

Town of Needham
Minutes of Personnel Board Meeting
January 2, 2008

Present: Mr. John Dennis – Chairman, Ms. Vivian Hsu, Mr. Joseph Herlihy, Mr. Rick Lunetta, Mr. Christopher T. Coleman – Assistant Town Manager/Personnel Director, Ms. Kate Fitzpatrick – Town Manager, Jerry Wasserman – Chairman, Board of Selectmen, Richard Creem – Chairman, Finance Committee, Scott Brightman – Finance Committee Member, and Nikki Witham – Recording Secretary

Convene: 6:00 PM, Town Hall- Selectmen's Meeting Room

Discussion of new position in Personnel Department: Mr. Coleman welcomed the guests to the meeting and informed them that the Personnel Board had a chance to discuss the DSR-4 position and in concept supports the idea for a new position in the Personnel Department, but has a few questions about the positions responsibilities. Mr. Lunetta asked, what kinds of responsibility will the director have? Mr. Coleman explained that the new person would oversee recruitment, training of General Government employees, orientation of new employees, as well as overseeing day to day operations for the department. Mr. Lunetta wondered what will get left behind if the position does not get filled. Ms. Fitzpatrick told the Board that day to day work, filling in for the Town Manager and special projects is behind. Under the current form of government Ms. Fitzpatrick oversees the entire Town with more emphasis on the following departments, the Fire Department, the Police Department, DPW, Park & Recreation, and Public Facilities. Dave Davison, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director oversees the Finance Department, the Library, and is the liaison to the Town Clerk. The Assistant Town Manager/Personnel Director is the department head for the Personnel Department and oversees the Health Department, Diversified Community Social Services (COA, Veteran Services and Youth Services), the Planning Department, the Conservation, the Building Department, and the ZBA. If the new position is funded, Mr. Coleman will be able to spend more time interacting with the Department Managers before problems become escalated and focus more time on the Land Use and Permitting Departments and DCSS. Having more time with customer service and satisfaction can help improve relations within the community. Mr. Wasserman said that the town has gone from a flat structure of government to a pyramid. In order for the new government to work, you need to give them the manpower to do it. He is very concerned about the number of hours the Town Manager and Assistant Town Managers are spending in the building. He doesn't want to burn out the people who are making it work.

Mr. Lunetta questioned the level of experience they will be looking for as well as what kind of salary range. Mr. Coleman stated that they were thinking of someone with three to five years experience and looking at a salary range up to \$70,000. The Board generally felt the person should have about seven to ten years experience in Human Resources, and they should think about someone who knows municipalities in a union environment. Mr. Lunetta suggested raising the salary to \$80,000 to entice a strong candidate. Ms. Hsu feels the more experienced the person the better, and thinks it should be someone with a level of sophistication and is ready to hit the ground running. Mr. Lunetta suggested that Mr. Coleman get in touch with Mr. Bob Gatti from Gatti Associates to pick his brain a bit about trying to find a suitable candidate. Mrs. Hsu also suggested looking into people from the field of Higher Education as they may have some expertise with collective bargaining.

Mr. Dennis asked for clarification as to what the position's title would be. Ms. Fitzpatrick said it would probably be a Human Resource Director. The group was more comfortable with the title being a Human Resource Director as opposed to a Personnel Director.

Mr. Creem from the Finance Committee let the Board know that they have discussed the position at the budget meeting and the issue is well covered. He told the Board from a personal standpoint, he thinks the Board has a very strong case and that money is ultimately what always becomes the issue. Adding positions gets scrutinized as costs increase. One concern of the Finance Committee is that now that Needham has moved to a Town Manager form of government, this new position may pave the way for more positions to be added later on. Mr. Brightman wondered if this position had previously been discussed or if it was a wait and see approach? Currently it has been a wait and see approach, but now the time has come to re-evaluate.

Mr. Dennis asked the Board if they were all comfortable with the years of experience and salary amount. The consensus was that they were all in agreement and they wanted to make sure the town looks for someone with solid experience. Ms. Fitzpatrick assured them they would be given the job description to view. Mr. Coleman suggested taking a look at the old description from when the town had a Personnel Director position versus the newly created one.

Mr. Lunetta made a motion that the Personnel Board supports the towns request to reestablish the position of a Human Resource Director formerly titled Personnel Director. Ms. Hsu seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

Mr. Lunetta made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 PM. Ms. Hsu seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nikki Witham