

**Town of Auburn
Joint Personnel Board
Board of Selectmen, Library Trustees & Police Commission
October 28, 2015**

Selectmen Present: James Headd, Richard Eaton and Dale Phillips

Library Trustees Present: Nancy Mayland, Jean Worster and Lorraine Senechal

Police Commissioners Present: David Dion and Glenn Shaw

Also Present: Bill Herman, Town Administrator.

Mr. James Headd convened the meeting at 5:03 p.m.

Consideration of COLA / Step Increases for FY 2016 Budget

Mr. Herman provided the Board members with the calculations from the COLA formula contained in the Personnel Policy, which is to average the Social Security COLA and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Northeast as of October. The Social Security Administration has announced there will be no Social Security COLA in 2016, while the CPI number is currently -0.1%. The resulting average is -0.05%.

Section 4:1.2 of the Personnel Policy states: "In the event that the average between the Consumer Price Index for the Northeast and the Social Security COLA results in a negative number, there shall be no COLA issued for that year. Nor will there be a corresponding decrease in wages based on the negative number."

David Dion indicated he has in the past supported recommendations that included a COLA and a Step increase for employees because the policy supported funding the numbers. He felt that with the numbers for a COLA coming out to the negative, the Boards should still adhere to the terms of the policy, which would indicate step increases could be budgeted, but no COLA would be issued in 2016. Nancy Mayland agreed with Mr. Dion's comments, and felt it would be best to be consistent in adhering to the terms of the Personnel Policy.

David Dion moved to include funding for step increases in the FY 2016 budget, but that no Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) would be budgeted

in compliance with the terms of the Personnel Policy. Second by Glenn Shaw. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Consideration of Potential Amendments to the Town of Auburn Personnel Policy

Mr. Headd noted the remaining items on the agenda were consideration of five proposed changes to the Town of Auburn Personnel Policy. He asked the Town Administrator to run through the proposals as presented.

Section 2:1 – Staff Supervision

Mr. Herman reported the Town's Personnel Policy currently includes the positions of Town Clerk and Tax Collector for the purposes of wages and benefits for the full-time positions. However, as elected officials, the two positions do not have direct staff supervision as employees do because elected officials are not legally considered to be "employees". The following section is proposed to be included in the Personnel Policy to ensure this standard is clearly expressed:

2:1 Town Clerk and Tax Collector

For the purposes of this policy, the elected positions of Town Clerk and Tax Collector are included in the overall wage and benefit practices of the Town of Auburn. However, as elected officials, none of the appointing authorities have direct supervisory authority over the individuals serving in these elected positions. This is in compliance with RSA 31:9-b and RSA 41:25 for the Town Clerk and RSA 41:25 and RSA 41:33 for the Tax Collector.

Nancy Mayland moved to approve the proposed amendment to the Town's Personnel Policy concerning the inclusion of Section 2:1 Town Clerk and Tax Collector. Seconded by Dale Phillips. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Section 6:2.1 – Earned Time

Mr. Herman indicated the Joint Board had made an adjustment in 2014 that eliminated the provision of part-time employees being eligible for Earned Time benefits, and provided for a transition in wage adjustments for then current employees who had been receiving the benefit, while eliminating the benefit as of

April 1, 2014. At this point all of those adjustments have been made and are in place, and the recommendation is to clean up the language of the policy now to simply reflect that “Effective April 1, 2014, any part-time employee will not be eligible for earned time accrual.” And not include the transformation process which has been completed and is not necessary moving forward.

Further, it clarifies that for all employees hired after April 1, 2014, years of service for the calculation of accrued earned time benefits will be based on the date of continuous full-time employment with the Town.

Mr. Herman indicated that it was felt this would be a cleaner presentation of the current standards in practice. It would also eliminate the situation of an employee moving from part-time employment to full-time employment and having their earned time benefit be calculated to include their date of hire for part-time employment, which would entitle such employees to a higher rate of accrual than their full-time employment would provide. He indicated this would not affect any current full-time employee, only individuals hired in the future.

Glenn Shaw moved to approve the proposed amendment to Section 6:2.1 and 6:2.2 of the Town’s Personnel Policy concerning Earned Time Accrual for full-time employees. Seconded by Nancy Mayland. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Section 9:3.3 – Social Security and Medicare

Mr. Herman reported the Town had become aware of an issue earlier this year involving retirees of the New Hampshire Retirement System – Group II (police and fire) who return to employment in a part-time capacity. The Social Security Administration refers to such individuals as “Group II rehired annuitants”, and they are not subject to Social Security contributions through their part-time employment. As a result, the Social Security and Medicare section of the Town’s Personnel Policy is being proposed to reflect this standard as follows:

9:3.3 Social Security and Medicare

In addition to the above retirement programs, the following Social Security and Medicare pertains:

Group 1: All full-time and part-time municipal employees are required to contribute to Social Security and Medicare at a rate established by current regulation. The Town will contribute at a rate also required by current regulations.

Group II: All regular full-time firefighters and police officers hired after April 1, 1985, are required to contribute to Medicare, but are not subject to Social Security. All part-time fire fighters and police officers are required to contribute to both Social Security and Medicare unless they are Group II rehired annuitants receiving retirement benefits from the New Hampshire Retirement System. Rehired annuitants are not subject to contribute to Social Security. For those subject to Social Security, the Town will contribute also at a rate as required by current regulations.

Mr. Herman outlined the process the Town went through earlier this year to identify the standards the Town was obligated to follow, and the refunding of approximately \$30,000 in such withholdings for nine individuals from the past three years, three months and 15 days. The Town has submitted corrected reports to the federal government, and will be refunded both the employees' and the employer's Social Security contributions for this time period. It was felt the Personnel Policy should capture the standard that the Town must follow.

Glenn Shaw moved to approve the proposed amendment to Section 9:3.3 of the Town's Personnel Policy to include the standard for Group II rehired annuitants. Seconded by David Dion. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Section 18 – Job Descriptions

Mr. Herman reported all of the Town and Library job descriptions are adopted by reference as part of the Personnel Policy. In looking at the description in Section 18, it was noted it only refers to the descriptions prepared in 2005 and then modified in 2011. He indicated during those years, all of the job descriptions system wide were affected. Since 2011, the Board had approved modifications to or additional job descriptions for new positions created since 2011, and it made sense to note those in the policy to ensure we are working from job descriptions the Joint Board had approved. In addition, the Library Trustees have recently re-worked the job description for the Library Director due to the recent departure of the Director and their efforts to hire a replacement.

The proposed adjustments to Section 18 – Job Descriptions is as follows:

18. Job Descriptions

The Town of Auburn Job Descriptions, initially prepared in 2005 and modified in 2011, are adopted as part of these Personnel Policies by reference. The Job Descriptions form the basis for the Town of Auburn Salary Classification Plan

(Appendix A) and Town of Auburn Wage Schedule (Appendix B) that are included in these policies.

In addition to the Job Descriptions referenced above, the following new or revised Job Descriptions have also been adopted by reference as part of these Personnel Policies:

Assistant Town Clerk & Tax Collector dated June 4, 2014

Police Department Office Manager dated June 26, 2014

Police Department Administrative Assistant/Dispatcher dated June 26, 2014

Land Use Administrator dated November 19, 2014

Library Director dated October 28, 2015

Nancy Mayland reported the Library Trustees worked with Ricky Sirois to review and adjust the job description for the Library Director before he left to ensure that it was reflective of the work the position was doing and placed the appropriate priority on the tasks included in the description. She indicated they reordered tasks, added some additional tasks such as the social media activity, and cleaned it up to represent the position as it currently exists. The changes do not change the labor grade for the position, so there is no financial impact as a result. The Trustees wanted to have the adjusted job description to assist in the hiring of the new Library Director.

Nancy Mayland moved to approve the proposed amendment to Section 18 of the Town's Personnel Policy and the revised job description for the position of Library Director. Seconded Jean Worster. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Section 18:1 – Town Clerk & Tax Collector

Mr. Herman indicated with the positions of Town Clerk and Tax Collector being elected positions, it is possible that one person could be elected to serve in both positions at the same time. That is the case in some communities with elected positions, while some other communities have taken steps to formally combine the two positions into one position. Although the Board of Selectmen are in agreement they do not want to encourage this to occur, the Joint Board should consider addressing the potential that this could occur by establishing a Labor Grade for the positions of Town Clerk and Tax Collector should the positions be held by one individual. Absent addressing the possibility in the policy, should someone be elected to both positions, under the current policy, the Town would be obligated to pay two salaries to the individual -- one set for the Town Clerk and one set for the Tax Collector.

Mr. Herman provided the Board members with information collected from communities around the state with combined positions, in addition to single Town Clerk and single Tax Collector positions. In all cases, it appears the combined positions are paid at a rate slightly higher than the Town Clerk rates of pay. Noting the Town of Auburn Classification Plan has established the Tax Collector's position as a Labor Grade 8 and the Town Clerk's as a Labor Grade 12, Mr. Herman is proposing the Board consider adopting the standard that should one person hold both positions, they would be paid at a Labor Grade 13.

The proposed amendment for the Personnel Policy is as follows:

18:1 Town Clerk and Tax Collector

The elected position of Town Clerk has been established as a Labor Grade 12 in the Town of Auburn Classification Plan, while the elected position of Tax Collector has been established as a Labor Grade 8. Should one individual be elected to serve in both positions at the same time, for the purposes of this policy, the positions will be treated as a combined Town Clerk & Tax Collector position and shall be established as a Labor Grade 13.

Richard Eaton and Dale Phillips both stressed that they felt it was in the Town's best interest that the positions not be held by one individual, but also noted as elected positions, no one can control who is elected to office. Mr. Eaton felt establishing this role at a Labor Grade 13 would actually encourage people to run for both positions. His view was the Town should discourage it by establishing the combined position at a Labor Grade 10 – a range in between the current standards for the individual positions.

Nancy Mayland and Jean Worster both felt such a labor grade would not be appropriate as one person doing both jobs is considerably more work than doing one or the other. A proposed Labor Grade should be commensurate with the level of work and responsibilities, as the other positions have been treated in the Town plan. Glenn Shaw asked if the Town couldn't save money by having, in essence, one position versus two. Mr. Herman indicated he didn't think so, as in order to provide the full coverage of the office that would be needed for both the Town Clerk and Tax Collector functions throughout the year, to cover during vacations, illness, training programs, conferences, etc., he felt the Town would need to have a minimum of two additional positions, although possibly not full-time. One would be a Deputy Town Clerk and the other a Deputy Tax Collector. When figuring out all of the needed time, he felt it could actually cost the Town more money than it does today. He indicated he agreed with the Selectmen that the Town is better served with two separate people filling these positions

versus one person holding them both, but we can't control that with both positions being elected positions.

David Dion moved to approve the proposed addition of Section 18:1 – Town Clerk and Tax Collector to the Town's Personnel Policy. Seconded by Dale Phillips. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes – June 17, 2015

Dale Phillips moved to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2015 meeting as presented. Seconded by David Dion. A vote was taken; seven were in favor and one (James Headd) abstained, the motion passed.

Other Business

Mr. Herman indicated that depending on the outcome of the negotiations for the collective bargaining agreement for the Auburn Police Union, there may be a need for a meeting of the Joint Personnel Board to consider an additional proposed change to the Personnel Policy. He indicated because negotiations were ongoing, he was not able to get into any specifics, but there is one item under discussion which we would need to come back to the Joint Board for consideration for all Town employees. He felt we would have a good indication in about a month whether there will be an issue or not, and we may not need the Joint Board to meet any earlier than January 2016.

Adjourn

Nancy Mayland made a motion to adjourn; Lorraine Senechal seconded the motion; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously, and the meeting stood adjourned at 5:35 P.M.