

**Town of Auburn
Joint Personnel Board
Board of Selectmen, Library Trustees & Police Commission
November 19, 2018**

Selectmen Present: James Headd, Richard Eaton and Keith Leclair

Library Trustees Present: Nancy Mayland, Elizabeth Michaud and Joseph Forest

Police Commissioners Present: David Dion and Michael Rolfe

Also Present: Bill Herman, Town Administrator.

Mr. James Headd convened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Consideration of Potential Amendments to the Town of Auburn Personnel Policy

The Board has been presented with six proposed adjustments to the Town Personnel Policy and agreed it was best to take them up one at a time.

Section 1:12.2 – Administrative Agents: Mr. Herman noted the current definition of Administrative Agents is listed as the Board of Selectmen for general town government, the Board of Police Commissioners for the Police Department and the Library Trustees for the Griffin Public Library. In the MRI Operational Review of the Town Hall, it was noted the Administrative Agents were more appropriately the Town Administrator, Police Chief and Library Director respectively, while the governing boards are the Appointing Authority (Section 1:12.1).

The proposed change in policy is as follows: “Administrative Agent shall mean the Town Administrator or designee for General Town government; the Chief of Police or designee for the Auburn Police Department; and the Library Director or designee for the Griffin Public Library.”

David Dion noted in some sections, such as Section 2 - Staff Supervision, where the term “Appointing Authority is used, it provides authority to hire and fire which he felt were reserved to the governing boards. Mr. Herman agreed and indicated the intent was not to change any existing authority the governing boards have. The intent is to separate purely administrative functions, such as managing personnel files, from the full authority of the governing boards. He recommended he would go through the policy for all the uses of the term “Administrative Agent”

and where it is an administrative function would leave the term in place based on the new definition proposed, but where it is more than an administrative function, such as Section 2 – Staff Supervision, would change the term to “Appointing Authority” which are the governing boards. The Board members were in agreement with that approach.

David Dion moved to approve the proposed change in Section 1:12.2 Administrative Agents to reflect the three administrative officials as proposed. Seconded by Richard Eaton. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Section 3:1 – Recruitment and Section 3:2 – Selection: The proposed adjustments to the current policy for Recruitment and Selection came from recommendations in the MRI Operational Review of Town Hall Operations and are intended to provide a little more direction and continuity to the process used for filling positions. Among these include using the Town web site for job posting announcements, coordinating posting of positions with the Town’s Human Resource Officer prior to posting, formally offering conditional offers of employment to selected candidates, and timing potential background, reference and other checks after a conditional offer of employment has been made.

The members of the Joint Personnel Board were in agreement with the proposal, but Joseph Forest suggested the language of the third paragraph of Section 3:2 Selection was not quite right. After review and discussion, it was agreed the paragraph should read as follows: *“When a conditional offer of employment is accepted by an applicant, the Town may then check references, perform a background check and, depending on the position, other reviews such as a criminal records check, credit check, medical examination, physical agility, license review and/or other testing as may be deemed appropriate and necessary for the position. Failure to agree to these checks will make the conditional offer of employment null and void.”*

Mr. Headd recommended separate votes be taken on each section.

Richard Eaton moved to approve the proposed change in Section 3:1 - Recruitment as proposed. Seconded by Joseph Forest. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Elizabeth Michaud moved to approve the proposed change in Section 3:2 - Selection as amended by the Board discussion. Seconded by David Dion. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Section 7:3 – Family and Medical Leave (FMLA): Mr. Herman reported this would be a new section to the Personnel Policy as recommended by the MRI Operational Review of the Town Hall. Currently the policy only makes reference to FMLA, and it was felt the policy should provide a general outline and

description of the FMLA benefits employees are afforded by federal law. He indicated the language proposed was secured from several other town's policies.

David Dion indicated the language proposed is very similar to language in the personnel plan he has for his business, and he echoed his understanding that all employers are required to make provisions of this type.

Keith Leclair moved to approve the proposed addition of Section 7:3 Family and Medical Leave as proposed. Seconded by David Dion. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Nancy Mayland joined the meeting at 6:20 PM.

Section 7:4 – Unpaid Leaves of Absences: Mr. Herman noted in looking for language for the FMLA section, he found several communities also had provisions for general unpaid leaves of absences. He indicated he was not advocating to include this provision, but wanted to share this potential with the Joint Personnel Board for their consideration. He indicated he was not aware of any circumstance during his tenure with Auburn that this type of leave had been requested.

David Dion indicated as a small business owner, he would not be in favor of this type of leave for his operations and did not believe it would benefit the Town. Keith Leclair express he did not support this type of addition. Mr. Herman indicated the Board can skip over this item and take no action which would effectively not amend the Personnel Policy to include this provision.

Section 17:4 Town of Auburn – Human Resource Office: Mr. Herman noted the MRI Operational Review of the Town Hall noted this section designated an office as the Human Resource Office, but did not designate a position responsible for that function which could potentially be confusing for employees. Earlier in the year the Board of Selectmen had designated the Town Administrator's position to be designated as the Town's Human Resource Officer. As a result, it is proposed to add the following paragraph to Section 17:4:

"The Town Administrator is formally designated as the Human Resource Officer for the Town of Auburn, although the Town Administrator may designate specific human resource functions and processes to either the Finance Director or the Finance Assistant in the Selectmen's Office."

Keith Leclair moved to approve the proposed change in Section 17:4 Town of Auburn – Human Resource Office. Seconded by Elizabeth Michaud. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Section 18 Job Descriptions: Mr. Herman noted during the past year, the Board of Selectmen made adjustments to several Town Hall positions and job

descriptions largely as a result of recommendations contained in the MRI Operational Review of Town Hall Operations. These included establishing the Finance Assistant position to be supervised by the Finance Director; to establish the Town Administrator as the department head for the Town Hall to supervise the Finance Director, Building Inspector, Land Use Administrator and the Parks & Recreation Coordinator, and to establish the Parks & Recreation Coordinator as the position responsible for budget development, program management and supervision of other part-time Parks & Recreation positions. He noted as all Town job descriptions have been included in the Personnel Policy by reference since 2005, it is proposed to include specific reference to the following modified job descriptions:

Finance Director dated February 26, 2018

Finance Assistant dated February 26, 2018

Town Administrator dated April 30, 2018

Building Inspector – Code Enforcement Officer dated April 30, 2018

Land Use Administrator dated April 30, 2018

Parks and Recreation Coordinator dated October 9, 2018

Nancy Mayland moved to include the reference to the six specific job descriptions in Section 18 as presented. Seconded by Keith Leclair. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Consideration of Potential COLA / Step Increase for FY 2019 Budget

Mr. Herman noted the Board has jointly determined the potential of a cost of living adjustment (COLA) for Town employees, Step increases for Town employees, or potentially both to be included in the ensuing year's budget. He provided the Board with a spreadsheet prepared by Finance Director Adele Frisella that details what current wages are for all Town and Library positions; what the amount would be if a 2.5% COLA were applied; what the amount would be if a 2% Step were applied.

He noted the spreadsheet calculated the bottom line of wages at current levels with no changes totaled \$2,041,260; the bottom line with a 2% Step increase only is \$2,052,48; the bottom line for a 2.5% COLA only was \$2,066,030, and the bottom line for a Step and COLA increase is \$2,077,189.

Mr. Herman noted no increase is for a full 12 months in that if a COLA is granted, it would take effect April 1st, while Step Increases are presented at an employee's anniversary date, which are spread throughout the year.

David Dion moved to recommend budgeting for the provision of a 2.5% cost of living adjustment and a step increase for all employees which totals

approximately \$2,077,189. Seconded by Nancy Mayland. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Request to Consider Inclement Weather Policy

Mr. Herman provided the Board with the text of the current Inclement Weather policy included in the Personnel Policy and noted he has had a couple of requests for the committee to consider modifying the policy to provide clearer standards for when offices might be closed due to weather conditions. The current policy reads as follows:

It shall be the policy of the Town of Auburn that Town offices and departments will be open to serve the public during normal business hours throughout the year, including during periods of inclement weather and storm occurrences.

During periods of inclement weather, Auburn employees who are scheduled to work are expected to report to duty in as timely a manner as possible, without endangering themselves.

On the occasion of a significant storm event that may necessitate the closing of Town facilities, the appropriate administrative agent is designated as the official who is empowered to make that determination.”

Mr. Herman indicated this policy has changed a number of times during his tenure in Auburn, including one year where the Town facilities were either open or closed based on whether the school was open or closed. He indicated that did not work as it happened to be a year when school closed a lot based on weather forecasts that often times did not pan out to be accurate.

He indicated the request came through the Police Department and largely concerned office staff as opposed to patrol officers. He expressed a concern about expanding the policy to identify “essential” and “non-essential” positions as he knows other organizations have as that usually leads to higher expenses for “essential” employees having to remain working if “non-essential” employees are sent home.

David Dion indicated this was the first he had heard of this concern within the Police Department. He indicated his first instinct was to delete the third paragraph of the policy proposal. Mr. Herman noted he had provided the Board with the language of the existing policy and had not offered any proposed amendment. He went on to indicate based on the change in the definition of “administrative agent” the Board had made earlier in the meeting, this policy would now indicate decisions could be made by either the Town Administrator, Chief of Police or Library Director concerning their respective areas of responsibility.

Elizabeth Michaud and Nancy Mayland indicated that is generally how it currently works at the library now with the Library Director making a determination and then informing the Library Trustees. Mr. Herman indicated he felt he would operate similarly, and that he was more inclined to be open for business and close early if necessary, notifying the Board of Selectmen of any potential closure.

The Board members did not see a need to make any modifications to the current policy and chose to leave it as it currently is written.

Approval of Minutes – November 28, 2017

Nancy Mayland moved to approve the minutes of the November 28, 2017 meeting as presented. Seconded by David Dion. A vote was taken: Yes – David Dion, James Headd, Richard Eaton, Nancy Mayland, Elizabeth Michaud and Joseph Forest. Abstaining: Keith Leclair and Michael Rolfe. The motion passed.

Adjourn

James Headd made a motion to adjourn; Richard Eaton seconded the motion; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously, and the meeting stood adjourned at 6:35 P.M.