

TOWN OF GREENWICH  
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION  
REGULAR MEETING  
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES – Cone Room

Tuesday, March 9, 2010

Committee: Jim Campbell, Chairman; Michael Mason, Larry Simon, Randall Huffman

Selectmen: Peter Tesei, First Selectman (5:41 P.M. arrival)

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Roland Gieger, Budget Director; Maureen Kast, Human Resources Director; John Crary, Town Administrator; Dustin Anderson, Assistant to the First Selectman; Robert Lichtenfeld, Managing Director of Operations, BOE; Joseph Siciliano, Director; Tom Greco, Manager of Business Service Operations, Parks & Recreation

The meeting was called to order at 4:37 P.M.

**1. Approval of Human Resources Committee Meeting Minutes**

Upon a motion by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. Simon, the Committee voted 4-0 to approve the February 12, 2010 Minutes.

**2. Establishment of Disability Retirement Advisory Board**

Ms. Kast presented her recommended Retirement Disability Review Board draft to the Committee for review and recommended that the Board consist of a physician, a Human Resources manager or the Town Administrator, and a worker's compensation administrator. Since two of the members are not employees of the Town, this Board would give an independent judgment on whether a disability retirement request should be approved. Mr. Gieger stated that the Charter refers to having this expertise for the Pension Board.

Mr. Simon stated that the Charter also requires that the Retirement Board review these disability retirements on a periodic basis, no less than every five years, which has never occurred, and that the Town has to be more rigorous in follow-up and should take up the option to conduct these reviews.

Ms. Kast will present the proposal to the Retirement Board at the March 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, for approval. A discussion followed regarding funding, periodic reviews, policy and procedures.

### **3. Discussion of Unemployment Expenses**

This item was taken out of order.

Mr. Campbell explained that the Committee's monthly review of unemployment expenses has begun focusing on the unemployment statistics of part-time employees, seasonal employees, and substitute teachers.

Mr. Siciliano presented a Parks & Recreation Department six-year Employee Analysis to the Committee and stated that the Parks & Recreation program base is what drives the unemployment expense. Mr. Siciliano gave an overview of the type of programs using seasonal workers and stated that most of the unemployment claims come from the workers in the longer programs (six, seven, or eight months of employment during the year), with some of the same people applying for unemployment year after year. Mr. Siciliano noted that, in order to avoid designation as permanent part-time, the maximum number of hours worked by seasonal employees annually is 1080 (as compared with 1820 by full-time employees).

In 2008-2009 \$130,000 unemployment expense was attributable to Parks & Recreation, and this year the total is \$50,000 for the first six months. Mr. Siciliano stated that approximately 24 employees collect unemployment each season. Mr. Simon suggested rethinking the problem, which may include determining whether these employees can do multiple jobs and become permanent part-time. Ms. Kast stated that permanent part-time would have union rules regarding work hours, whereas temporary seasonal employees are at will and are not bound by any of the contractual rules. Mr. Campbell stated that while it might not be possible to completely eliminate the problem of seasonal workers and unemployment expenses, it is important to recognize and agree that it is an important issue and there may be multiple ways to try to minimize the economic impact to the Town.

A discussion followed regarding reorganization of temporary/seasonal employment, contractual limitations, the cost of permanent part-time employees, policy, and State of CT unemployment regulations, and possible solutions.

Ms. Kast noted that Consultech will provide information and training on the rules of unemployment on Thursday at 11:00 a.m. The Finance Dept. is preparing an RFP for all of the risk management functions, which should include unemployment.

Mr. Lichtenfeld stated that, as a general rule, substitute teachers are not entitled to collect unemployment, except when the school district makes and breaks a commitment for rehiring. Substitute teachers who work one year and return the next year do, however, apply for and sometimes collect unemployment. The school district has appealed those payments and unemployment seeks to get the money back, but is often unsuccessful. This is one of the issues that the school district plans to discuss with Consultech on Thursday. Ms. Kast stated that notification of a claim takes about 45 days, which in some cases comes after the substitute is back on payroll.

A discussion followed regarding the number of substitutes, the claim process, the HR process, NY State regulations, partial and reduced compensation, and possible solutions.

#### **4. Status of M/C Performance Evaluations**

Ms. Kast stated that the performance evaluations are due in the middle of May and a memo has been sent to all appointing authorities and M/C employees to update them on the new process and timeline. The process requires a conversation between management and the employee regarding their smart goals and accountabilities. A new component to the process is a multiple rating, where the employee has given the names of others that the reviewer can speak to regarding their performance.

Ms. Kast stated that she and a panel will review the evaluations in mid-May, and if any department evaluations as a whole appear to be grossly skewed, there will be a conversation with that appointing authority.

Ms. Kast stated that she will present the evaluations that she feels are not scored accurately to an ad-hoc panel for review. Mr. Tesei expressed concerns that the panel may undermine the management's authority by changing a rating. Mr. Campbell stated that in order to keep it as objective as possible, the panel structure may need to be formalized. A discussion followed regarding evaluation rating differences.

#### **5. Discussion of HR Study**

Mr. Mason explained that, as a result of numerous BET and committee presentations and discussions in recent months regarding Workers Compensation, unemployment, and employee human resources issues in general, the Budget Committee recommended an appropriation of \$75,000 to do a in-depth study of all of these HR-related issues. Ms. Kast stated that most of these issues lie with Risk Management.

Mr. Simon noted that Mr. Crary and Mr. Anderson offered to do this study in-house. Mr. Simon and Mr. Campbell suggested trying to better determine the scope of review by meeting over the next two months with Mr. Crary and Mr. Anderson. A discussion ensued regarding risk management, HR functions and concerns, and the time commitment that would be involved in performing and completing the study.


#### **6. Discussion of HR Reports**

All of this month's HR Reports were discussed under Unemployment Expenses.

#### **7. New Topics**

Mr. Campbell stated that a BET representative is needed for the Affirmative Action Advisory Board, which meets monthly, and that if any member of the Committee was interested in serving as that representative, to please contact him.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 6:22 P.M.

  
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Maria Bocchino, Recording Secretary

  
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Jim Campbell, HR Committee Chairman