



**PERSONNEL BOARD**  
**TOWN OF OAK BLUFFS**  
PO Box 1327, Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

**PERSONNEL BOARD MEETING MINUTES:**  
Oak Bluffs Town Hall Conference Room

September 25, 2023 – Special meeting.  
5:00 pm

Present: Chair William Vrooman, Vice Chair Brian Smith, Board Members Kevin Brennan, Maura McGroarty, Sherry Countryman.

Absent:

Also Present: Town Administrator Deborah Potter, Assistant Town Administrator Wendy Brough

**Chairperson Vrooman called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.**

**1. Vote to accept minutes from 09/014/2022.**

Chair Vrooman continued to the next meeting for review and vote, no discussion.

**2. Discussion and possible vote on recommendation to adopt revised Schedule A (Classification Plan) and Schedule B (Compensation Plan) of the Personnel By-laws, as updated from the recent Classification and Compensation study conducted by Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management.**

DISCUSSION:

**Classification Schedule.**

Member McGroarty started the discussion by asking for clarification of titles in grades and confirming new positions not in the previous classification.

Assistant Town Administrator Brough confirmed the Parks & Recreation Manager, EMS Coordinator and Deputy Fire Chief were new to this classification schedule.

In response to Executive Assistant II with the Select Board, it was clarified that it is a higher level of responsibility than Executive Assistant I.

Town Administrator Potter discussed the Executive Assistant II and Planning and Zoning Administrator were classified in a higher grade than other administrators due to the substantive responsibilities of their duties and independence of these positions, who are essentially without department heads.

Member Countryman asked for clarification on the increase of the Assistant Town Administrator position to Grade 7, while other Department Heads move to Grade 6. Ms. Potter responded on the responsibility level of this post, that while a stipend position, they oversee

Town-wide projects, up of 17 million in grants and project management with engineers, complexity is significant, with direct oversight and direction to Department Head on protocols, procedures and personnel management.

Ms. Countryman asked if the Town Accountant would be in the same level. Ms. Potter responded that the Town Accountant is administratively managed by the Town Administrator, they still report to a Department Head.

Member Smith highlighted in Grade 2 to have all administrative assistants' titles to be the same, this was agreed to.

Ms. McGroarty commented that the Assistant Town Administrator is an outlier, with Department heads reporting to this position. Ms. Potter explained that if the current Assistant Town Administrator were to leave, the Town Administrator could interview Department Heads for the Assistant Town Administrator opening, receiving a stipend for the additional duties in this role.

In discussion of the current Assistant Town Administrator, who is also in charge of personnel, Ms. Brough commented that the Human Resources (HR) Director position should be included in the classification. If the Assistant Town Administrator position was to separate out, the HR Director would be in Grade 6 with the other Department Heads, and it is only with the additional duties being done by the current Assistant Town Administrator, that elevates it to the Grade 7.

On further discussion, even though the HR Director is not filled, as it resides with the current Assistant Town Administrator it was decided to include in the classification study for reference and for the future if the current Assistant Town Administrator vacates the position.

Member Brennan asked if this is the time for title adjustment, with titles not informing on "leaders of people and individual contributors" and not being able to tell them apart. It is not so clear with the audience, for example Library Director and Principal Assessor in the same grade. With two titles where one is a leader of people, running the facility and one an individual contributor.

Ms. Potter said with the warrant already done, this could be reviewed for the future. She continued that with the classification schedule we can add a column that titles the grades and explains the classifications, such as Department Heads, Assistant Department Heads, Superintendent levels. It was discussed that some Department Heads did have statutory titles under State Law, such as Shellfish Constable, Harbormaster, Treasurer-Collector.

The Town Clerk was brought up on why it was included in the schedule as it is elected. Ms. Potter discussed the potential of this becoming an appointed position, due to Town Clerk duties increasingly becoming more technical in nature, and if the current Town Clerk relocates out of Oak Bluffs, they would no longer be eligible for the position.

It was brought up that it may be more appropriate for this position to be removed and if it became appointed, it then would be reclassified by the Personnel Board.

**Board Member Brennan made a motion to adopt revised Schedule A with a minor modification on amending Admin to Administrative in Grade 2, removing Town Clerk and inserting Human Resources Director into Grade 6.**

**Board Member Smith Seconded (5 -Aye)**

DISCUSSION:

**Compensation Schedule.**

Member Countryman asked when looking at the recommended compensation schedule, are we looking “apples to apples” with current ranges of Edgartown, Tisbury and West Tisbury.

Ms. Potter outlined, by having a range it allows us to look at the current market value today to see what other positions are paying and figure out what to raise an individual’s rate to be at, to be competitive.

Ms. Brough confirmed that the Island ranges in the comparison spreadsheet are their current FY24 ranges and which the Island Towns advertise positions at. With the proposed new ranges, Oak Bluffs will then be the same or over the median in comparison with other island ranges. But she noted that between Towns, the ranges can vary from position to position, there is not one set rate for each position. These ranges also include the 3.1% COLA the Personnel Board just voted to approve at their last meeting, and that the Island ranges on July 1 of next year will all increase by the COLA they vote for at Town Meetings.

Ms. Countryman asked, if we put these ranges in place, and some employees are paid below the minimum, what is the aggregate impact in terms of the budget. It is difficult to vote when not seeing the impact on the budget and the cost.

Ms. Countryman presented concerns that the Finance Committee may become tied to these new ranges, that could be unsustainable. Ms. Potter said that by having these new ranges in place, departments will be able to submit their budgets with accurate numbers. Ms. Countryman proposed that by not knowing the impact to the budget, it is not known if the budget is able to absorb the change, and maybe to implement over 2-3 years. Mr. Smith commented that Oak Bluffs would be in the same position of falling back as we are not keeping up with other Town increases.

Ms. Potter responded that another impact is the probability of losing current employees. If you vote for these ranges, then it gives us goals to reach. Mr. Smith also commented on the cost of losing an employee and the cost of replacement. More discussion included on the impact of not adopting the updated ranges may cause employees to leave as this has been delayed, and does

not show the Town's commitment to paying competitive wages. Ms. Potter brought up that if we don't compensate our employees at a reasonable level, they may walk out the door.

Ms. McGroarty asked how long it would take to get from the minimum to the maximum of the range. Ms. Potter said about 8-10 years with a step schedule.

Mr. Vrooman stated that these ranges should be updated frequently to keep competitive. Discussion included that the schedule should be increased with the COLA, each time it is adopted, so not to fall behind as what has currently happened.

Ms. Brough estimated that about 15 or over half of the non-union employees would need adjustment with these new ranges.

There was discussion on the intersection of duties with the Finance Committee and Personnel Committee. The Personnel Board recommends the range, then the schedules go to the Select Board for approval for the STM warrant.

Ms. Countryman clarified that if these ranges come through, the Finance Committee would have to cut in other areas. Ms. Potter said that there is no cost for this schedule until you change an individual's salary. Ms. Countryman voiced that she would like this to be moved to April, when there is a better idea of the budget.

Mr. Vrooman and Ms. Potter responded that if you wait to April that you already have your budget, then you would have to correct all the personnel budget numbers, it would not be an accurate budget.

Ms. Potter voiced her advocacy for the employees, who are watching this process, and the Town has to work faster and smarter to retain employees, and pay them equitable wages.

**Board Member Smith made a motion to adopt Schedule B.**

**Board Member Brennan Seconded.**

<b>Brennan</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Countryman</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>McGroarty</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Smith</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Vrooman</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**Board Member Countryman motioned to adjourn the meeting.**

**Board Member Smith Seconded. (5-Aye)**

**Meeting Adjourned 6:13 pm.**

*Minutes prepared by  
Wendy Brough, Assistant Town Administrator.*

**MEETING DOCUMENTS:**

1. 9/25/2023 Agenda

2. Item 1 – Draft 9/14/2023 Minutes
3. Item 2 Current Schedule A Classification Schedule
4. Item 2 Proposed Schedule A
5. Item 2 Current Schedule B Compensation Schedule
6. Item 2 Proposed Schedule B

Personnel Board Approved 11/9/2023