

**TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION**

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, June 3, 2020
Virtual Webinar

Committee

Present: Karen Fassuliotis, Committee Chair; Debra Hess, Miriam Kreuzer, Elizabeth K. Krumeich

Staff: Erica Mahoney, Ass't Director, Human Resources Department (HR) Department (Dept.); Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Mary Pepe, Director, HR

BET: Michael Mason, Chairman; Andy Duus, Laura Erickson, Leslie Moriarty, Jeffrey S. Ramer, Leslie Tarkington

BOE/GPS: Shamain Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer, GPS; Regina Williams, Assistant Director, GPS Human Resources

RTM: Danyal Ozizmir, RTM D-5, Budget Overview Comm. Vice Chairman, member Labor Contracts Comm.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:32 A.M.

Executive Session

An executive session was not held.

Unemployment Claims – May 2020

• **Town Unemployment Claims**

Assistant HR Director Mahoney noted that the Town had not yet received a State Unemployment Report for the period of January 1 - March 31, 2020, to enable the Town to reconcile its records. Mr. Mynarski commented that the Town could anticipate an insurance reimbursement or credit for "disruption of work", as well as reimbursement from the State for 50% of the claims-cost through a Federal COVID-19 program. Committee members asked if a sufficient amount was budgeted, or could be encumbered to meet the Town's share of the claims' cost. Ms. Pepe reported that to date, seven Town employees have been furloughed due to their having no work because of Town Hall being open by appointment only. It is anticipated that these employees will file for unemployment benefits. They will continue to receive medical benefits while furloughed. Additional employee savings have been obtained from Parks & Recreation seasonal workers' not being hired for programs that have not occurred due to the pandemic shutdown. Mr. Mynarski added that although there could be a shortfall in the Unemployment budget line item, a surplus from Workers' Compensation funds would be available to offset it.

• **Board of Education (BOE) Unemployment Claims**

Ms. Williams commented that per diem substitute teachers and adult education

instructors applied for unemployment insurance and were referred to a new portal under development in April 2020. The BOE HR Department is awaiting the State Report's information to calculate accurately its Unemployment Claim liability. The Greenwich Education Association (GEA), Greenwich Organization of School Administrators (GOSA) and Laborer's International Union of North America Unit 136 Para-Professionals (LIUNA) union collective bargaining agreements are currently being negotiated for FY21 – 24 so it is anticipated that this will be a topic of discussion.

HR Reports

- **Vacancy Report**

Director Pepe drew the Committee's attention to priority vacant positions.

- The Nathaniel Witherell – final interviews are underway and the Deputy Director, Director of Nursing, and Director of Financial Operations, are expected to be filled in the near term.
- Internal Auditor position has attracted new applicant resumes that will be screened for interviews.
- Human Services Dept. – Commissioner Barry has announced his retirement but has extended his retirement date to the end of August 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In addition, his Deputy Commissioner has also announced her retirement. An Interview Panel has been assembled and appointments for several applicants for the Deputy Commissioner position have been scheduled. The search is ongoing for candidates for the Commissioner's position.
- Fire Chief – A nationwide search has been conducted and candidates are being screened for interviews. It is anticipated that Deputy Chief Kick will be the Interim Chief until the position is filled.

The procedure for filling vacant positions during the Town's job freeze was discussed. Ms. Pepe explained that currently Town departments requesting to fill a vacant position must justify the position to the Town Administrator. It was noted that there is a vacancy in the Human Services Department for a case worker that appears to be part of the job freeze. The position has been posted since January 2020 and has remained unfilled, primarily because it has been difficult finding a candidate who is proficient in Spanish. It was suggested that the Committee extend an invitation to the Commissioner of Human Services to the July 2020 HR Committee meeting to discuss the position.

- **Workers Compensation Claims**

Worker Compensation Claims were reviewed by Mr. Mynarski. No significant changes have been reported.

Old Business

- **HR Coronavirus Update**

- **Town**

Ms. Pepe reported that Town Hall was following all State Guidelines for reopening relating to office safety. Plexiglass partitions have been put up where appropriate and work spaces have been rearranged, where possible, to increase the distance between employees. Every employee has been provided with three reusable face masks and are required to wear a mask while in Town

Hall. Ms. Pepe then described the Town's safety initiatives for Town Hall employees returning to work on June 8, 2020. Prior to returning to Town Hall, all employees were required to review the Town's Pandemic Phase 1 guidelines and complete video training about safety protocols that must be observed while in Town Hall.

It is anticipated that as the Town enters Phase 2 and Phase 3 re-openings that unless there is a health reason, absence permitted under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or other reason consistent with other State and Federal laws will be considered for these employees.

Ms. Pepe was asked if the HR Department would consider providing the Pandemic Phase 1 and any future pandemic video training and certification-requirements by the Town to Elected Officials, Boards, Commissions, and other volunteers regularly visiting Town Hall. Ms. Pepe indicated that they would consider doing so in the future as Town Hall opens up to other individuals.

- **Board of Education**

BOE HR Director Johnson commented that many Havemeyer employees were working remotely and the Board was currently focusing on determining policy for the possible re-opening of schools. School buildings remain closed. She remarked that she would bring the Town's COVID-19 employee certification-testing to the BOE's attention.

Ms. Williams was asked whether the BOE custodial staff might be available to assist the Town with cleaning, for example, the Parks. Ms. Williams reported that there was no downtime for those onsite employees who are responsible for school building maintenance and deep cleaning, and did not anticipate that they could be made available to the Town.

It was commented that other communities are considering having parent participation in the discussion of what the re-opening of school will look like in the fall (whether it be in-class, virtual or a hybrid). Ms. Johnson was asked whether the BOE was considering including parents in a discussion regarding re-opening the schools in the fall. Ms. Williams said that she was not aware of that being discussed as a possibility but she would take the suggestion back to the BOE.

- **M&C Salary and Healthcare Increases**

A Committee member asked whether it would be appropriate to discuss whether, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the BET should be requesting M&C and Elected Officials to forgo their 2021 pay increases either by salary freezes or voluntarily since there was discussion within the RTM and elsewhere that Town unions give up their agreed-upon wage increases for F21. It was noted that the Superintendent's Cabinet have already agreed to a pay freeze. The BOE's initiative was commended but the Chair indicated that the pay raises for M&C and Elected Officials were already voted on by the BET as part of the F21 budget that was submitted to the RTM. The RTM is currently considering the F21 budget and it would be up to RTM members to reduce the M&C salaries as part of their budget vote. Additionally, should the RTM members elect not to reduce these salaries, the BET has authority only over the Town's Finance

Department. The other Boards and Commission, as well as the First Selectman, would need to decide to whether to freeze F21 salaries for M&C employees reporting to them. It was also noted that Elected Officials would have to voluntarily agree to forego their anticipated raises, but absent action by the RTM, it was up to each Elected Official to do so.

Approval of BET HR Committee Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Ms. Krumeich, seconded by Ms. Hess, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to accept the Minutes of the Regular BET HR Committee Meeting held on May 14, 2020. Motion carried.

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Ms. Hess, seconded by Ms. Krumeich, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to adjourn the meeting at 9:48 A.M. Motion carried.

The next Regular Meeting of the BET Human Resources Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, July 15, 2020, at 8:30 A.M. The Meeting is currently scheduled as a virtual webinar meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary



Karen Fassuliotis, HR Committee Chair