Personnel Board 2020 Annual Report

West Tisbury has the best employees. During 2020 all of our municipal employees worked to adjust in order to provide town services during a once in a lifetime pandemic. It was not easy to transition to working from home; learn the complexities of conducting public meetings via Zoom and conference calls ,navigating the complexities of helping the public while being socially distant, and keeping up with shifting permitting and work related regulations from the state. All employees have exhibited professionalism, cooperation, and dedication to making sure the business of West Tisbury continued as smoothly as possible. The Board would like to thank all town employees for their cooperation and flexibility during this time.

As we closed out 2020, the board welcomed James Klingensmith to the board to fill the seat left vacant upon the retirement of Norman Perry. Norm diligently served on this board for more than 20 years. Norm has been sorely missed and we want to express our gratitude for his many years of public service.

This will be the last annual report submitted with Ben Retmier and Dianne Powers as board members. Dianne Powers, former Selectperson and retired Register of the Dukes County Registry of Deeds graciously agreed to join the Personnel Board in 2019, but has since moved off –island. Thank you Dianne for stepping in when we really needed you. Enjoy your new home. Ben Retmier stepped down in order to devote more time to baby daughter Cora and his duties running Tri-Town Ambulance.

Approval of the FY2021 wage adjustment for employees and implementation of the changes to the classification and compensation plan was delayed until a special town meeting held on October 6 at the Tabernacle in Oak Bluffs so that attendees could be socially distant. Town Meeting approved the Board’s recommendation of a 2.7 % wage adjustment for all Town employees, and approved changes to the classification plan. These changes were approved retroactive to July 1, 2020. The board is recommending a 1.8 % wage adjustment for all employees effective July 1, 2021 for FY2022.

The Town had the following staffing changes in 2020. Beth Kramer retired from the Library and turned the reins over to Alexandria Pratt just as the pandemic hit and the library had to shut down. It is difficult to step into a new position under normal conditions but 2020 has been anything but normal. Mikaela Lawson started as the Childrens’Librarian in July. Tammis Sprague the Data Collector/Assistant Assessor retired in September. We thank Beth and Tammis for their many years of dedicated service to the Town. The Assessors hired Cindy Sherman to fill this position.

The challenges of running a public health department during a once in a life time pandemic on top of the regular workload has been enormous. The Board of Health hired William Droheim as a full time Assistant Board of Health Agent.

Welcome to all our new employees.

All town buildings were closed to the public in March. To the extent possible town buildings were retrofitted to provide more space between workstations, with higher partitions and Plexiglass windows added. Thanks to all staff who helped move furniture and files and thanks to Mike Hull for his work to build partitions so that staff could return to work in the building with increased protections in place.

The Board was able to continue its work to review and approve performance evaluations, new hires and other personnel matters via Zoom conferencing. We look forward to having all staff back at their posts and town buildings open to the public once again.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Retmier, Chair

Leon Brathwaite

James Klingensmith

Dianne Powers

Rachel Rooney, Employee Representative

Maria McFarland, Board Administrator