

**Board of Selectmen  
September 16, 2013**

**Present:** Kenneth S. Paul, Chairperson; Richard C. Edwards; Connie M. Twombly; Teresa A. Williams, Town Administrator; and Toni Bodah, Secretary.

Also present were Jim Miller and Fred Guldbrandsen (videotaping); and Chief Ken Fifield.

The posted session was called to order at 3:10 p.m. by Mr. Paul, who led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The purpose of this session is to review potential revisions to the Personnel Policy. Chief Fifield is present as he has several comments regarding that policy, as well as the wage/pay study. Chief Fifield provided a brief history of the pay study. The Town of Lincoln recently hired MRI to conduct such a study, with Wakefield and Wolfeboro being two of towns included in that study. The study was thorough and included pay, benefits, insurance programs, etc. Another study was done to include Milton and Ossipee. This MRI study could be a good basis for a more comprehensive study for Wakefield. Chief Fifield stated that Wakefield is doing well in the area of insurance; however, we seem to be deficient on pay rates. He would encourage the Board to have MRI provide Wakefield with a similar study as was done for Lincoln.

Ms. Williams referred to the pay study done last year for us by MRI. We also received all the information from the Lincoln study; however, that study does not include all positions that we need. All agreed that the information in the study is an important tool. It might be worth asking MRI for the cost to perform a study for Wakefield (similar to that done for Lincoln) or to update our current schedule. Ms. Williams believes that the information within the Lincoln study would be more beneficial to Wakefield than the current schedule being utilized. Discussion followed as to which towns in the Lincoln study would be appropriate to Wakefield. Mr. Paul referred to the turnover in the Police Department and the possible causes for same. Chief Fifield stated that pay is not the only cause for turnover—some issues in the Personnel Policy have also had an effect. It was agreed that Ms. Williams and Chief Fifield would continue working to update the current pay scale, including attempting to get additional information from MRI.

**Personnel Policy**

Chief Fifield advised that several issues with the policy have come to light. Because the PD is paid overtime after 80 hours (opposed to after 40), if an officer takes vacation for week #1, then works overtime during week #2, the officer is not eligible to earn overtime pay as our policy states (in part), "For the purposes of calculating overtime hours, vacation, sick and compensatory time will not be considered." Therefore, that officer doesn't actually use any vacation time. Ms. Williams received similar comments from other employees. If an employee takes 2 days off as earned time, then works overtime for the next 3 days, that employee cannot be paid overtime (assuming this all takes place during the same work week). For pay periods with vacation time, the Chief would like the weeks separated so that the officers can be paid overtime. This would necessitate his increasing the PD overtime line in the budget.

Chief Fifield then advised that employees would like to be able to have a choice of at least 2 insurance policies. Ms. Williams clarified that the employee would pay for any extra associated costs.

Another suggestion was to offer some benefits for part-time employees. The Chief suggested that if an employee has worked for the Town 2 days per week for a number of years, that employee could be given 2 paid days off per year. This could take effect after 5 years of service. Mr. Paul noted that the Town does offer longevity pay.

Chief Fifield advised that another suggestion to come to light was for the Town to reimburse the officers for some equipment that they need to purchase, such as specialized undergarments, boots, etc.

The Board members agreed that we should consider 2 40-hour work weeks when vacation time is used, with overtime being paid if worked. This change will not be effective until the revised policy is adopted as a whole. Mr. Paul believes that reimbursement for equipment purchased should be a matter of budgeting by the department. The Board briefly discussed the suggestion of some benefits for part-time employees and whether the longevity pay schedule would be kept. Mr. Paul stressed that the Board would need to know how many employees this would involve and the cost of same prior to making any decision.

**Page 5 – Definitions: Probationary Period**

Reference is made in the policy to evaluations being reviewed with the employee at the end of the probationary period; however, we do not generally do evaluations for the probationary period. It is important to touch base with that employee to ensure he/she is in the right position. The policy will be revised to indicate an evaluation will be done “if needed.”

**Page 5 – Definitions: Furlough Days**

Ms. Williams stated that it is difficult for part-time employees, especially at the Police Department. Discussion followed regarding Group II employees being exempt, as well as the coverage Chief Fifield believes is necessary on furlough days. Mr. Paul noted it is not fair to other administrative employees to allow one administrative employee (in the Police Department) to work on a furlough day. More discussion regarding how furlough days affect customer service in various departments. Ms. Williams stated that a number of employees do not feel it is fair that they have to use earned time to be paid for a furlough day, and they want the furlough days given back as holidays. The purpose of establishing furlough days was to save money. Discussion followed as to how many other employers give Columbus Day and the day after Thanksgiving as paid holidays. Mr. Paul noted that many companies are moving to 4-day work weeks, Tuesday through Friday. This eliminates most holidays. No change was made to this section at this time.

**Page 6 – Recruitment #5**

Language will be amended to indicate that “...employees may be subject to a comprehensive background investigation...”

**Page 6 – Selection, Paragraph #2**

The first sentence will be removed (which relates to giving preference to residents of Wakefield for available positions).

**Page 7 – Compensation, Paragraph #4**

Evaluations should be accomplished in a timely manner in order for increases to be effective near the employee's anniversary date. Ms. Williams will massage this language.

**Page 8 – Compensation, Paragraph #1**

All reference to COLA will be removed.

**Page 10**

A paragraph will be added (to follow the section on "Smoking") regarding cell phone use. Use of a cell phone while driving a Town vehicle (barring a police emergency) is prohibited. Mr. Paul stated that employees should not use their cell phones at their desks and should not be using Facebook, etc. Mr. Edwards stated that it is a blessing to be able to keep track of your children in this day and age. Ms. Williams has already reminded employees about appropriate use of cell phones. Additional language will be included in this section.

**Page 10 – Personnel File**

Language related to monthly accruals and time used or compensated for will be removed from this section. This information is not kept in the personnel files (although it is kept).

**Page 11 – Emergency Closings**

Discussion regarding who should make the decision to curtail Town services. If the building is closed, the employees should be paid. If an employee decides to stay home, that employee will either use earned time or will not be paid. The Board agreed to delegate the authority to the Town Administrator as to when it is necessary to close the building.

**Page 16 – Earned Time**

Ms. Williams provided background on the previous policy regarding vacation/sick/personal days for the benefit of Mr. Edwards and Ms. Twombly. Some employees have requested that vacation days be separated from sick days as they don't always have time left to use when sick. Mr. Paul stated that employees need to save time to use in case they are sick. At present, new employees cannot utilize earned time (even if sick) within the first 6 months. The Board agreed that employees can use earned time in cases of illness within the first 6 months, effectively running a negative balance. Some employees have requested to be allowed to accumulate sick days, without the expectation they will be paid for that accumulated time upon termination.

Another suggestion was to change the "grandfathered" status to include those current employees who began employment with the Town prior to the policy change. After discussion it was decided to leave the language as is regarding grandfathered status.

The chart for earned time separates vacation time and sick time, totaling as earned time. This will be revised so there is no separation between vacation and sick time.

The last paragraph will be removed, and new wording will be formulated. It is allowable to take earned time on an hourly basis.

**Page 17 – Holidays**

Mr. Paul suggested that the Board could establish the next year's holiday schedule prior to January 1 each year, or we could include language indicating that the employees will be granted the listed holidays with pay **unless the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday**. A brief discussion followed regarding the holiday pay schedule for the Police, Fire and Transfer Station. This payment should be separate from the regular paycheck. Mr. Paul suggested paying those employees for each holiday as it arises.

This conversation will be continued on Monday, September 23, 2013, beginning at 3 p.m.

Mr. Miller asked whether this document would be made available for public/employee review and/or comment. Mr. Paul expects that employees will have an opportunity to review the revisions; however, it is difficult to put this draft document "out there."

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Toni Bodah, Secretary

Approval of Minutes:

---

Kenneth S. Paul, Chairperson

---

Richard C. Edwards

---

Connie M. Twombly