

MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL PERSONNEL COMMITTEE AND SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, AUGUST 22, 2011, AT 7:00 P.M. IN ROOM 207, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present

Thomas Ruocco, Chairman, Personnel Committee and members Michael Ecke and Sylvia Nichols.

Council members Patti Flynn-Harris, Andrew Falvey, James Sima, Tim Slocum.

Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; Louis Zullo, Personnel Director.

1. ROLL CALL

The clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined to be present.

3., PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

3. NON-UNION RULES AND REGULATIONS.

Section 9-5.1 Sick Bank - Mr. Zullo explained that the changes in this policy allow union members to avail themselves of the non-union sick bank in the event the union bank sick hours are depleted.

Mr. Zullo stated that, In the past 2 years, due to serious illness, the Town Hall union bank was down to "0" while the non-union sick bank had significant hours. Union employees can donate up to five (5) sick days to the bank. The maximum sick days an employee can carry is 150 days; an employee may cash out only 50 sick days upon termination of employment; and the people with the larger number of sick days are employees with 15+ years of service. The Police Department has the maximum 150 sick days, and they cash out each year. This is why the non-union employees requested this provision.

Regarding long term disability, the Council was advised that there is a disability insurance plan for which the employees pay the full premium.

Ms. Nichols commented on 150 sick days being a long time, about 7 months, and it is more likely an insurance policy.

Ms. Flynn-Harris stated that the 150 days is more than sufficient.

The Council was informed by Mr. Zullo that the union employees are willing to share their sick days. After the 2 serious illnesses of employees in the past 2 years, non-union staff wanted to contribute some of their sick days.

Mr. Falvey cited his concern for union employees wanting to use considerable time from the sick bank.

In response, Mr. Zullo advised that use of the sick bank days cannot exceed 60 days. All requests come through the Town Manager for approval, and the use of the sick bank has never been abused.

10-1 Retirement Plan. Mr. Zullo reviewed the plan in place for all employees hired prior to June 30, 2009 who participate in the Town Retirement Plan, and those employees hired after July 1, 2009, who only have the option to participate in the Town's 457 Deferred Compensation Plan. If an employee hired prior to July 1, 2009 elected to participate in the 457 Plan when hired, they are not eligible to switch their option to participate in the Town Retirement Plan.

10-1.3 – Changes made to line #2...with a **Town** contribution of 5%; line #3...end the sentence with base wages; delete “and not the Town of Cheshire Retirement Plan.”

If a participant contributes at least 1% of their wages, the Town's contribution will be 6% of the participant's wages.

10-4 – the increase in co-pays for prescriptions is now \$5, \$25, \$40; the other increases in this section for PPO, HMO and HSA and deletion of all reference to caps are approved.

10-4.4 – Waiver of all medical coverage payments was discussed with the Council. Mr. Zullo noted that the single waiver would be \$1,500; couple waiver would be \$2,200; and the family waiver would be \$3,000. With the people currently in the waiver program, the proposed increases would cost \$2,700. It is hoped the waiver payment increase would be an incentive for others to waive Town medical benefits when covered by a spouse. There are 20 people receiving waivers at this time. If one family waiver was approved there would be a savings of \$20,000.

Waivers have not been increased in 5 years, while insurance rates have increased 60%. This is a one year decision by an employee, and there is also a qualifying event for an employee on waiver to get into the medical benefits plan (i.e. spouse with benefits loses a job).

Mr. Ruocco said he did not support the increase in the waiver program, and does not believe an increase in the payments will be an incentive to employees to waive benefits. This provision can be looked at again next year.

Mr. Milone said he would put together statistics on the waiver program for the last 3 years, and the costs across all bargaining units. The waivers started in the 1990's.

10-7 – The recommendation is to change the name of this provision to “Performance Awards” (from “Longevity” Awards). The proposal is to increase the award amounts as follows: 10 but less than 15 years of service, \$350 to \$400; 15 but less than 20 years of service, \$500 to \$550; and 20+ years of service \$650 to \$700.

If these award amounts were increased, it would total a cost of \$800 in additional payments to employees eligible to receive the award. In the past the Town gave people a bonus award, and this is no longer being done. The performance award is only for those employees who have above requirements or exceptional performance.

10-9. Wellness increase from \$200 to \$250 (for health facility memberships). Mr. Zullo commented on "healthier employees being more productive, and tend towards less insurance claims". Of the non-union staff, 18 people participate in this program, and the additional cost would be \$900.

Mr. Milone explained that the Town provides wellness programs for employees, including blood pressure clinics, cholesterol checkups, screening for cancer.

It was stated by Ms. Nichols that it is nice to give employees small incentives, and since this program does not have a large increase, she supports the \$50 increase.

Mr. Falvey said this is a small, good will gesture to the employees and he supports it.

13-8. No changes were made to this section following discussion with labor counsel. There was an issue with an employee on a disciplinary hearing, and labor counsel advised there are other avenues to follow which a person could seek.

Mr. Ruocco informed the Council that the Personnel Rules and Regulations would be on the agenda of the August 29th Council meeting.

With the proposed changes approved, Mr. Zullo said they could be implemented with changes in the first payroll in September.

SUMMARY

9-5.1 – No change.

Sick Bank – changes approved by the Council.

10-1. – Changes approves by the Council.

10-1.3 – add "Town" contribution of 5%; delete.."and not the Town of Cheshire Retirement Plan."

10-4 – approved as submitted.

10-4.4 – the increase in the waiver payments was not approved by the Council.

10-7 – the increase in the performance awards was not approved by the Council.

10-9 – the increase in wellness membership enrollment was approved to be increased from \$200 to \$250.

13-8 – no changes.

MOTION by Mr. Ruocco; seconded by Ms. Nichols.

MOVED that the Personnel Committee approve and accept the changes to the Non-Union Rules and Regulations as proposed and discussed.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

4. YOUTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES AND SENIOR AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES REORGANIZATION/CONSOLIDATION AND REVISED JOB DESCRIPTIONS.

Mr. Milone distributed copies of the revised job descriptions for the Coordinator of Senior Services and Director of Human Services, stating that they are the same as reviewed by Council on July 19th.

MOTION by Ms. Nichols; seconded by Mr. Ecke.

MOVED that the Personnel Committee accept the changes in the job descriptions for the Director of Human Services and Coordinator of Senior Services, and consolidation and reorganization of Youth and Social Services and Senior and Transportation Services as proposed in the reorganization summary.

Discussion

Mr. Zullo explained that the 2003 model for these job descriptions was looked at, and in a meeting with the incumbents the model was reviewed and discussed.

In a meeting with Michelle Piccerillo, there was a review of her current responsibilities, a review of Ms. Ferrall's and Ms. Pulisciano's responsibilities. Following this meeting, the new job descriptions were written. The two departments will become one department. There will be sharing of some duties.

With the reorganization there is a savings of \$40,000 for the first year and Mr. Milone noted that it would be about \$35,000 in subsequent years. In the first year of the reorganization there will be two department budgets (FY 11-12) and for FY 12-13 there will be one budget for one department.

Mr. Milone advised that he has sent a memo to all the senior citizens about the changes being done, without any change in programs or services. When everything is accomplished, he will meet with the staff, discuss the changes, walk through the changes and who is performing various duties, etc. Mr. Milone commented on the

uncertainty in the lives of senior citizens, and these changes are adding to it, with some confusion and concerns. Everything possible will be done to make the changes comfortable while providing the same services to the seniors.

The concern about a disaster or emergency and the responsible person at the Senior Center and the role of the Town was raised by Mr. Sima.

In response, Mr. Milone stated that everything comes to him; he will get the first responsible person and make contact; and emergency service personnel will get involved, immediately, along with department heads. In the past the Senior Center has been opened for emergencies.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

5. TOWN MANAGER'S FY 11-12 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.

Mr. Milone stated that the goals and objectives were first reviewed with the Council on July 22nd. He and the Council reviewed the few additions and changes to the Goals and Objectives. (new or amended items are noted in bold type)

Goal I - Ensure continuing fiscal stability of Town Operations

Continue to maintain prudent controls **through expanded utilization of "Munis" accounting system.**

Initiate annual pension actuarial valuation and re-evaluate various pension consulting services.

Goal II – Continue to provide programs that support staff morale **and enhance effectiveness of staff to ensure highest level of customer service.**

Goal III – Improve operational efficiency and effectiveness.

Implement online registration for all Parks and Recreation programs.

Revise all labor contracts and identify priorities and a strategy for the development of successor agreements.

Re-evaluate and modify, where necessary, Department budget performance measures.

Complete study of technology infrastructure and software and make recommendations to Council **by 3/3/2012.**

Mr. Milone stated that the idea is communication; keeping the Town Council as informed as he can; and be as transparent as possible.

Goal IV – Expand communication efforts to enhance citizen awareness of and involvement in Town Government, and maintain high level of communication with all stakeholders.

Enhance utilization of website by Town staff to improve content of information, nature of dissemination and ease of use by the public.

Maintain high standards in reporting by continuing to improve the quality, content and presentation of published documents **(i.e. operating and capital budgets, annual report, CAFT, etc.)**

Mr. Milone stated this includes completion of the technology initiative, which will come out of the Technology Study Group.

Enhance the use of and information disseminated by cable access TV and develop backup/contingency plan for T.V. production.

Expand ongoing dissemination of relevant/appropriate information to the Town Council **by establishing a weekly “notes to the Council” e-mail.**

Goal V – Continue or complete or advance key Town projects.

Complete West Main Street streetscape improvements.

Initiate the first state of Linear Park extension from West Main Street north.

Complete Library reconfiguration **and RFID project.**

Expand road infrastructure program.

Resolve Community Pool Bubble Replacement issue.

Implement, where possible, the results of energy performance contracting projects.

Complete CAD/RMS public safety software conversion.

Complete Phase 1 of GIS software project.

Initiate Town Center Sidewalk replacement program.

Mr. Sima commentes on a successor to the Town Manager, having a blueprint in place so anyone who follows a department head has something from which to work to understand how to get started.

In that regard, Mr. Milone stated that he will be relying in ICMA, his professional organization, to provide a model which can be followed by the Town Manager and

department heads. He will have a copy of this information for the Council at the August 29th meeting for Council approval.

6. TOWN MANAGER'S PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

MOTION by Ms. Nichols; seconded by Mr. Ecke.

MOVED that the Town Council enter Executive Session at 8:20 p.m. to include Town Manager Milone for discussion on the Town Manager's performance evaluation.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

MOTION by Ms. Nichols; seconded by Ms. Flynn-Harris.

MOVED to exit Executive Session at 9:20 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. Nichols; seconded by Ms. Flynn-Harris.

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk