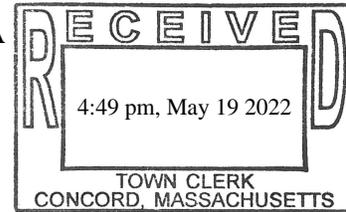


PERSONNEL STUDY TASK FORCE – TOWN OF CONCORD, MA
MEETING MINUTES

Date: March 28, 2022
Location: Virtual



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

Others Present: Susan Bates – Select Board, Bill Mrachek – Personnel Board, Kate Hodges – Deputy Town Manager, Erin Mulcahy – Assistant Town Accountant, Kaari Tari – Concord Town Clerk, Malysa Simard – Finance Assistant, Karlen Reed, Mark Howell, Ned Perry, Anita Tekle, Doug Meagher, Joseph O’Connor.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to Order by Ruth Lauer, Co-Chair at 4:20 pm by roll call after some minor technical difficulties.

2. Approval of Minutes

After a short discussion including some amended wording offered by Bruce, Ruth moved and it was duly seconded to approve the minutes as amended.

3. Initial Discussion

Anne noted the correspondence to the PSTF by Ned Perry and very much appreciated his perspective on the past and future of the Personnel Board.

Anne thanked Erin for all of her work on the survey on behalf of the Task Force, noting the very high response rate. Anne clarified that each separate comment represents one person for that question and that the order of the answers for each question is randomized. Ruth echoed the significance of the high response rate.

Anne suggested members of the Task Force use the survey results to inform our responses for suggested changes to the Personnel Bylaw.

4. Bylaw Discussion

Anne talked about how the role of the Personnel function has evolved and how we need to be cognizant of these changes.

Anne started off the discussion of the draft report to the Select Board and the format it might take. Some of the sections are fairly long and complex, so the discussion of these will occur at our next meeting. Ruth talked about Sections 3 & 4 of the Bylaw. Claude offered some additional wording for Section 3, which Ruth supported, as did Paul. Ruth went on to discuss some of the details of the Policies and Procedures that are envisioned by the Bylaw.

Anne talked about the need for Town governance to be nimble and suggested that there might be a number of sections that could move from the Bylaw to Policies and Procedures.

Paul discussed the past practice of having an employee newsletter and how helpful it was for communication and morale, giving a few examples. Ruth concurred, giving a shout-out to Doug Meagher for his work on this newsletter. Anita Tekle mentioned that some of the past newsletters should be on file at the Town House, and Susan Bates explained that some of the most recent ones were available digitally as they had been distributed via email. Susan also pointed out, relevant to an earlier discussion, that Finance Committee normally had an observer to the Personnel Board

Claude talked about how discussion of Sections 7 & 8 of the Bylaw would benefit from the perspectives of the HR Director and Town Manager to see if any changes would benefit hiring or retention. He also spoke about the idea of an “Employee Ombuds” to attend Personnel Board meetings. Paul expressed concern about the need for such a role as well as the potential legal liability.

5. Public Comment

Ned Perry thanked the PSTF for their work and questioned whether it was still practice for the Finance Committee to observe and comment on Personnel Board meetings and issues.

Anita Tekle questioned whether employee concerns are actually brought to the Personnel Board regularly, as her perspective is that past minutes of this committee do not reflect such discussions.

Mark Howell suggested that only those relatively immutable responsibilities should go into the Bylaw and that the best place for a number of other responsibilities should be in the Select Board’s Charge to the Personnel Board.

6. Future Meeting Schedule

The Board affirmed the scheduling of the next meeting.

- Monday, April 11, (Virtual)

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Claude Cicchetti, Clerk