WEST TISBURY PERSONNEL BOARD

MINUTES

October 18, 2021

**Present:** Leon Brathwaite,Janice Haynes, James Klingensmith, Hunter Moorman, and Brian Smith

**Also Present for all or part of the meeting:** Kathy Logue and Skip Manter

**Staff Present:** Maria McFarland

Leon called the meeting to order via Zoom video conferencing at 5:00PM.

**Minutes:**

The minutes of the September 7, 2021 meeting were approved as revised. Roll Call Vote: Brathwaite-aye, Haynes-aye, Klingensmith – aye, and Moorman-aye. Smith abstained.

The minutes of the September 13, 2021 meeting were approved as revised. Roll Call Vote: Brathwaite-aye, Haynes-aye, Klingensmith – aye, Moorman-aye and Smith -aye.

**Performance Evaluations:**

Brian made a motion, seconded by Hunter to accept the evaluations for Diana Braillard (COA),Jefferey Fisher (Building) and Jane Rossi (Planning) with one-step increases as approved by the Department Head. Roll Call Vote: Brathwaite-aye, Haynes-aye, Klingensmith-aye, Moorman-aye, and Smith-aye.

**Old Business:**

**COVID 19/Vacation Carry Over Extension:**

Members were given a spreadsheet of results from island and off island towns detailing what accommodations have been made for the use and carry over of vacation time during the COVID pandemic. Maria summarized the discussion from the October 18 meeting and went over the results of the survey which found that almost no towns were providing accommodations beyond FY2022. She suggested the board look at the policy adopted by the Town of Lincoln.

Kathy Logue pointed out two issues. One issue is that vacation time is tied to the employee’s anniversary date so depending on when that date falls in relation to June 30,2022, people may be negatively affected. The second inequity is that some employees would not be able to take advantage of Section 12-7 of the Personnel Bylaw because they haven’t worked for the town for more than with the town for more than 10 years or that their there is not enough money in their budgets to cover a buyout. She explained that some of the larger departments may have money in their budgets to cover these payouts, while smaller departments, especially one-person departments don’t have this payroll cushion. Kathy asked that the Board to be flexible with individual situations.

Issues:

* Inequities because of different anniversary dates and departmental needs
* Lack of money in Personal Services budgets to allow for payouts under Section 12-7 of the Personnel Bylaw. This time will be edible for buyouts under this section.
* How to handle exceptions for essential employees: It was decided that the policy should not spell out exceptions. The board will address requests for exceptions on a case by case basis.
* Town of Lincoln policy which allow surplus vacation hours be used by employees first work anniversary after June 2022.

Discussion:

Brian said COVID inconvenienced everyone in different ways. In his opinion the most equitable way to handle this is to use a start and end date. Jim agreed with Brian He commented that employees should be able to find a way to take time off. Over the summer the island saw visitors from all over the world. The threat is out there and it is isn’t going to change. Hunter agreed that there needs to be a start and end date. The government needs to keep running and the board may need to make exceptions for essential employees.

Leon clarified that the current policy allows employees to carry over their vacation time to June 30, 2022. If exceptions need to be made, the department should bring it to the Personnel Board rather than having the Personnel Board make a policy about what exceptions it would allow.

Jim said the exceptions should be addressed on a case by case basis. He used an example the essential worker who gets hurt and can’t work. Management has to figure out how to function in the absence of the essential worker. This is the same with vacation time.

Maria pointed out that the larger departments have enough staff to cover shifts if people are out, but one-person departments will have a hard time taking larger chunks of time off to use up vacation time.

The conversation digressed to talk about staffing for the accounting department so that there is always someone to do payroll if both the accountant and the treasurer trained to do payroll and the need have backup coverage. Maria pointed out that the Bylaw allows for temporary and emergency hires.

Brian made a motion, seconded by Jim to amend the May 18, 2020 policy to clarify that vacation time on the books between March 10, 2020 and June 15, 2021 must be used by June 30, 2022.

Discussion on the Motion:

Hunter asked the board to consider the Lincoln amendment. He asked what the financial impact would there be it to allow people to carry over this time to their 2022 anniversary. People who are being disadvantaged because they could not take vacation time because of COVID.

Janice said what Hunter is proposing extends the time but there is still inequalities. There is no way to make it equal for everyone. Adopting the Lincoln policy won’t solve the problem of when anniversary dates fall.

Members acknowledged that the inequalities that have been identified cannot be resolved. The inequities are in hearent in the COVID crisis.

Kathy asked the board if they will help people who just can’t use this time before June 30 and if there in not money in that departmental budget, with getting approval from the Fin Comm. Leon agreed but doesn’t think that should be part of the policy.

After discussion on the motion, Leon called for a roll call vote: Brathwaite-aye, Haynes-aye, Klingensmith – aye, and Moorman-aye. Smith abstained.

Maria will circulate a memo to all staff regarding this policy. Leon would like the employees to acknowledge receipt of the policy in writing.

Leon asked if the COVID vacation time should be eligible for a buyout under Section 12-7. It was agreed that this time is eligible.

**New Business:**

**Indigenous Peoples Day:** Leon let the board know that if the Select Board votes to change to Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day the board will need to submit a warrant article to change the Personnel Bylaw. Tabled to a future meeting. .

**Administrative:**

* **Documents to be signed: None**
* **Documents noted for the record:**
  + - Notice of Change of Status: Highway Department
    - Notice of Change of Status: Library (3)
    - Vacation carry over approval: Coit and Pratt ( Library)

There being no new business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 6: 02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria McFarland

Board Administrator