

TOWN OF GREENWICH  
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION  
REGULAR MEETING HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES Town Hall Meeting Room

Thursday, October 16, 2014

Committee: Nancy Weissler, Chairman; William Drake, Randall Huffman, Mary Lee Kiernan

Selectmen: Peter Tesei, First Selectman

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Mary Pepe, Director of Human Resources, Erica Mahoney, Assistant Director of Human Resources; Allison Graham, Employee Benefits Manager; Tiffany Navarro, Workers' Compensation Administrator; Al Cava, Director Labor Relations

Other: Peter Sherr, member BOE

The meeting was called to order at 2:28 P.M.

**1. Approval of BET HR Committee Meeting Minutes September 16, 2014**

Upon a motion by Ms. Weissler, seconded by Mr. Drake, the Committee voted 3-0-0 (Mr. Huffman absent for the vote) to approve the Minutes of the September 16, 2014 Regular Human Resources Committee Meeting.

**2. Update on TOG and BOE Labor Contract Settlements**

Mr. Sherr advised the Committee of highlights of the negotiations between the BOE and the Greenwich Education Association (GEA), which represents TOG's 871 certified teachers. He pointed out that the newly negotiated contract would cover a two-year period, unlike the previous three-year contract, while awaiting new healthcare cost information that will impact benefit costs in 2018.

Mr. Sherr explained that teachers' salaries will increase 2.99% in each of the next two years, consisting of a small GWI and a step for teachers who have less than 13 years of tenure. One of the goals of reinstating the salary step for these teachers was to provide an incentive for them to remain in Greenwich. Unlike the prior contract that included the cost-saving migration to high deductible health savings plans, this contract did not include any major concessions on health care costs. Mr. Sherr noted that Greenwich teacher salaries are at a modest premium relative to their Fairfield County peers. Mr. Sherr noted that the overall cost of contract was favorable relative to recent teacher contract settlements.

Mr. Sherr suggested that it would be helpful to future negotiations if the date of budget discussions was moved to a later date so that TOG would not be the first CT municipality to negotiate a teacher contract. He felt that CEA, the state union, was more aggressive in pursuing a favorable Greenwich contract because it currently sets the standard across the state for future negotiations. He also noted that the CEA has asked for a declaratory

judgment that employers pay for any taxes (e.g., Cadillac tax) under the Affordable Care Act; Mr. Cava noted that there is precedent for union members to pay such taxes.

Mr. Sherr recommended that a health care strategy be established before the next negotiation in order that the BOE negotiating team would be more fully informed. Ms. Kiernan responded that the Health Benefits Task Force, composed of BET members, HR Department staff, the Director of Labor Relations, Finance staff, and a staff member from the First Selectman's Office, already has this responsibility. The Task Force will be meeting shortly to develop a strategy for health care insurance for 2016.

Mr. Cava informed the Committee about negotiations with the Teamsters union which represents approximately 400 TOG workers. He noted that the two-year contract would increase salaries 2.44% in each year, which is in the middle of the pact in terms of CT labor settlements. The Town also achieved some significant work rule changes. As result of migrating the remaining Teamsters to the high deductible health savings plans, the Town will realize about \$1 million in savings.

Mr. Cava gave highlights of the 3-year contract negotiated with TOG police that provides for salary increases of 2.4% in year 1, 2.7% in year 2, and 2.6% in year 3. The contract clarifies procedures for extra duty pay. It also provides for the migration of 112 Silver Shield members to the high deductible health savings plan. Members of the Committee asked about the possibility of the police converting from a defined benefit program to a defined contribution program. Mr. Cava noted that it was worth looking at. However, he indicated that there have been reservations in the past about this transition because of concerns that this would lead to higher turnover, and each police professional represents a significant investment in terms of training.

### **3. September 2014 HR Reports**

**Workers' Compensation Expense Reports** - Ms. Navarro reviewed September Workers' Compensation Lost Time and Claims activity highlighting that there had been an increase in the General Government and Nathaniel Witherell groups. Thirty four claims, five of which were lost time incidents, were reported in September. Overall she indicated that there had been 90 incidents so far this year compared to 98 in the previous year. She attributed some of the improvement to the presence of a new part-time, on-site Safety Consultant. She noted that the high number of slips and falls at the BOE was due, in part, to some employees wearing flip flops, and HR was assessing a possible footwear policy.

Mr. Mynarski reported a positive variance on the amount of Workers' Compensation being paid compared to the previous year.

**Vacant and Posted Position Listings** – Ms. Pepe reviewed the current vacant positions, noting the addition due to the resignation of the Special Projects Coordinator for the First Selectman.

Mr. Mynarski asked Ms. Weissler if Agenda Item 6 could be moved forward for discussion.

### **6. Review of CIRMA report for June 2014**

Ms. Navarro commented that while the trend data for 2013-2014 appeared favorable, some claims had not yet matured. However, 2013-2014 was noteworthy in that there were no

large claims in excess of \$100,000. Slips and falls and strains and sprains continue to be the Town's largest exposures. She noted that five large claims had reached settlement but several 2008-2009 claims were still unsettled. She commented that lost time claim exposure had been moderated by the Town's return to work policy. She also discussed the Town's comparative costs versus its peers (Norwalk, Danbury, Manchester, and Westport), which show that Greenwich has higher medical costs and a greater incidence of claims (but that the latter is narrowing versus our peers).

#### **4. Human Capital Management System Update**

Ms. Pepe commented the ADP implementation went live on September 28<sup>th</sup>, with the first paychecks due on October 17<sup>th</sup>. She noted the following challenges to be expected as part of this implementation: 1) proper system configuration; 2) human error; and 3) culture change. She highlighted the intensive investment that had been made in training and IT to ensure as smooth an implementation as possible.

Ms. Pepe indicated that due to the volume and scope of the payroll process change, several payroll runs and subsequent "post mortems" would be needed to reduce the error rates for the 3,000-5,000 checks that are run. She expressed her strong appreciation (as did the HR Committee) for the enormous amount of work that the HR staff, Police, Fire, Public Works, Parks & Rec and the BOE had devoted to this implementation.

First Selectman Tessei expressed his strong support for the implementation of the new system and noted that he had asked his senior management team to do what was necessary to support it.

#### **5. Update on Health Insurance Claims Year-to-Date and Contract Renewal**

Ms. Graham noted that a result of the renewal of the CIGNA contract, plan rates will increase by 14.7% in 2015. However, this increase will be mitigated substantially by the migration of a several unions to the \$2,000/\$4,000 high deductible health savings plan.

Ms. Graham pointed out that there has been a sharp increase in catastrophic claims in 2014; it's unclear as to whether the Town's emphasis on health care screenings has led to more medical conditions being identified. She also noted that many employees may face higher insurance premiums in 2015 because they have not participated in the Town's wellness programs, as required by their contracts.

She noted that the Health Benefits Task Force will begin to develop a strategy for the Town's health care coverage for 2016.

#### **7. Discussion of Proposed Position Upgrade/Reclassification Policy**

Ms. Pepe indicated that a new draft of the position upgrade and reclassification policy had been distributed to Committee members. Following the implementation of the ADP system, Ms. Brown will work to develop a point system to support this policy, after which it will be reviewed by the HR Committee. Ms. Pepe spoke about how changing job descriptions upon the departure of an incumbent and changes in testing content, skill requirements and education were having a beneficial impact on the quality of candidates the TOG was interviewing for open positions.

## **8. Items for Future Discussion**

Ms. Weissler proposed that the Committee take up the issues of M&C salaries and the salaries of the First Selectman, Tax Collector, and Town Clerk in December, with the goal to vote on a recommendation to the full BET in January in advance of budget deliberations. She also noted that the Committee will need to review and vote on any new positions that are proposed in the 2015-16 Budget. Ms. Pepe indicated that HR may request making their current Safety Consultant a permanent part-time position.

Ms. Weissler suggested that a template be developed for departments' requests for new positions.

## **9. Adjournment**

The Meeting adjourned at 5:03 P.M.

The next meeting will be Thursday, November 13, 2014 at 4:30 PM in the Cone Room.



---

Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary



---

Nancy Weissler, HR Committee Chairman