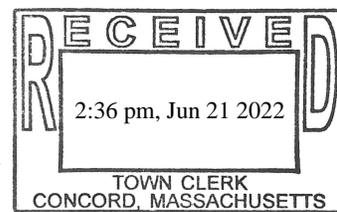


PERSONNEL STUDY TASK FORCE – TOWN OF CONCORD, MA  
MEETING MINUTES



Date: May 9, 2022 4PM  
Location: 141 Keyes Rd Conference Room, hybrid

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

Others Present: Terri Ackerman, Chr. Select Board; Ned Perry

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to Order by Anne Rarich Co-Chair at 4 pm with a roll call of those present. In the absence of Claude Cicchetti, Ruth Lauer was elected Clerk *pro tem* by a roll call vote.

Bruce Button	Aye
Ruth Lauer	Aye
Paul Macone	Aye
Anne Rarich	Aye

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Upon a Motion duly made and seconded, it was  
VOTED (by roll call) to approve the Minutes of April 11, 2022 and April 25, 2022.

Bruce Button	Aye
Ruth Lauer	Aye
Paul Macone	Aye
Anne Rarich	Aye

**3. Correspondence**

Anne Rarich referred to a number of communications that were distributed with the agenda packet: a Town Manager-provided letter about the Labor Counsel role in releasing the Employee Survey; comment on that message from the Fire Chief; and a response to the Fire Chief from Paul Macone; a letter of resignation from the task force from Claude Cicchetti and confirmation thereof by Select Board Chair Terri Ackerman; and a task force message of thanks to the employees for their participation in the Employee Survey. In addition, Anne distributed a copy of draft recommendations gleaned from homework the task force has been engaged in that should have been included in the agenda packet.

**4. Discussion on How the Task Force Anticipates Making its Report to the Select Board**

The Personnel Study Task Force is a creation of the Select Board that came out of actions at the 2021 Annual Town Meeting. Although no Hearing on the task force work is mentioned in its Charge, it is typically a component of resolving studies such as bylaws or long-range plans that provides an opportunity for public input. The Task force is nearing its conclusion and it is timely to check in with the Select Board on its intentions.

Ruth Lauer expressed the opinion that deciding the timing and manner of dissolution of the task force and whether to include a Hearing is the prerogative of the Select Board. Should there be a

Hearing, the Select Board might assign the jurisdiction to the task force, the Select Board, or the Personnel Board. Members expressed opinions on the task force role.

Paul Macone suggested that we focus on agreeing on what the task force recommendations and how close we are to conclusions. Anne noted that she worked back from the timing of preparing actions for ATM 2023 and indicated that making our report in June/July would enable the recommendations to move through the Warrant and Town Meeting process smoothly. Anne Rarich offered to contact the Select Board Chair to inform him of the likely timeline of making the final report and getting a sense of what to do about a Hearing.

## **5. Draft Recommendations for Report to the Select Board**

The Task Force members stepped through their individual assignments on the resource documents and offered their conclusions. It is the consensus of the task force that the Personnel Board remain a strong component of the Town relationship with its employees. **Bruce Button** stated his opinion that sections 1 and 2 of the Bylaw refer to maintaining an equitable and efficient system of personnel administration and need little change. The 1985 document is the precursor to the Personnel Bylaw and has never been rescinded. In his opinion, it continues to be an operative document and its stated activities need to be implemented. His suggested recommendations are: Personnel Board should be fully staffed by the Select Board; meetings with agenda packets containing data for decisions should be scheduled regularly and frequently; data on the Personnel Board webpage should be maintained, not removed; the addition of an Employee Organization Chart with job descriptions is crucial for accountability and must be provided any classification action is taken; there should be an audit of the Human Resources Department; the grievance policy should be removed from the bylaw as it is controlled by law. The Town is experiencing 50% employee turnover that needs to be addressed through training, recruitment, and retention efforts by the Personnel Board.

**Ruth Lauer** stated that Sections 3 and 4 of the Bylaw refer to Personnel Policies and Procedures (PPPs) and Employment Status. She stated that PPPs are supposed to be printed and available to employees. However, PPPs have not been maintained, are out of date with the bylaws they reference, and are not available for study. As such, employees are not current with their rights and responsibilities. The need for a new PPP has come to light, due to the pandemic-- a Remote Work Policy. Ruth also suggested moving references to Employee Assistance Program benefits so that this vital benefit is easier to find and make use of. Task Force discussions have indicated that converting the Personnel Bylaw into a Policy document (and an Employee Manual/Handbook) would enable the Personnel Board to act more nimbly and address long-time complaints of limitations put on the Personnel Board role. In her opinion, first the task force must settle on its recommendations for updating and strengthening the bylaw.

**Paul Macone** stated that Sections 5 and 6 address the Compensation Plan. There is no issue with the authority stated. However, both indicate periodic review of compensation and job descriptions. There is no evidence that this is being done. The last compensation review was done 14 years ago. The longer this goes on the more likely it will require a consultant and added expense to accomplish. The language states that the Personnel Board “shall” review. Timely documentation is the issue. In his opinion, references to Longevity Pay should be examined to update and mirror what is granted in collective bargaining contracts, i.e., access to the Beede Center rather than compensation.

**Claude Cicchetti’s** recommendations cover Sections 7, 8, and 9 – salary schedules, in training status, and hours of work. In his opinion, the Town Manager and not the Personnel Board should be the responsible party for temporary and limited status positions.

**Anne Rarich** stated that Sections 10—20 – pay policy, sick leave, holidays, bereavement leave, personal leave, military leave, jury duty, unpaid leave, family and medical leave, leave accruals, interruption of employment, and leave for temporary and limited status employees. She recommends the Personnel Board review these sections and consider a variety of options from amend, refresh, clarify, and keep as is.

**Paul Macone** mentioned items that have been cited throughout the task force study and in the Employee Survey: 15 sick days, “use or lose” vacation accrual, investigating sick leave benefits in other towns.

**6. Pending Meetings**

Monday, May 23 141 Keyes Rd, hybrid

Monday June 13 141 Keyes Rd, hybrid

**7. Public Comment**

There was no public comment offered.

**8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm by roll call.

Upon a Motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED (by roll call)

Bruce Button	Aye
Ruth Lauer	Aye
Paul Macone	Aye
Anne Rarich	Aye

Respectfully submitted,  
Ruth Lauer, Clerk pro tem  
Approved: June 13, 2022