



TOWN OF CONCORD PERSONNEL BOARD  
MINUTES  
Wednesday, March 8, 2023  
5:15 p.m.

Select Board's Room, Town House & Zoom Video Conference

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86010877264?pwd=dkMxaWpYcGZoVzlrUDhMbFY5NWWhxQT09>

**Members Present:** William Mrachek (Cochair), Elizabeth Cobbs (Cochair), Katherine Ryan, Nancy Crowley, Joe Emerick

**Staff Present:** Amy Foley, Human Resource Director; Kellie Hebert, Sr. Management Specialist

**Other:** Terri Ackerman, Select Board Liaison to the Personnel Board.

### 1. Call to Order

Bill: calling to order 5:17pm, with all members present. We have a Quorum.

Bill: First, I'd like to propose Liz Cobbs as a Co-Chair for this committee. Liz has agreed to continue her support of the Classification and Compensation study.

- Nancy: I take the motion that Liz Cobbs become co-chair of the Personnel Board.
- Joe: I second, Kate: aye.

### 2. Approval of Minutes

- December 21<sup>st</sup>: Agree
- February 8<sup>th</sup>: Nancy: accept the minutes as amended. Aye from All. Amy to amend and post.
- February 14<sup>th</sup>: Motion to approve these minutes. Nancy: I make the motion to accept these minutes Liz: Second, All in agreement.

**Amy:** I don't have the minutes from January 4<sup>th</sup> and I don't have December 5<sup>th</sup>. When the Personnel Board presented to the Select Board (12/5), where was a quorum, so minutes must be posted.

### 3. Classification & Compensation Study

**Joellen:** Good Afternoon, the presentation in your packet is included in what you have today. You can see all that has transpired since last Fall and bring you up to date re: where we are today.

- Slide 2: dovetails with what I went over with the employees, but I'll go into more detail here. It clarifies on the Table 2 what was shared with employees.
- Slide 3: we started after Labor Day last year, had some kick off meetings with employees; employees received a letter explaining all that was going to happen. We discussed the list of comparable communities and a special group of comparables for the Light Plant.
  - Kick off meetings covered the Job Evaluation process and drafted the classification plan.
  - At the same time, we were looking at the comparables.
  - We put aside the benefits piece—put it on hold for now.
  - By the end of next week, I'll be there to review the report with you. You will have seen it in advance, and we'll review on 3/22 and then again on 3/27<sup>th</sup> for the Public Hearing.
  - Slide 4: Here we went over the Job Analysis Questionnaire and reviewed this information in many ways—and people had multiple ways to get this information to us.
  - We understand that it is an emotional process for many. when everyone saw the table that you have, it was emotional—but we were only talking about the jobs here, not the individuals. It was hard not to look at yourself in filling out the questionnaire, but this is what we asked of the employees.
  - Slide 5 & 6: JOB ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRES (JAQ): we asked employees to hold a copy so that they would be able to look back at it once they had the final report and their positions.
  - Slide 7 & 8: this is where we finalized the jobs. It's good information to have on file. Some people did not have a role that had changed, but other positions have changed and then it was used to update job descriptions. We do understand that every community is different—there are unique issues with each town. So, through the interviews and the JAQs are helpful to our understanding of these roles.
  - Slide 9: Education and Training are the first factor. Here we capture all special skills and training that people need to manage their jobs. The higher the level checked, the more significant the job description would be.
  - Slide 10: with 9 factors, there is a balance that helps to level out the jobs—e.g. if you need a higher level of education vs. needing more of a physical demands on the job—these could end up at the same level in the classification system.
  - Slide 11: The JAQ is in the addendum; Internal Equity means that the positions in the same grade would all fall within the same pay ranges. We also recommended title changes.
    - Initially, there were 17 grades, but we've now added a grade at the very highest level.
    - The new grade will be explained more later.
  - Slide 12: Proposed Classification system outlines, with 4 grades as outlined on the slide.
  - Slide 13: Compensation and Benefits Survey: we looked at "Like" communities, with a separate "salary survey " for the Light Plant. In that, we defined the positions so that we had true comparisons. We do a lot of work in Massachusetts, so we had a lot of comparable data.
  - Slide 14: 8 criteria were used for Massachusetts. Many of them identify financials, so that we are giving you comparables that would be what you can pay.

- Light plant: the technical nature of these jobs command a higher salary, so we were able to determine those ranges based on the comparables.
- Slide 17: Salary ranges are a better gauge of the market vs. a specific salary. We feel confident in the information that we gathered.
  - On the benefits side, esp. when comparing to the private sector, it's important to emphasize when and where people are working. Compensation is one thing, but the structure of the work is a key component, especially if we look at the more comprehensive understanding of compensation.
- Slide 18: we calculated compensation of the 85<sup>th</sup> and 95<sup>th</sup> percentiles of the salaries of comparable communities.
  - Please note that these ranges are very high—they are very competitive. We have worked all over Massachusetts (49 reviews) and in Illinois we have done about 89 different reviews, as an example. Including our work in many other states, and in all cases, you are paying at higher end.
- Say a person were to shift jobs where they stay in band or if they want to seek a role in a higher band, then there are a lot of qualifications will change (e.g. higher level of education required).
- Slide 19: We have used Gradation and Range Spread.
  - Gradation: shifts in each grade (the salary ranges)
  - The range *spread*—originally, we calculated at 35% spread within a grade. But we changed that to 40% considering the reconsideration requests.
    - One thing we heard is that employees were concerned that their future earnings would have been limited if the bands were at a 35% range spread.
- Slide 20: For the Light Plant: there is a significant amount of training required for these roles—and that the Range Spread and Gradation were calculated understanding this fact.
- Slide 21: Reconsideration Process – we don't always do this part, but it was necessary in this case. We sent the forms to each employee, and then they got back to us by March 3<sup>rd</sup>.
  - I had meetings set up just before the deadline in case people needed more information to submit the reconsideration.
  - This was what we presented to employees on 2/21.
- Slide 22: We had about 55 reconsiderations—which is higher than I've had in other studies. Main reasons:
  - Compensation range is too low based on current range.
  - Position is classified too low.
  - Title changes
- Slide 23: We looked at all and I'm now working on the Draft Final Report (due 3/22). We want to go back to Department Heads (plan is on Monday, March 13<sup>th</sup>).
  - We can talk further about the next Public Hearing.

Liz: I'd like to see the Reconsideration Requests.

**Kate:** Isn't there a privacy concern?

**Joellen:** I've not done this that many times (perhaps 10 times?), so not sure what is best in terms of making this information public? Perhaps the shorter list—those that were not addressed with the changes we've made—were to be shared, then that might be best.

**Liz:** Is the assumption that sharing this information with the Personnel Board is a public statement?

**Joellen:** Perhaps just the co-chairs, or designated individuals on the Personnel Board could be tasked to review the reconsideration requests?

**Kate:** If there are some reconsideration requests that are not reconciled, what is the secondary process to address these concerns?

**Joellen:** At some point, you have to put it to rest. If you have gone through the process, and involve the department heads, then after that it has to be done.

- For example: we've take a lot of time to make sure that the positions are in the right place. My recommendation is that we have asked for feedback, we've heard them, and we've addressed them. It will be true that no employee will be in a lesser category than where they are now. There were some situations where people thought that their jobs should be classified differently. Mostly, these have been addressed. The vast majority of your employees are going to be positively impacted.

**Bill:** any questions?

**Joe:** what about next year? With the market changing so quickly—are we doing annual benchmarking in future or is it COLAs going forward?

**Joellen:** if you implement in FY24, then by FY25, you will look at the comps again to see if you need a general increase (looking at compensation comparisons); if you do that, then you will remain competitive. I do write about how to maintain the Compensation Plan going forward in the report. The primary piece is to assess.

**Joe:** Internal equity is understood, but with the MA equal pay act—my understanding of the law is that ranges are one part of it, but it is also important to have equity in the actual pay received. e.g. do all women fall at the lower end, that would be important to assess. It's also important to understand where people fall in the ranges and what they actually earn.

**Joellen:** You may have to follow up on this on your end; how gender and age work in your town, you would want to look internally on how people lay out in the ranges. We are establishing internal equity in the ranges and that complies with the law. How it specifically affects people, that would be a separate piece.

**Joe:** is there a target within the range where we want people to be based on their jobs? Is there a minimum of these ranges, say 50 percentile and the maximum is the 85 -95<sup>th</sup> percentiles?

**Joellen:** So the minimum is the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile. The ranges are 40% from min/max. But when we looked at the market, the minimum that you have set up is the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile. The individual range sheets; it starts at the average (50<sup>th</sup>, 60<sup>th</sup>, etc.). But the pay philosophy of the town wants to be above average.—

these are based on the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile. So, you have a 40% range based off the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile. And I think what you are asking is “where do people end up within the range?” It depends on many factors, including tenure but we are not there yet. But generally, we recommend that employees are below the range, they should be brought up into the range. We think they must be paid within the range. You don’t have anyone above the max in any range—if there were such a case, you’d have to deal with that, but you don’t have any roles in that position. In sum, you wanted to set the range based on that 85<sup>th</sup> percentile so you remain a good payer.

**Bill:** Re: Reconsideration requests, where the answer does not change—then what do we do? In Concord, more communication would be best... so what do you suggest? What do other communities do re: communication with folks. Much better to have one-on-one discussions with employees.

**Joellen:** For the most part, people requested things that we’ve addressed. No one is being “hurt” by these changes. I think that there are not that many people who are left dissatisfied. I think you need to address people with compassion, whether their concerns are addressed comprehensively or not.

We’ve discussed letter responses to each reconsideration request.

**Bill:** I encourage the town to do more rather than less in re: to communications. I think it would be good to ensure the employees that GOVHR and the Town are responding to their concerns.

**Bill:** You mentioned that the Department heads will have a meeting. Will you provide them information about how to communicate with their teams? We should make it clear that these roles are really important leadership roles. We want to ensure that we communicate with them in a way that they know we understand them as key employees in their organization.

**Joellen:** we had a lot of support from employees and from leaders in the town—they have been responsive and helpful.

**Kate:** I have one question: You mentioned the new grade that you added—why? Could you explain why it was added?

**Joellen:** Public Works supervisory position—we needed to build in another grade 15 and then had to renumber. We decided to break out separate grade ---public works, (and these jobs are in high demand); everything else is intact.

**Bill:** Terri we will recognize you from Select Board:

**Terri:** Great job, and having seen these before, I’d say this is well done. My question: how long do you think that this base plan will serve the town? How many years before another evaluation?

**Joellen:** 5-10 years or more. If you are diligent in following the instructions about maintaining the plan, then it will serve you well.

- If there are new duties or reclassifications, then that would shift a role, but each year, it should be reviewed with the Dept. Chairs as maintenance, but I think that is all you need.

**Terri:** We are also looking at the role of the Personnel Board. In the past, we’d have had a Personnel Board person support the review of the C&C. Is this feasible?

**Joellen:** You are having to deal with speed—the Town Meeting structure slows down the decision-making process significantly vs. other parts of the country. You are going to see that the changes/inability to hire quickly is going to be a challenge.

**Terri:** 2 questions on the details of the plan: e.g. page 56....Grade 10 Media Manager---I think it fits in Minuteman Media... but not really clear if this is the head of the media group or not?

**Amy:** The Media Manager—it's a rework of the "production manager" ... I'll confirm that.

**Terri:** So where is "station manager"? there is no "station manager"? or the "Media Manager" is going to run the whole studio?

**Amy:** yes.

**Terri:** Line worker grades 2 and 3...

**Amy:** In that particular field, 1 = the highest and goes down from there.

**Bill:** My understanding is that the Town Manger is responsible to share the recommendation with the Personnel Board regarding the C& C plan? With that recommendation then the Personnel Board acts. What are the steps in this process? Amy what are these steps to go forward?

**Amy:** I don't recall anything this formal but I don't bring anything to the Board that has not been endorsed by the Town Manager.

**Bill:** The assumption then is that if something has come to the Personnel Board, then it is ready to be acted upon? Ok.

**Liz:** Sorry, I don't see agreement from the Town Manager. Is this explanation correct?

**Town Manager:** I have been involved in the process and I think we're not ready to recommend it, but close. We are down to a handful of reconsideration requests. So I'd be happy to put that in writing if that is helpful.

**Bill:** It would be a nice part of the process to have it formally done. Thank you.

**Kate:** What other issues are needed to ensure that we are ready to review before we vote—I'd like to understand that better.

**Bill:** yes, agreed we still need to discuss that. Any Public Comments?

No one.

**Bill:** Thank you Joellen for the work—not at the finish line yet, but obviously we are near the end.

**Joellen:** Thank you and your town employees have been very helpful in the process. There was a lot of work to be done and they were supportive of the process. Almost there!

**Bill:** Kate made the point that we need to understand what additional information do we need to see before we're comfortable to vote on the study and the recommended plan? We need to understand what the additional information entails.

**Nancy:** lots of work—I'd like to see how they make out with the few employees are left with their reconsideration status. And in addition, the rationale to add the 18<sup>th</sup> grade. I would like to see an update of the reconsideration requests before voting.

**Kate:** Next draft of the report—would like to see that before we vote. I assume we will see that before we vote. The report that maps out methodologies and how this would be laid out.

Nancy: Yes, I'd like to see the additional grade 18 and how that was

**Amy:** We can get the draft plan out to the board end of next week.

**Joe:** What is the pay philosophy here? I'm still confused about that; what people actually make vs. just the range. It's important to understand in the town if there are discrepancies by gender or anything else across the pay ranges because they are pretty wide.

**Bill:** How to request it—in the minutes of this meeting, yes, but also how to get this analysis done and brought to us. Is it possible to do that work in order to answer Joe's question?

**Amy:** The Personnel Board surely needs to weigh in on the salary policy will be. Each year, the Personnel Board, after Town Meeting weighs in on the the policy about how people are paid within these ranges. That is different than a pay equity audit which would be more complicated. But we do have to look at actual pay

**Joe:** I'm concerned with the application of the ranges (which seem quite wide). I don't have an issue with the classification system as presented, but I'm concerned to look at the consistent and standard manner in which people were allocated actual pay within that range, based on experience and education. How it is applied is important.

**Liz:** Joe, are you concerned that with out a pay equity audit, then we can run into trouble down the road if we are not clear on where people sit in these ranges?

**Joe:** I don't think approving this is a problem, but I don't know how the town is actually paying people within these ranges. It's the actual pay philosophy that I don't see defined. Without knowing the impact of that, then it's hard to understand how people are allocated pay within the range. For example, an Assistant Treasurer position comes open and where do we target new hires within that range? It could be anywhere between \$72,000 and \$97,000. Where do we actually target in the range and are we doing that consistently?

**Town Manager:** I was trying to understand if you were asking about people coming in as new hires or existing employees. But I think we need to have more of these conversations. Until the plan is set, we cannot finalize an answer to these two questions.

**Bill:** I think it would be helpful to understand what additional work has to be done. Then, the Personnel Board members would be able to check up on what is to be done, with a clear understanding of timelines and goals going forward. That would helpful for everybody. The PB to understand what to check up on and help to define and refine what has to be done going forward. Having some next steps written down and shared—that would be very helpful.

**Liz:** so this point goes on the list of what we need to see for the vote on the C&C plan?

**Bill:** No, I don't think we need the list of work going forward fully defined before the vote. I think once we hear from the Town Manager we can understand where we are with the vote to proceed with the C&C Plan and whether we will support Article 5 or 6 for Town Meeting.

**Kate;** Amy, you are so busy, then can't we put these things in a parking lot for later? Amy you are so busy, so if it's not information that we need to vote, then is it a parking lot to push off to after the vote.

**Joe:** Then if there is a parking lot, then let's have the parking lot plan outlined as part of the vote. I can provide you some background information about how to set up a "pay philosophy" going forward. I think this would be good for the town to have.

**Amy:** great, thank you, that would be helpful.

**Bill:** This is actually a key point: The Personnel Board can provide expertise to the town that will be beneficial for all. Joe, thanks for that addition.

**Bill:** Any public comment? No, so let's vote to adjourn. Great session, thank you all!

➤ Kate: Move to adjourn. Nancy: Second All in agreement.

**Materials referenced at the meeting:**

- Minutes of 12/21/2022, 2/8/2023 & 2/15/2023 meetings
- Timeline for Bringing a Classification & Compensation Plan Proposal forward to Town Meeting, dated 2/21/2023
- GovHR presentation slides from 2/21/2023 employee meetings: Draft Classification and Compensation Plan
- Personnel Board's presentation slides from 2/27/2023 Public Hearing
- GovHR presentation slides from 3/8/2023 Personnel Board Meeting: Draft Classification and Compensation Plan

***Minutes approved 3/22/2023***