

TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY
Policy Review Committee
Meeting Minutes – December 1, 2017

In attendance

Committee members: Donna Donahue, Gary Baker, Beth Dow and Chris English
Town staff: Jackie Sullivan

Chris called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Approval of November 3, 2017 Meeting Minutes. Donna moved to approve the minutes of the Committee's October 27th meeting, with a second from Beth. Unanimously approved.

Final Read Through of Proposed Personnel Policy Amendments. Chris invited Committee members to share their thoughts on the final draft of the policy.

Section 13: PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Donna said she felt that the phrase “. . . at such times . . . as the Town manager or her/his authorized representative deems reasonable”, in describing the frequency of employee performance reviews, was too arbitrary and should be changed to reflect an annual review process. Chris noted that the Town is in the early stages of developing a performance review process that it is anticipated will be done annually. The Committee agreed upon the following revision:

Employees may be subject to job performance evaluations [at least annually or at such times and in such manner as deemed by Town Policy](#). The results of such evaluations will be submitted to the employee, the employee's supervisor, the Town Manager and will become part of the employee's personnel file.

Section 21: BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Beth revisited the Committee's earlier decision to strike the sentence stating that part-time employees are not eligible for bereavement leave and questioned whether not being explicit about that status of part-timers in regard to bereavement leave creates ambiguity. She suggested adding a sentence saying that part-time employees “may” be eligible for bereavement. Donna, however, argued that the Committee's intent in removing the sentence was to allow for supervisory discretion when dealing with part-time employees and that not being explicit creates space for a conversation and doesn't tie a supervisor to a specific course of action. In the end, the Committee decided to leave Section 21 as is.

*** NEW * Section 35: Biennial Review.** Donna recommended adding language specifying that the policy should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. The Committee agreed to Beth's suggestion of a biennial review period. Chris will draft some simple language for discussion at the next meeting.

Committee Recommendations for Selectboard Consideration. The Committee discussed making a formal recommendation to the Selectboard when it presents the amended policy that the Board consider phasing out Longevity Pay (Section 27) and the Sick Leave "buy-back" provision in Paragraph 20.03. The Committee had discussed at the November 3rd meeting suggesting that Longevity Pay could be phased out once the Town had a performance management process in place that ties employee performance to compensation in some way. Regarding Sick Leave buy-back, Donna noted that she is philosophically opposed to the provision because it can encourage employees to avoid using sick time at times when they should, in the expectation of a financial benefit.

Because these recommendations fall outside of its charge in regard to reviewing the Personnel Policy, the Committee agreed only to suggest that the Board consider asking Town staff to investigate the pros and cons of phasing out Longevity Pay and the Sick Leave buy-back. Chris said he would draft language for such a recommendation for discussion at the next meeting.

Next Steps. Once the Committee has finalized the policy draft, Chris said that he will share a copy with Kathleen for her review and discuss a date for presenting the amended policy to the Selectboard. Because the Board's two December meetings are largely focused on the FY19 General Fund Budget presentations, he said he would recommend to Kathleen holding off until January to present the policy.

The Committee will meet again on Friday, December 8th @ 8:00 a.m. to wrap up discussion on the action items from this meeting and formally recommend adoption to the Selectboard.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

Submitted by:

Chris English
Assistant Town Manager