



**SELECT BOARD
WORK SESSION
VIRTUAL MEETING**

**Minutes of Thursday, December 1, 2022
5:00 PM**

Board Members participating were Select Board Chair Marshall Hook, Vice-Chair and Clerk Lynne Bermudez and Select Board Members Cameron Brown, Boyd Jackson and Rafael McDonald. Others participating of the Select Board's Staff were Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian and Executive Assistant Debra Morong.

GOVERNOR'S ORDER

Select Board Chair Marshall Hook announced that, due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency announced by Governor Baker, this meeting would be conducted as a Virtual Meeting via ZOOM and as such, participation was remote. He then read the following:

"Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted via remote means. Members of the public who wish to watch or listen to the meeting may do so in the following manner: Video conference (see log-in information below.) No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the Topsfield website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting."

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Hook called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-Chair and Clerk Bermudez made the following announcements:

"The meeting is being recorded by the Recording Clerk via ZOOM in the event that the connection is lost at any time during the meeting a device is being used by the recording clerk for the purpose of taking minutes; is there anyone else present who wishes to record the meeting?" There was no response.

“While we are conducting town business using remote participation via ZOOM, we ask that those of you not recognized by the chair or otherwise engaged in the discussion of the moment to please mute your microphone to avoid interruptions outside the conversation. Thank you.”

SALARY SURVEY

Joellen Cademartori of GovHR USA provided an overview of the recently completed Salary Survey. The salary survey was undertaken to compare the Town of Topsfield compensation levels to market levels to ensure competitiveness to attract and retain employees. Ms. Cademartori reviewed the survey process with data collection and the establishment of comparable communities. She discussed a general recommendation for implementation as well as the ongoing management of a new plan.

Ms. Cademartori recommended that Topsfield maintain compensation in the 65th percentile range of comparable communities and to move from the current step/salary grid to an open range merit plan. She commented it will be a process that would include training managers to use performance appraisal tools, having a good performance criteria and goal setting, and having someone in the organization that will review everything submitted for fairness and consistency.

A discussion was held on the advantages of moving to a merit plan including being able to recognize top performers and, with clear goals and a performance tool, to enable managers to provide employees with performance feedback throughout the year. A drawback is that salaries are public information and merit increases may cause concern among employees making comparisons to their coworkers.

TA Harutunian reviewed a timeline for implementing a new compensation plan with a target date of January 1, 2023 to increase the salary of employees who currently fall below the new salary ranges. Salary increases for other positions will be reviewed to move them closer to the 65th percentile slot of their grade with considerations given to length of service, education, and other factors.

TA Harutunian commented that Topsfield salaries have been staying current with the market and the salary survey is an opportunity to enhance the current structure. FY24 budget worksheets have been distributed with non-union salaries on hold until a new plan is approved and implemented. The plan will be reviewed by the Ad Hoc HR Working Group that is working on HR policies and also discussed with the Finance Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5:50 PM, Vice-Chair and Clerk Bermudez made a motion to adjourn. Select Board Member Brown seconded the motion and the motion carried by roll call vote as follows:

Chair Hook	Yes
Vice-Chair and Clerk Bermudez	Yes
Select Board Member Brown	Yes
Select Board Member Jackson	Yes
Select Board Member McDonald	Yes

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Morong, Executive Assistant & Recording Secretary
Theresa Coffey, Recording Secretary

DOCUMENTS

- Agenda for December 1, 2022
- Presentation titled GovHR USA Town of Topsfield MA Compensation Study, dated December 2022