

## **REPORT OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES BOARD**

The Human Resources Board is comprised of five residents appointed by the Moderator to oversee the Town's human resources function. As charged by the Town Bylaw, the Board administers the Classification and Salary Plans; recommends, establishes, and administers personnel policies and procedures; and maintains employment records. In fulfilling its responsibilities the Human Resources Department also assists Town departments with a wide range of employment and employee relations activities, serving as a resource and providing counsel when needed. It offers guidance and advice with respect to the interpretation and application of personnel policies, contract provisions, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. An important part of its mission also 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 charged by the Town Bylaw to “keep informed as to pay rates and policies outside the service of the town, and [to] recommend to the Town any action which it deems desirable to maintain a fair and equitable pay level.” During FY 06 the Board analyzed the results of a compensation survey to determine whether to maintain a separate compensation schedule for information technology positions. Based on data from both public and private sector employers, the Board concluded that it is appropriate to provide a premium for these positions to remain competitive in the market. A broader survey of all non-union positions is planned for FY 07 so that appropriate recommendations may be made to the 2007 Annual Town Meeting.

An increasingly important aspect of the human resources function is the health insurance benefit offered to employees who work at least 20 hours per week, as required by state law. This benefit is also available to retirees. In FY 06 the Department researched the data to support an actuarial assessment of the Town's unfunded liability for its portion of the cost of health insurance, and helped provide staff support to the Selectmen's Health Care Costs Working Group. Human Resources Department staff work closely with employees and retirees to help them with plan selection and the enrollment process. Retirees face particular challenges in navigating the choices available to them relating to Medicare coverage, in which future retirees will be required to participate, following the acceptance by the 2007 Annual Town Meeting of section 18 of Mass. General Laws Ch. 32B. The Department administers seven health insurance options (retirees have an additional nine options open to them), dental insurance, long-term disability and life insurance for more than 1500 subscribers. Other benefit programs include deferred compensation, flexible spending plans and a college saving plan.

The Board approved changes to the Department's web pages when the Town moved to a new internet design, to provide more information on benefits and personnel policies. Other administrative activities included implementation of a liaison system to provide personal links and contacts between Board members and the chairmen of other Town boards and committees. The Board wants to ensure there are open and effective lines of communication at both the board and staff levels of Town government.

The Department is responsible for keeping current on state and federal employment laws and personnel practices to ensure both legal compliance and awareness of innovative approaches to human resources management. Routine compliance activities include annual distribution

of the Town's policy relating to harassment in the workplace and ensuring that all public works employees whose work involves potential contact with hazardous materials are trained annually on what is called "right-to-know". The right-to-know sessions include material presented by Health Department staff on personal health topics of interest such as sun safety and working in cold weather. The Department's other responsibilities include: administering the performance evaluation program and non-union compensation plans, working with the occupational health nurse and department heads on Workers' Compensation cases and issues, and maintaining the system of classification of positions for compensation purposes.

### **Training and Development**

The Department continued to expand its employee health promotion and wellness programs during FY 06, working in collaboration with the Board of Health and their staff. The goal of these initiatives is to promote lifestyle changes and healthy habits that both improve quality of life and help reduce the risk of serious health conditions such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes, the costs of which impact the Town's health insurance budget. New initiatives included a smoking cessation program, support for an at-work Weight Watchers group, a lecture/demonstration on healthy breakfast food choices, and skin analysis for sun damage. A number of Town employees and retirees participated in an intensive cardiovascular health improvement program offered by the West Suburban Health Group, the municipal joint purchase group through which Wellesley purchases group health insurance. The Department's regular training calendar included sessions this year on conducting performance appraisals, CPR/AEDs (automatic external defibrillators), and back injury prevention. A new workshop in FY 06 developed skills in best practices in employment interviewing. The regional municipal training consortium in which Wellesley participates sponsored programs on customer service skills.

### **Recruitment and Affirmative Action**

Recruiting activity decreased significantly as compared to FY 05. During FY 06, the Human Resources office assisted Town departments in recruiting to fill 51 positions, a 27% decline. Of those positions, 18 were filled by external candidates, 23 were filled by internal candidates, three were withdrawn and seven were still open as of the close of the year. The Department continues to build awareness of, and work with Town departments toward achieving, the voluntary goals established in the Town's Affirmative Action Plan. To that end, the Department places employment advertisements and sends notices of vacancies to minority and female advocacy organizations. The Human Resources Department also screens applications and assists departments both in conducting interviews and conducting background and reference checks on prospective new hires.

### **Board and Staff Changes**

The Board met 12 times during FY 06. Board member Josh Black was elected to serve as chairman. Stephanie Wasser was elected vice-chairman following the resignation from the Board of Walt Snickenberger, the balance of whose term was filled by Dick Hartley, with Mary Pilecki serving as secretary. Naomi Stonberg was appointed to a three-year term beginning FY 07 upon the expiration of Josh Black's term. The department's staff remained at 3.6 FTE positions comprised of HR Director Susan Adler, full-time HR Generalist Cheryl Daebritz, part-time HR Generalist Paula Grace O'Connell, and Administrative Assistant Lynne Fuchs.

Respectfully submitted,

HUMAN RESOURCES BOARD

Stephanie Wasser, Chairman  
John Veryzer, Vice Chairman  
Mary Pilecki, Secretary

Dick Hartley  
Naomi Stonberg