

REPORT OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES BOARD

The Human Resources Board is comprised of five residents appointed by the Town Moderator to oversee the Town's human resources function. In accordance with the Town Bylaw the Board administers the Classification and Salary Plans; recommends, establishes, and administers personnel policies and procedures; and maintains employment records. The Human Resources Department staff is responsible for employee benefit administration and assisting Town departments with a wide range of employment and employee relations activities. An essential part of its mission is to support management and employees alike and to foster equitable application of personnel policies and practices throughout the Town.

Wage, Benefit, and Human Resources Administration

The Board is responsible for making recommendations to Town Meeting on salary and wage adjustments for non-union employees. In order to fulfill this responsibility the Board conducts annual surveys of comparable communities to ensure that our wage schedules and salary ranges are competitive. An additional factor in the recommendations that were made at the 2009 Annual Town Meeting was the mandatory participation by non-union employees in the new health insurance plans effective January 1, 2009. The Board was aware that the higher co-pays associated with these plans could result in higher out-of-pocket costs for employees than they had previously experienced. In the end Town Meeting approved the Board's recommendation to provide a 3% adjustment to the schedule of hourly rates of pay, and an appropriation of \$120,000 for distribution to management employees who are in a merit-based compensation program. The current economic climate was reflected in the fact that no change was proposed to the salary ranges, as it was deemed that the prior year's ranges continued to reflect market conditions. The merit pay appropriation was also reduced by \$30,000 from the amount that had been approved in the previous two fiscal years.

As noted above, a major component of the Town's long-term effort to reduce the growth of employee and retiree health care costs was accomplished during FY 09. As a result of union negotiations and policies adopted by the Board of Selectmen a majority of employees enrolled in a suite of new health insurance plans which feature lower premiums and higher co-pays during a special mid-year open enrollment. Following further contract settlements the balance of the Town's workforce transitioned to these plans effective July 1, 2009. Employees are also enrolled in an IRS-sanctioned reimbursement program to off-set some of the new, higher co-pay amounts. The Town realized a significant savings in the amount it pays annually for its approximately 80% share of premium costs, and will also benefit on a long-term basis because of positive impact on the Town's unfunded liability for future retiree health insurance costs (OPEB).

Training and Development

Providing critical and informative training programs to Town employees continues to be a focus of department activity. During FY 09 a major outreach was made to orient employees to their new health insurance plan choices and on the new benefit that supplements the insurance plan, called a health reimbursement arrangement (HRA). The department also conducted several wellness programs, the goal of which is to

promote healthier lifestyle choices. These included spring and fall walking programs, smoking cessation, nutrition education and stress reduction. On a regular basis the department provides mandated training on hazardous chemicals in the workplace; how to conduct performance reviews; and CPR/AED in conjunction with the Wellesley Fire Department.

Recruitment and Affirmative Action

Despite the downturns in the economy there was a significant amount of employment activity during FY 09. The HR Department received 29 requisitions for a total of 33 benefit-eligible positions. Fifteen opening were filled by internal applicants, 12 by candidates outside the Town workforce, three were withdrawn and three others were still open on June 30.

Board and Staff Changes

The Board met 16 times during FY 09. Susan Hurwitz served as chairman, with Phil Laughlin as vice-chairman and Naomi Stonberg continuing as secretary. Dick Hartley completed a three-year term of service on the Board on June 30, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

HUMAN RESOURCES BOARD

Helene Buchler
Susan Hurwitz

Nancy Whitney

Philip Laughlin
Naomi Stonberg