

**Town of Auburn
Joint Personnel Board
Board of Selectmen, Library Trustees & Police Commission
December 2, 2014**

Selectmen Present: Russell Sullivan, James Headd and Richard Eaton

Library Trustees Present: Nancy Mayland, Fay Hanscomb and Jean Worster

Police Commissioners Present: David Dion, Dennis McCarthy and Ken Robinson, Sr.

Also Present: Dennis Vieira and Bill Herman, Town Administrator.

Mr. Russell Sullivan convened the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Consideration of Potential FY 2015 COLA and/or Step Increases

Mr. Sullivan asked the Town Administrator to run through the information provided. Mr. Herman advised the Joint Board members that for the FY 2015 municipal budget, a decision had to be whether any wage adjustments would be budgeted. The Board's options were a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA); a Step increase; a combination of a COLA and a Step Increase, or no increases at all.

Mr. Herman noted the Personnel Policy directs how a COLA would be calculated, which is the average of the Social Security COLA and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for October. Mr. Herman noted the Social Security COLA is 1.7%, while the CPI was 1.2%. The average of the two is 1.45%. If a COLA is granted, it is done across the board to all employees effective April 1st. So a COLA is only reflected for nine months in year it is granted.

A Step increase is a 2% increase, and is granted only upon a positive job performance review. If granted, the increase would be given on the individual employee's employment anniversary date, so they are scattered throughout the year. And not every employee is assured to receive a Step increase.

Mr. Herman noted under the terms of the two-year Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Auburn Police Union, the Town is obligated to propose funding for Step increases for the police officers. If all other Town employees are provided a COLA, then a COLA is to also be provided to the members of the Auburn Police Union.

Mrs. Mayland indicated she would like to see the Town only budget for a 2% Step increase. She felt the tax rate increase was significant in 2014, and Town officials should do their best to hold the line of spending.

Mrs. Hanscomb agreed with Mrs. Mayland's point of view and felt they should only recommend a Step increase.

Mr. Sullivan felt there was a very small increase between where the employees are today should no increase be granted (total expense of \$1,716,636) and the bottom line of providing a COLA and a Step to employees (\$1,740,015). He noted that difference was \$23,379 and wouldn't make a significant difference in the bottom line of the Town budget.

Mr. Dion felt a COLA was intended to keep individuals whole to the rate of inflation, while a combined COLA and Step would enable individuals to get slightly ahead. He felt the Joint Board should recommend to the Budget Committee that the Town provide both a COLA and a Step, noting the Budget Committee would have the option of funding one or the other, or both.

Mr. Herman noted the budget numbers presented today includes funding for the eighth full-time police officer beginning July 1st, as had previously been endorsed by the Police Commission and the Board of Selectmen. He just wanted to make sure everyone understood that funding was part of this proposal.

Mr. Headd, Mr. Robinson and Mr. Eaton also voiced their support for budgeting for a 1.45% COLA and a Step increase.

David Dion moved to recommend the FY 2015 budget include funding for a 1.45% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and a Step increase for all Town employees. Seconded by Ken Robinson, Sr. A vote was taken; eight were in favor (Dion, Robinson, McCarthy, Sullivan, Headd, Eaton, Hanscomb and Worster) and one (Mayland) was opposed. The motion carried.

Consideration of Proposed Change to Personnel Policy

Mr. Herman reported the Town's Personnel Policy allows part-time employees the opportunity to purchase health and/or dental insurance through the Town's pooled insurance plan at their own expense. Currently, there are a few part-time employees who have taken advantage of this opportunity. He indicated recently, a problem arose when an employee experienced financial difficulties and stopped paying for their insurance coverage. In this instance, the employee had been paying the Town via personal check as opposed to payroll deduction, which meant the Town was not able to quickly address the issues of re-payment for the insurance coverage received. That particular case has worked itself out, but the Town administration is proposing a change to this provision within the Personnel Policy to require any part-time employee who opts to purchase insurance do so only through payroll deduction. The proposed amendment is as follows:

9:1.1 Health and Dental Insurance

Medical and Dental coverage is available to all full-time employees on a voluntary basis. Applications for such coverage will be accepted upon hire and will have a thirty (30) day wait period before insurance takes effect. (Carriers may only allow beginning of the month enrollment, which could extend the thirty (30) day wait to a longer period.) Full-time employees may elect insurance coverage or change insurance coverage during open enrollment or upon a qualifying event.

The Town of Auburn will cover 100% of the premium for single plans and 75% for two-party and family plans. Effective January 1, 2012, the Town of Auburn will cover 90% of the premium for single plans, regardless of Point of Service (POS) or Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) coverage; 80% for two-person and family POS coverage and 85% for two-person and family HMO coverage.

Part-time employees may enroll in the medical and dental plans at their own expense, **but only through Town of Auburn payroll deduction.**

Information concerning the medical and dental coverage plans will be available upon request. The elected Road Agent, due to the full-time nature of this position, will be eligible for medical and dental coverage under the same terms and conditions as other full-time employees if he/she chooses to have coverage.

There was little discussion. The Joint Board members felt this was a good business practice to avoid any future problem or issue.

Nancy Mayland moved to approve the proposed amendment to the Town's Personnel Policy requiring the purchase of health or dental insurance by part-time employees by way of payroll deduction. Seconded by Dennis McCarthy. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Consideration of Establishment of Land Use Administrator Position

Mr. Herman reported Dale Phillips would retire as of December 31st. In looking at the Assessing Coordinator's position (currently a part-time 28-hour per week position) and the current Planning & Zoning Secretary position (currently a full-time 35-hour per week position), it was felt the functions of the two positions could be combined into one full-time 40-hour per week position. Both positions deal with property and land use, either via regulation, subdivision, assessing, etc., and combining the work efforts made sense. Currently, both the Assessing Coordinator and the Planning & Zoning Secretary positions are classified as Grade 7s on the Town's Classification Plan.

The Town administration is proposing establishing a full-time 40-hour per week position called Land Use Administrator, which was the combining of the current Assessing Coordinator and the Planning & Zoning Secretary positions. This new position would also be listed as a Labor Grade 7.

Mr. Herman noted it has been agreed by all parties that should this combined effort not work, or the current personnel finds they do not like the new position, or for some other reason it is felt we should go back to the two separate positions we currently have, the Town would do that and there would be no penalty to the individual employee. The individual would be able to go back to their current position as it is presently constituted, and the Town would seek to fill a part-time Assessing Coordinator's position.

Nancy Mayland moved to approve the proposed job description of Land Use Administrator and to place it as a Labor Grade 7 in the Town's Classification Plan. Seconded by Jim Headd. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes of June 26, 2014 Meeting

David Dion moved to approve the minutes of the June 26, 2014 meeting as printed. Seconded by Ken Robinson, Sr. A vote was taken; seven were in favor (Dion, Robinson, Sullivan, Headd, Eaton, Mayland and Hanscomb) and two abstained (Worster

and McCarthy). The motion passed.

Adjourn

James Headd made a motion to adjourn; Ken Robinson, Sr., seconded the motion; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously, and the meeting stood adjourned at 4:25 P.M.