

Town of Dudley
Minutes of the Personnel Board Meeting of January 16, 2018
9:00 AM, Dudley Municipal Complex, Room 315
Approved 2/20/2018

1. Open Meeting

Due to a technical problem with the video equipment the meeting was moved to Room 315. Lorna Wade opened the meeting at 9:00am. In attendance were Maribeth Marzeotti, Peter Fox and Rose Smoolca. Also in attendance was Michelle Jervis, Interim Clerk, Conrad Allen, Assessor and Ora Finn, Town Clerk. James Dunn and Anne Marie Gray were absent.

2. Acceptance of Minutes:

Maribeth Marzeotti motioned to approve the meeting minutes of 12/19/2017 as printed. Peter Fox seconded. Vote 4-0.

3. Appointments/Resignations:

Assessor's Clerk – Resignation - Conrad Allen, Chairman of the Board of Assessors, came before the Board. He stated that he received notification that Margaret Kane, Clerk in the Assessor's office, is leaving at the end of next week. She is leaving for a better paying position. He feels that the town does not have competitive pay compared to surrounding towns and his office is playing "musical clerks". The Board recently had the hours (40) reinstated and he is grateful for that. The town is in the lower pay scale than surrounding towns. We train them and they leave for another position. After discussion **Peter Fox motioned that the Principal Assessor submit to the Personnel Board a copy of the updated job description as well as her recommended starting salary for the position with a list of comparative salaries in area. Maribeth Marzeotti seconded. Vote 4-0.** Mr. Fox agrees that the town needs to be within 90% of salaries in the area in order for Dudley to keep good employees.

4. New Business

Ora Finn, Town Clerk – Request hourly wage increase for Assistant Town Clerk Jacqueline Phelps. – Ms. Finn came before the Board. She stated that a new job description was approved for the new position of Assistant Town Clerk as well as a vote at town meeting. She provided the Board with a comparison of surrounding towns showing salaries with Assistant Clerks starting at a higher pay scale with no experience. Ms. Phelps, who has been working in her office for 1.5 years, is an excellent employee and hard working. She would like to see her salary increase to \$18.00/hour. She is taking classes, attending conferences, and is a notary, and feels her salary of \$16.48/hour will not keep her here. She is also preparing to become bonded. Mr. Finn stated that she is planning on retiring in 2019 and wants a smooth transition. Peter Fox feels that the position is underpaid and supports up to the 90 percentile. He would like to see the Town Administrator's input on how we can get her to the 90%, especially when she has so many responsibilities. **Peter Fox motioned that the Personnel Board recommend that the Assistant Town Clerk receive an increase in her salary to \$18.00/hour. Rose Smoolca seconded. Vote 4-0.**

Employee Handbook – Discussion – At our last meeting the Board agreed to set up a committee comprised with members Lorna Wade, Jim Dunn and Peter Fox to review the Employee Handbook. Regarding the Progressive Discipline Policy that is section 16 of the Handbook, all agreed there needs to be clarification for equity for our employees, there is too much gray area. Ms. Wade would like to get input from the Town Administrator as well. They will work around Mr. Balukonis’ schedule.

Letter to Board member – Ms. Wade stated that last week we forwarded a letter to Ann Marie Gray asking if she would still desires to be on the Board. She has not attended a meeting in quite some time and she has not been able to reach her by phone or email. Per the bylaw “an appointed board member, if absent from three or more consecutive meetings, with the exception of illness or extenuating circumstances, their position shall be declared vacant by said committee”. **Peter Fox motioned to approve the letter to Anne Marie Gray as written. Maribeth Marzeotti seconded. Vote 4-0.**

Update on Personnel Clerk – Since the retirement of Joan Gardecki the Board has not had a clerk. Michelle Jervis, who is the Administrative Secretary for the Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator has been posting the agendas and taking minutes. They need someone in the Personnel office to file and take care of the evaluations, posting of open positions and other duties associated with that Board. They were considering asking Mrs. Gardecki to come back.

5. Board Member Comments:

Mr. Fox informed members of a recent article in the Telegram about the average Central Massachusetts tax bill. Dudley is last in the 72 communities listed for taxes. All agreed that Dudley is a great place to purchase a home, low taxes, safe community and good schools but the budget suffers because of it.

Regarding the Town Clerk’s position, members discussed the pros and cons of the position being appointed instead of elected. Peter Fox believes that if the position is appointed you can get the best qualified person for that job. In an elected position is can become a popularity contest. It is a position that has a large learning curve and not everyone has the ability to work well with residents and departments in town. It might be worth discussing with the Town Administrator.

6. Next Meeting and Adjournment

The next meeting of the Personnel Board will be on Tuesday, February 20, 2018 at 9:00 AM in the Dudley Municipal Complex, Veterans’ Memorial Hall, Room 321-A.

Maribeth Marzeotti motioned to adjourn at 9:50am. Peter Fox seconded. Vote 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Jervis