



TOWN OF SHREWSBURY

Richard D. Carney Municipal Office Building
100 Maple Avenue
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545-5398

Minutes Personnel Board Meeting February 26, 2021

Present: Theresa Flynn, Anthony Froio & Robert Cashman

Also Present: Kevin Mizikar, Kristen Las, Kristina Anderson

T. Flynn called the meeting to order in Google Hangout at 8:33 AM using an agenda and meeting notice dated February 23, 2021.

On a motion by A. Froio and a second by T. Flynn, the Board voted 3-0 to accept the minutes of July 23, 2020, as amended.

K. Las then explained the Fund Transfer letter from Town Accountant M. Thompson, stating that the numbers, detailed by department, reflected in the document the 1% cost of living adjustment approved by Town Meeting to be effective October 1, 2020. A. Froio made a motion to approve, T. Flynn seconded, and through a roll call vote the fund transfer was approved. K. Anderson would send this document through DocuSign for signature and processing following the adjournment of the meeting.

T. Flynn then moved on to the Job Analysis Questionnaire (JAQ) agenda item, and inquired if there was a specific time of year or process that employees had the opportunity to re-complete the questionnaire. K. Anderson informed the board that employees have the opportunity to complete this questionnaire at any time. T. Flynn then inquired if other changes were foreseen. K. Las responded that the JAQ's being addressed at the meeting were the only ones on the horizon, and added that the recommended classification changes would not disrupt internal equity.

The board then moved on to discuss the vacancy within the Engineering Division of the Department of Public Works. K. Anderson explained that after the retirement of J. Rahmati, Assistant Civil Engineer - Surveyor, A. Truman, Division Manager – Town Engineer and J. Howland, Public Works Director, made the decision to alter the job description and job title for this role to better serve the needs of the division. The Board discussed if the job title that would not be backfilled should remain on the Classification and Compensation schedule. A. Froio suggested that the vacant titles remain on the schedule, R. Cashman and T. Flynn unanimously agreed that the vacant titles should remain on the schedule, as needs change over time and employees may aspire to that title in the future. A. Froio recommended an annual conversation with Department Heads to confirm that the titles on the Classification and Compensation

schedule serve the needs of the department. K. Las agreed and noted that all department heads are completing a five year staffing plan in order for the Town to have a strategic staffing approach in the near future.

A. Froio then made a motion to approve the classification changes of K. Stockwell and C. Willis from Grade 3 to Grade 4, based upon the score of the JAQ's. Through a roll call vote the two classification changes were approved.

A. Froio then made a motion to approve addition of the new Engineering title, Assistant Town Engineer, in Grade 5 of the Classification and Compensation schedule. T. Flynn seconded and through a roll call vote the title addition was approved. T. Flynn then asked K. Anderson if she foresaw further changes to the schedule. K. Anderson responded that further changes are not expected at this time. A. Froio stated that he found the procedure to be healthy for the Town, as we were able to react to business needs in a timely manner, as opposed to having to wait until Town Meeting.

The board then moved on to discuss the Introductory Period, previously referred to as the Probationary Period within the Personnel Bylaw. T. Flynn inquired how this period was removed from the bylaw. K. Anderson explained it occurred by mistake at the 2020 annual town meeting when the step language was removed from the bylaw. K. Mizikar further explained that in the state of Massachusetts, once the probationary period has completed, decisions related to the continuation of employment become more of a legal challenge. A. Froio agreed with K. Mizikar and noted that introductory periods are common in both the private and public sectors, further stating that a ninety day period is common in the private sector, and inquiring what the Town's comparable communities do. R. Cashman noted that civil service has a six month probationary period in order for the supervisor to determine if an individual can complete the job duties effectively. K. Anderson then went on to discuss the Bereavement Leave section of the Personnel Bylaw, noting that the addition of step parents did not make it into the amendments approved at the 2020 Annual Town Meeting due to an oversight. A. Froio agreed with the addition of step parents in order to remain competitive. K. Anderson will collect the probationary period data from the Town's comparable communities and redline the Personnel Bylaw for discussion at the next meeting.

K. Mizikar then discussed union contracts set to expire on June 30, 2021, Custodial and Public Works Unions. K. Mizikar noted that the Town is off cycle with the Police and Fire Unions due to the need to address FLSA issues, and therefore open the contract mid cycle. K. Mizikar further explained that the Town signed one year agreements with the Custodial and Public Works Unions a year ago due to the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, and that in these negotiations the Town would return to a multiyear agreement.

K. Mizikar then moved on to the Performance Based Appraisal system, stating the department heads were working with their staff on employee goal setting, with professional/technical and administrative employee goals due back to the Town Manager's Office by March 1, 2021. The Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, and Department Heads had all set goals at the time of

conversation. He further explained that training was provided to all employees in December of 2020 regarding this new process, and that those trainings were recorded to provide to new employees. K. Mizikar noted that he foresaw the goal setting process maturing year over year, and explained that the performance period ran from April 1 to March 31 of any given year. K. Mizikar stated that the Town will introduce working with the board on performance based increases and continue to work with the board on COLA increases. A. Froio inquired how success would be measured against the goals. K. Mizikar responded that his intention was to enhance communication between the Department Head and employee, and that the options for measurement were “Does Not Meet”, “Meets” and “Exceeds” the goal. Progress would be measured throughout the performance period, with monthly meetings expected between the department head and employee to check in on progress. Department Heads had been advised to come to the Town Manager’s office with issues throughout the performance period in order to address the issue and pivot to a new goal if necessary. K. Mizikar further explained that employee goals were being reviewed by the Office of the Town Manager in order to ensure consistency in how challenging the goals were across classifications, and address anomalies in advance to the beginning of the performance period. A. Froio stated he liked how the Town connected all levels of the organization, aligning everyone to be vested in the same goals and measurement of success. A. Froio added that this process forces department heads to invest in the development of their staff and that he agreed with the Town Manager’s Office reviewing and managing the program.

Moving forward, R. Cashman inquired if there were any key positions that were currently vacant. K. Mizikar responded that all leadership positions were filled, but the Town was struggling with a vacant Maintenance Craftsman position within the Parks and Cemetery Division of the Department of Public Works due to the Commercial Driver’s License requirement, required during snow and ice events. K. Mizikar noted that the Town was revisiting the licensure needs across the Public Works Union.

K. Mizikar went on to explain that in Fiscal Year 2022 he was working on putting the Town in a stable position for the succession of the Town Accountant, who had been with the Town since the 1980s, as M. Thompson, Town Accountant, had a planned retirement date of October of 2022. K. Mizikar explained that he had budgeted for an Assistant Town Manager – Finance and Administrative role for Fiscal Year 2022, a recommendation from a 2016 study conducted by the state. This position would be responsible for the financial functions of internal departments. K. Mizikar noted that M. Thompson would most likely be promoted into this role in order to assist in improving processes in advance of her departure, as well as train the new Town Accountant.

K. Mizikar then went on to explain the movement within the Town Manager’s Office over the last several months, stating that the Benefits Coordinator position was moved into the Town Manager’s Office in order to stop the trend of high turnover in that position as well as take a step in building a central Human Resources function. K. Mizikar went on to explain that D. Snowdon had been promoted from Assistant to the Town Manager - Management Analyst to Division Manager – Business Manager within the Department of Public Works, and A. Martinez had entered into an interim role as she grew into the Assistant to the Town Manager - Management

Analyst position. A. Martinez's Administrative Assistant position had not been backfilled from when she entered into the interim role, as the Town Manager's office chose to wait for the right person as the future of the Town Manager's Office evolves, as opposed to making a quick hire.

T. Flynn inquired about the five year staffing analysis and long term planning being conducted by Department Heads. K. Mizikar replied that this request was a part of the strategic planning and goal setting process. As opposed to receiving annual requests for new positions during the budget setting process, he had asked department heads to think more long term about their needs over the next five years.

A. Froio then inquired about the morale of Town staff, with the pandemic persisting and slow vaccination roll out. K. Mizikar replied that the morale is overall very good, with two polar views on returning to the office, with some wanting to be onsite, business as usual, and others who were hesitant to return. K. Mizikar went on to explain that the Town had weathered the challenges very well, and did not see the municipal setting having a large amount of employees who were 100% remote in the post-pandemic world.

By a motion made by T. Flynn, seconded by A. Froio, through a roll call vote, the meeting adjourned at 9:36 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristina B. Anderson
Assistant to the Town Manager
Human Resources Coordinator

Referenced Materials
FY21 Classification and Compensation Schedule
Job Analysis Questionnaire
Fund Transfer documents