree healthcare. MP stated that the data that had been used was very broad and was not comparable to Wayland, so the Committee had asked the actuaries to provide additional information using the town's own experience data. MP reported that the Committee was also looking at ways to save on healthcare costs, for example by billing other towns where a retiree may have worked prior to coming to work in Wayland for a portion of the retiree medical costs. MP also stated that the Committee had noticed that for certain plans, towns in MA appeared to be paying more than an individual would pay for the same plan.

Next Meeting:

The members agreed to meet again on September 9 at 5:30 pm prior to the Open Meeting Law Training.

NW moved to adjourn the meeting. Five members having voted in the affirmative, the motion passed. The Board adjourned at 8:05 pm.