

**Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Personnel Policy Review Committee**

Meeting – June 18, 2014

Swanzey Town Hall, 620 Old Homestead Highway, Swanzey, NH

Present at Meeting: The meeting was called to order by Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe at 2:05 p.m. at the Swanzey Town Hall. Present were Chief of Police Thomas DeAngelis, Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe, Human Resources and Services Coordinator Edna Coates, Swanzey resident D. Michael Lilly, Resident Care Giver III Donna Allen, Public Works employee Ann Bedaw, and Bookkeeper Theresa Louder.

Absent: None

Others Present:

No others were present at the meeting.

Minutes:

As this was the first meeting of the Personnel Policy Review Committee, there were no minutes to accept.

New Business:

O’Keefe started the meeting by discussing the background for the Personnel Policy Review Committee. The Committee was first established by the Selectboard on April 23, 2013; new appointments to the Committee were made by the Board of Selectmen on April 29, 2014. Because meetings are public, meeting notices must be posted at least 24 hours prior to the meetings. Notices must be posted in at least two public places, and usually are posted at Town Hall and the Swanzey Post Office. The Town website is also utilized. Louder suggested also posting notices at the West Swanzey Post Office.

The meeting schedule was discussed, with consensus that meetings would be on the third Wednesday of each month at 2:00 p.m. As Town Hall is closed to the public on Wednesday afternoons and the meetings of the Committee are public, it was decided that the Committee shall meet at the Swanzey Police Station, 34 Eaton Road, Swanzey.

Introductions were made by each person stating their name and position.

O’Keefe began discussion regarding the goals of the Committee. It is good practice to comprehensively rewrite and update the personnel policy every five years. The policy should be reviewed for portions that are weak, absent, and outdated. The Committee is expected to submit a policy to the Board of Selectmen for approval at a date in the future. The proposed policy should be reasonable and acceptable to the Board of Selectmen. O’Keefe stated that department specific policies should be included so that there is one policy document that encompasses all employees.

Coates handed out copies of the current personnel policy and other external policies that have not yet been included (Nepotism Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, Uniform Policy for The Carpenter Home, On-Call Policy for The Carpenter Home, and Conference, Meeting and Training Travel Expenses).

Louder provided background for the initial stages of the policy rewrite (planned in 2006 or 2007) and the intention to incorporate new and required sections. Sections already in the policy have been updated and revised as necessary, but some sections were not updated at all or not revised when referenced in another section. A desire to have the first sections of the policy for all employees, the

next portion for full-time employees, and so on until the department specific requirements was addressed.

General conversation followed regarding lunch breaks, hours worked, lack of consistency in the current policy, and minimum hours and scheduling for employees. Leave time with respect to Workers' Compensation, Family Medical Leave, and Short-Term Disability is of concern. Additional dialogue about the purpose of Workers' Compensation and Family Medical Leave occurred.

Wording of the policy needs to be addressed as well. Most sections refer to the bookkeeping office, but the Town now has a Human Resources office. Some other sections are vague and confusing.

Employee evaluations and progressive disciplinary action were discussed. Progressive action would begin with a verbal warning, followed by written warning, suspension with pay, suspension without pay, and termination. Discussion continued regarding how often the evaluations should be completed, who should complete the evaluations, and how merit pay and Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) should be distributed. COLA should be kept separate from merit. Merit being awarded as a dollar amount instead of a percentage was also proposed. Whether Supervisors and Department Heads should be evaluated by their subordinates was mentioned. DeAngelis stated that the Police Department utilizes a computerized evaluation form for Supervisors so that the employees remain more anonymous.

O'Keefe presented the Committee with an organizational chart of Town employees. O'Keefe will update the chart after errors were noted with regard to Finance and Carpenter Home employees. Additional review regarding who reports to whom followed.

The Workers' Compensation carrier for the Town and whether we should go out to bid was mentioned. The Town's exposure is very bad right now, since it looks at previous years claims. Going out to bid is something to consider in the future.

While planning for the next meeting, discussion returned to probation lengths and accrual of vacation time, as well as the way overtime is calculated.

For the next meeting, the Committee will focus on Workers' Compensation, Family Medical Leave, earned leave, benefits and probationary periods. Members will also review the rest of the current personnel policy and note items of concern or changes they would like to make.

Coates will provide sample policies by email to Committee members.

Next scheduled meeting: July 16, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. at the Swanzey Police Station.

Adjournment:

Louder **moved** to adjourn the meeting, Lilly seconded, and all were in favor. **Motion passed.** Adjournment occurred at 3:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa V. Louder, Bookkeeper

Approved on August 20, 2014