

PERSONNEL STUDY TASK FORCE – TOWN OF CONCORD, MA
FINAL MEETING MINUTES

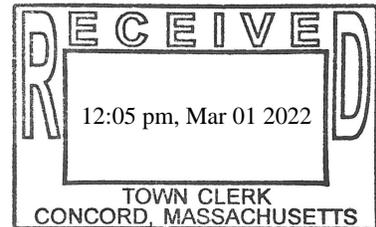
Date: February 7, 2022
Location: Virtual

Present from the Board: Ruth Lauer (Co-Chair), Anne Rarich (Co-Chair), Claude Cicchetti (Clerk), Paul Macone, Bruce Button.

Others Present: Terri Ackerman – Select Board, Susan Bates – Select Board, Kerry Lafleur, Acting Town Manager, Kate Hodges, Deputy Town Manager, William Mrachek – Personnel Board, Chris Carmody – Administrative Manager, Erin Mulcahy – Assistant Town Accountant, Karlen Reed, Mark Howell, Ned Perry, Anita Tekle, Doug Meagher.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to Order by Anne Rarich, Co-Chair at 4:01 pm by roll call.



2. Approval of Minutes

Ruth moved amended minutes for the meeting of January 24th that she had distributed in advance. In particular, the committee discussed the section on visitor discussion where a personnel professional was brought in to discuss the idea of surveys. The visitor spoke about surveys but also more broadly about the role of personnel boards. Upon a motion duly made and seconded it was voted 4-1 to approve the amended version of the minutes which removed the discussion that was seen to be off-topic.

3. Survey Discussion

Erin Mulcahy was introduced and said she was looking forward to working with the Task Force.

Anne thanked the Task Force for the draft questions, which will be discussed at a later meeting. Erin will be involved in some of the logistics, and we will need to think about the timing.

Kerry Lafleur discussed the issue that employees in collective bargaining negotiations must be considered when conducting a survey. Kerry also guided against questions such as those involving employee satisfaction, retention, recruitment, and health benefits, as these are the purview of the Town Manager and Personnel Board and are not Personnel Bylaw issues. If we were to receive responses outside our mission, Kerry asked that we share them with her.

Kerry notified the Task Force that as she has thought about the implications of a joint survey more deeply, she is looking toward doing an independent survey. Her reasoning was that not only are the types of questions very different, but the Task Force survey would be a public document, which could potentially skew the responses she might seek from a survey that she could do on her own. She was also concerned about timing, as our timelines might not match up well.

Paul Macone expressed disappointment that a joint survey was not going to happen and sought a middle path where this could still occur. Bruce echoed Paul's concerns.

4. Bylaw Discussion

Claude presented an overview of potential draft changes to the Personnel Bylaw via PowerPoint based upon his thoughts as informed by Task Force meetings to date. Initial thoughts include:

- Clarify the division of responsibilities between Town Manager & Personnel Board.
- State explicitly that significant personnel policy changes require review by the Personnel Board.
- Require employee notification of PB meetings where proposed policy changes are on the agenda.
- Suggest a process where employees can ask for proposed policy changes to be put on the Personnel Board agenda if it was not done so already.
- Increase the communication of reports, generated both internally and externally, between the Town Manager and the Personnel Board, focusing on strategic and management reporting.
- Study further and consider creating the new responsibilities of Town Employee Ombuds, to help address employee concerns and facilitate communication with the Personnel Board.
- Study further and consider changing the governance process between the Town Manager, Personnel Board, and Town Meeting.

The discussion afterward clarified some of the ideas were but there was no vote sought or taken. Paul Macone expressed concern that we were offering conclusions before we had completed gathering data. Anne and Ruth suggested we could do both at the same time in parallel.

5. Public Comment

Terri Ackerman thanked the Task Force for its efforts.

6. Next steps

Ruth and Anne will work with Erin Mulcahy on compiling the survey questions for next meeting. Bruce will talk to the Fire Chief and again to the Police Chief. Bruce is also getting calls from current and former employees. Claude will talk to the Finance Director. Ruth will talk to Recreation. Anne will contact the Council on Aging. Paul will talk again with Alan Cathcart. It was then decided to make the above meetings optional as both the PSTF and Town employees would be stretched thin as Town Meeting approaches.

7. Future Meeting Schedule

The Board re-affirmed the following schedule of future meetings through the end of the year.

- Monday, February 28, 4pm (Virtual)
- Monday, March 14, (Virtual)
- Monday, March 28, (Virtual)

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Claude Cicchetti, Clerk
approved February 28, 2022