

Select Board Minutes for October 15, 2014 Select Board and Personnel Committee Joint Meeting

Present:

Select Board Members - Tom Carter, Chair; Ron Coler; Todd Olanyk
Personnel Board Members - Priscilla Phelps, Chair; Jen Marken; Wayne Farrell;
Tom Carter, Select Board Member of the Personnel Board

Also present:

Town Collector/Treasurer Laura Blakesley; Tom Poissant, Highway
Superintendent; Mary Fitz-Gibbon, Executive Administrator; Lynn Taylor,
Assistant Municipal Clerk, Scribe

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Select Board Chair Tom Carter and Personnel Board Chair Priscilla Phelps. A quorum of both boards was present. Mr. Carter stated this evening would be devoted to the Benefits section of the draft revised Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.

Mr. Coler wished to take a few moments to correct some minor grammatical errors before proceeding. Further discussion led to an agreement to change the term “probationary period” to “introductory period” as used for new employees in order to distinguish it from a disciplinary action.

With these accepted the discussion turned to the Benefits section.

The benefits in the draft policy are those currently in use. In preparing the draft, the Personnel Board sought only to clarify existing policy; it did not have the authority to change benefits. At this meeting some possible updating of benefits was also discussed.

Sick leave: In response to the Treasurer’s need for a formula to determine sick time an employee is entitled to, one had been created by the Personnel Board, which the Treasurer currently uses. Since benefited employees work different hours in a work week, the formula created works for full-time (40) hour employees, and is also prorated for those who work other numbers of regular hours. This will be revisited at the next meeting.

A lengthy discussion ensued including changing the number of sick days offered and how they would be accrued. Currently, a fulltime employee has 8 days (40 hours) per year. Should this be increased to 10 or 12 days? Should time not used be carried over into another year? If so, how much time?

The Treasurer indicated a problem with start dates for the various benefits. At one time sick days and vacation time were awarded at the beginning of the year. At some point this was changed to award time in increments as earned during the year. She recommended returning to the earlier method as it simplifies accounting. She noted previously employees have not abused the benefit schedule. No decision was made.

There was discussion about whether to use January 1, the calendar year, as the start date or July 1, which begins the town's fiscal year. Using the calendar year would make all benefits, sick, vacation, and personal days work the same way. No decision was made.

In the case of an employee hired at any point during the year, benefits would be prorated for that individual for the partial year.

Vacation days - Some changes were suggested for scheduling of vacation days. Especially, the early scheduling of vacations extending for more than five (5) days so that adequate staffing is available to do the Town's work.

Holidays - It was agreed that a provision clarifying the handling of holidays which fall on a Saturday or Sunday be added to the policy. It seems somehow to have been removed. Two other sections were questioned and deleted as unnecessary. (pgs. 15 & 16)

Laura reported that in 2011 to reduce the Town's liability, there was a policy change to limit allowable accrued sick time; those with grandfathered sick time were paid off at a cost of \$24,000 at that time. Currently, employees can accumulate up to 60 days and are not paid for this time upon termination of employment.

FMLA, which is generally unpaid, allows use of vacation time and/or sick time.

Laura offered to obtain information from surrounding towns regarding these policies for the next meeting .

There was some discussion of regular formal evaluation of employees. Tom Poissant expressed a preference for ongoing manager/employee communication as opposed to evaluating Highway employees in a scheduled, formal way. Members of the boards supported conducting formal evaluations as a way of letting employees know that they are doing their jobs well, or, conversely, as a way of documenting employee issues and problems.

The next joint meeting is scheduled for October 22, 2014 @ 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 P.M.

Documents:

Agenda

Changes to PPP manual as of 10/15/2014

10/15/2014 minutes once approved