

WEST TISBURY PERSONNEL BOARD  
MINUTES  
December 2, 2019

**Present:** Leon Brathwaite, Ben Retmier, Rachel Rooney, and Dianne Powers

**Absent:** Norm Perry

**Also present for all or part of the meeting:** Joyce Albertine Dawn Barnes, Joan Chavez, Laura Coit, Michal Colaneri, Rhonda Conley, Ted Jochsberger, Beth Kramer, Tanya Larsen, Dee Leopold, Kathy Logue, Emily Milstein, Larry Schubert, and Pam Thors

The meeting was called to order at 5:04PM.

**Classification and Compensation Study: Discussion of Appeals Process:**

Ben opened the meeting by thanking everyone for coming. He explained to the audience that the purpose of this meeting is to gather information in order to an understanding the changes being requested and that no action will be taken on the job descriptions tonight. He reminded everyone that all questions are about the position description and not related to the person in the position.

**Affordable Housing Administrative Assistant.** Rhonda Conley and Larry Shubert, chair of the Affordable Housing Committee were present.

The Affordable Housing committee is requesting that this position be placed on the same grade as the Board Administrator positon.

Rhonda said the first draft of the job description changed the job title to Board Administrator. Subsequently, the consultant determined, (for reasons detailed in an undated email that the position title would be changed to Affordable Housing Administrative Assistant II and regraded from a Grade 3 position to a Grade 4 position.) In Rhonda's opinion this position should have been changed about 10 years ago. When she first started 18 years ago, it was mostly a recording secretary type of position but it has evolved.

Leon asked Rhonda to explain what the job details and how many hours are required. It is a 35 hour a month position, two office hours are held one morning a week. She fields all questions from the public with respect to affordable housing issues. She reports to the Chair.

Leon then asked Rhonda to describe what fielding questions from homeowners about financing, purchasing, and resale entails. Rhonda replied that when someone applies she gives them the information about the steps to secure financing and explains the covenants. She is the first person anyone talks to. She reviews legal documents before they go to the committee. She has been to off island trainings for housing matters such as Chapter 40 B housing.

Larry said the consultant said a multiple grade increase would create the need for the position to be re-advertised as it would more than just a simple reclassification. Larry asked if the grade increases could be phased in over a few years. No.

Ben asked what liability the Town might face if a critical error is made. Rhonda explained that there could be a property liability if affordable housing covenants expire or a new covenant is missed. There would be no financial impact to the Town, but the property could lose its affordable status if covenants are not extended.

Larry said he is not the administrator of the Board, Rhonda is. Larry added that this position also acts as the staff person for the West Tisbury Affordable Housing Trust which is a joint committee with the Board of Selectmen. They are tasked with approving the spending of funds in the Affordable Housing Trust. Meetings are held on the same nights as the regular committee meetings but are a separate meeting. It does not require a separate position. The primary responsibility of the housing trust is to authorize the spending of trust funds. The position is responsible for processing bills for payments from the trust fund and preparing associated reports

Dianne asked if a new person took over this position would that person do the work of the staff person for the Affordable Housing Trust. Yes.

Michael Colaneri said the job has changed over the years and they have done many projects where Rhonda has acted as the liaison.

After discussion with the staff and chair it was determined that the position description is missing the additional responsibilities of providing staff support for the functions of the West Tisbury Affordable Housing Trust. Maria will work with Rhonda to review and write some wording for this additional essential function.

**Board of Assessors/ Principal Assessor:** Dawn Barnes and Michael Colaneri, Chair, were present.

Dawn told the board that the Assessors are not asking for any additional changes to the job description beyond what was originally requested by the department. The final job description was signed off. The request for a grade change stems from the fact that when the Treasurer's position was changed to that of Treasurer/Collector it was moved up one grade. Now that the consultant has recommended a one grade increase for the Accountant, the Assessors feel the Principal Assessor position should also be elevated because the position is part of the Town's financial management team.

Dawn has been the Principal Assessor for 6 years. Prior to change in the status of the Collector's position from elected to appointed, the 4 financial positions (Accountant, Treasurer, Collector and Principal Assessor) were on the same grade. Until 2018, the Tax Collector position was an elected position. When the Treasurer and Collector's offices were combined the Treasurer/Collector position was placed one grade higher than the other financial positions because of the additional responsibilities and an assistant was hired.

While Dawn told the board she did not see any changes to the town accountant's position beyond a title change. (The Accountant's position description was changed to include more detail about the role the accountant provides to the Finance Committee).

Duties of the assessing department are primarily set by statute. Dawn reviewed the recap sheet and explained the role of each department in preparing the recap sheet. The recap sheet is the final paperwork submitted to the Department of Revenue when the tax rate is set. She also detailed the number of parcels they are responsible for valuing, and the revenue generated by taxes.

The principal Assessor has one staff person so has daily supervisory responsibilities.

Ben asked how frequently Dawn attends court sessions at the Appellate Tax Board. Dawn said she has attended 4 or 5 hearings over 6 years. The Principal Assessor also works with legal counsel to prepare for these hearings.

### **Library Circulation Assistant:**

Beth Kramer, Library Director, Laura Coit, Head of the Circulation Dee Leopold and Emily Milstein, two of the circulation assistants, talked with the board.

Beth quoted from the Consultant's review of the Director's request to change the minimum education requirement from a High School Diploma with a Bachelor's Degree preferred to a Bachelor's Degree required.

"Circ assistant received 45 points which includes high school plus some college. A bachelor's is too high for this position. I would not recommend it, and it would exclude a number of people, perhaps discriminatory. According the standards of the MA Library Association, they would not recommend a bachelor's for a circ assistant for community this size. In fact they would not recommend a MLS for the Director either." Beth said the consultant must be using information that is out of date and it is not consistent with current educational requirements

Beth said she reached out to the MA Library Association, the Mass Library System, and the Board of Library Commissioners to seek their assessment of the consultant's determination. The MLA does not advise on this and has not for many years. Beth looked at library job descriptions on various data bases and found that all comparable jobs in libraries of this size require a 4 year degree. Beth disagrees with the consultant that that a Bachelor's Degree is too high because it is essential to the complexity of the position.

She went on to say that a broad understanding of print and electronic materials as well as an extensive understanding of database retrieval techniques and emerging tech devices and applications requires a college degree and one year of library experience.

She went on to say that the assistants have to understand children's developmental patterns and staff has been trained in medical reference interviews and research of medical data bases. She thinks the consultant looks at population numbers rather than circulation numbers, public access, computer use and attendance. Beth submitted the usage data in the appeal. She also thinks the consultant did not accurately capture the work environment.

Beth has submitted additional revisions including that the library serves as an exam proxy location and all the staff are trained in CPR, First Aid, Narcan administration, and active shooter training.

Leon asked if all other positions at the library require a four degree. They do.

Leon then asked if one of the staff could describe interactions with the public.

Dee Leopold responded first and provided the following narrative.

“When you come into the library it is a big open space. When you walk in staff are the face of the library. Today for example was a stormy day winter day and people are looking for story hour and kids are running round. Someone will say I don’t know how to send a fax or enlarge these photos. Can you help? I just put in a blue ray disc into one of your laptops and it won’t play. Why? It is the technical stuff.

A woman came in today and said her mother can only listen to books. So I asked what she likes to listen to and how can we get them. What would be a good narrator? That in addition to the phone ringing and the weather is bad out. Have to think of the materials coming in, are they being cared for. Around 11 o’clock, deliveries come in and while patrons come in they are sorting and shifting and it is fabulous and it is fun and it is organic but you never know what is going to happen next and you really are the point person. There isn’t a hierarchy.

I hope I am capturing it. It isn’t like any other library. When I took the job I thought I would be checking in books. Whoa..... that is just the beginning. It is so much more, and so much richer. You would be hard pressed to find someone who doesn’t find the library to be one of the jewels in the crown of the library system here. We are rewarded not so much by our excessive compensation but by being told constantly how important the library is to everybody.”

Emily added that her background is as a teacher with a master’s degree who has opened three businesses and managed her husband’s office. She thought it would take her a couple of week to learn the job instead, she found that it took her two months to absorb the “tremendous amount of what you have to know to do the job.”

Leon asked if people ask come in with confidential information about their family that they want to discuss. Emily replied that you have to be sensitive to people’s privacy. People give them medical and tax information to be faxed.

Laura Coit said they meet whatever the patrons needs have. Often people come in with family members who have been diagnosed with a disease or have committed suicide and they are at a lost about where to go for information. She feels that it is the library staff’s job to provide the resources they need and to comfort them. That’s why we are constantly doing training to learn how to diffuse difficult situations and research medical records.

Dianne asked if all staff have had active shooter training. Joyce said her staff has not, but the library and town hall staff have. Dianne said this was not something that is specific to the library positions. Rachel responded that libraries are soft targets. Rachel said when we are closing we have to look in the bathrooms to make sure no one is overdosing.

Members then discussed Beth's request to change the title of this position. Maria noted that if the Director had requested a new position during the course of the study, the consultant could have been asked to draft an appropriate description grade it and obtained wage data. Beth said she didn't have the benefit of the request until now as part of the appeal.

Leon stated that changing the title of a position does not necessarily mean a grade change. We could look at a title change after this study is done but he did not think it could be part of the process now.

Ben asked Beth to explain what is involved in serving as exam proctor location. Beth said the library provides this service about two dozen times a year. There is no special training required. They follow the specifications the organization or school requires. A staff person sits at a desk outside the conference room where the test is being taken while they do their regular work.

Leon then asked for a description of the opening and closing procedures. Emily said it takes an hour. Ben asked if it is complex. It's not the most complicated, but it is a lot of steps. They have to pull books for inter library loans, answer the phone, and shut down the computers. We have a whole system of unlocking and locking doors.

If there is a function going on in the community room while the library is open, there can be up to 80 people in the building so they have to do crowd management while being hosts.

Ben asked if it would make the hiring process harder if one year of library experience is required. Beth responded that it might, but it would add to the quality of the position. Beth would like it to be a four year degree and one year of library experience.

### **Treasurer Collector/ Assistant Treasurer Collector:**

Kathy said they have made a few additional changes to the job description. Kathy said she thought it was clear from the job description that the breadth and depth of knowledge, the range of abilities and skills multi-tasking that one has to have to do that the position would have graded higher.

After seeing the results of the study, Kathy said she talked to other towns in the study about their structure and detailed how other departments vary.

In her opinion, the assistant is doing a higher level of complexity. The person needs to be bonded and not make mistakes. The consequences of making mistakes in any aspect of the job are significant.

Kathy added that she compared this position with the Board Administrator position and she cannot see the reason for a grade disparity between these positions and that of the Assistant Treasurer/ Collector because this position is empowered to act as the Treasurer/Collector whenever that person is out of the office which is every Monday. It was noted that the board administrator position does not have a supervisor.

Joan described her typical day. There is a lot of multitasking and dealing with people who are unhappy about their taxes or that they have been flagged at the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

Leon asked the lock box service. Joan explained that the lock box service takes care of collections unless there are issues with a payment. They send a daily file that she downloads. She deals with any discrepancies. Leon pointed out that under the supervision section she only does this work on when Kathy is out. Ben asked how often this is an issue. Kathy said it is an issue of 8 to 10 times a year (when real estate and excise tax bills are done.)

Kathy said that if West Tisbury did not have a lock box service the Town would need a staff person just to process tax payments. The service handles all straight forward transactions. Payments with missing information are handled in house.

Leon asked how online payments are handled. Payments are made in person, or through City Hall Systems or the lock box. Kathy explained that the town contracts with City Hall Systems and that she does the reconciliation at the end of the month.

The assistant also processes Municipal Certificates which requires working with attorney's offices.

Ben asked about processing payroll. Joan explained how the Town Accountant and Treasurer/Collector work to process payroll. It is a two-step process to serve as a check and balance. Joan processes the payments and Kathy does the reconciliations. Joan processes payroll when Kathy is out.

**Council on Aging/ Assistant Director:** Tanya and Joyce were present. Tanya said she thought there were a lot of requested job descriptions changes that were not honored and that her interview was cut short because the consultant had to get to the boat.

Tanya pointed out that the only comparable in the salary survey was for a position in Provincetown. [In fact, Provincetown does not have this position. The information provided to the consultant was out of date. ] Tanya submitted the job description for the Assistant Director in Barnstable (not a town in the study). Tanya said that West Tisbury is

unique. Most towns do not have an Assistant Director position. She said that the most comparable job description is the Director of Senior Services in Edgartown.

Tanya said her job combines the role of activities coordinator, assistant director, and program director.

The primary responsibility for transportation and home visits rests with the Outreach Coordinator, but the Director and Acting Director also do this when necessary. Tanya detailed a home visit where they found many issues.

Leon asked what is entailed in recruiting and training volunteers. Tanya does the CORI checks and manages the senior citizen tax work off program. This is not properly identified in the job description and will be added. The Council on Aging is only responsible for coordination of these application and placement. There is no supervision involved.

Leon asked if a Masters Degree in Social Work should be a requirement of this position. Joyce said no, but they both have the degree.

Leon asked about home visits and confidentiality. Joyce said she and Tanya are mandated reporters. He followed up by asking how much experience in human services they would want a new person to have. Tanya replied that it depends on type of human services degree the person had. A social work license is not required. Experience is more important than the degree.

After a brief discussion about education and experience requirements, a change will be made to the number of years of experience required if the person does not have a Bachelor's Degree. The experiences should increase from 3 to 4 years. Being a mandated reporter will be added as an essential function.

Ben noted that Tanya submitted several job descriptions (or advertisements for positions) as part of her appeal. He asked if she thought her position was comparable and did she find that they were markedly different. Tanya said she really didn't. She looked mostly at the pay rate and job title. She said they primarily looked at Edgartown.

Also discussed were the special requirements needed at the time of hire or within a time frame after hire. This will be looked at it again. Joyce and Tanya will go back and look at the special requirements section and provide changes accordingly.

**Board Administrators:** This is on the agenda for the board to determine if they agree with the consultant's recommendation that this class of positions move from Grade 6 to Grade 7.

Pam Thors, the ZBA administrator was present to listen to the discussion. Dianne said she is concerned that the consultant only provided one rating sheet for all 5 of the positions. Maria clarified by explaining that in 2015 a rating sheet was done for each board

adminstror positon. While the total points varied, all positions were within the range for Grade 6. This time, the consultant did one rating sheet for all five positions.

Dianne said there are several places where the positions are similar but as an example, one position has access to confidential information and the others do not.

Leon said the title and responsibilities are similar. Dianne said she is working on making a spreadsheet to show the differences within the job descriptions.

Maria said her understanding from the consultant is that the increase in the grade was driving in part by the market data. Leon said he went through the ratings and the total came to a Grade 7.

Pam asked if an appeal will be allowed if the Grade is not changed. Pam was told that would have to be determined.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria McFarland  
Board Administrator  
APPROVED