



**PERSONNEL BOARD  
Zoom Meeting Minutes  
November 12, 2021 12:00 PM**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Board Members:** Marcel LaFlamme, Chairman, Paul Moreau, Joseph Rock, Maureen Hill

**Staff:** James Hagerty, Town Administrator, Kim Lucas, Human Resources Director, Jamie Vanderhoop, Human Resources Assistant

*Marcel called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.*

**Discussion:**

Marcel opened the meeting with discussion about the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA). The Social Security Administration has set the FY23 COLA at 5.9%. The rate Kim has calculated and given to the Board based on the consumer price index "Boston Cambridge Newton" projects a 2.27% rate.

Discussion by board about importance of COLA and the fairness to employees. Maureen said that there are employees that are maxed out on pay grade steps so COLA is very important.

Kim shared information on the calculation of 2.27%, 6 month average of the prior 12 months CPI.

Marcel stated that Social Security has never been this far off from the Town's calculations before. Joe stated that the financial data on COVID rebound skews the percentages. Last year was subdued and cannot be compared to this year. Joe recommended not to use the 2.27% calculation.

Discussion by group on the method Social Security uses to set their COLA rate. They use quarterly averages to calculate. The Town uses the yearly average.

Paul stated that he would like to ask for the maximum COLA for employees.

James said that other union contracts will not be 2.5%. James suggested he would go with 2.27% because it is defensible.

Joe disagreed. He stated:

- median cost for a house on MV is currently \$1 million
- There are no housing subsidies or enough support for working people

James discussed the cost of employees. He stated he believed a 4% recommendation would be a tough sell if other town are at 2%.



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Paul agreed with Joe and stated that COLA often seems to be less about cost-of-living and more about what the town can afford.

Marcel brought the discussion back to the 5.9% COLA by the SSA and discussed Bureau of Labor Statistics approach.

Marcel stated that Edgartown is in a good place financially and he appreciates the low tax rate. He does not want employees to not feel supported.

Maureen stated that there are historically a lot of questions about COLA at town meeting.

Joe stated that the Personnel Board has the power to support employees; that the community is moving off island and younger people are having a hard time staying here.

Marcel questioned the 2.27% because it is a big difference between what the military and SSA are offering (5.9%).

Kim stated that the Personnel Board will need to state why they are deviating from prior practice if they suggest a higher COLA.

James mentioned COLA for union contracted employees in Oak Bluffs and Tisbury Schools was set 3 years ago.

**Motion:** To set the annual COLA at 2.5%

Moved by M. Hill, Second by P. Moreau. **Vote: Not sustained**

**Motion:** To set the annual COLA at 3.0%

Moved by M. LaFlamme, Second by M. Hill. **Vote: Unanimous**

Kim discussed the October 7, 2021 Personnel Board meeting and the Building Department request for reclassification of the Department Assistant.

This request came to the Personnel Board in September and was discussed at the October meeting. The board discussed the current position and the possibility of moving from Grade C to Grade D and renaming the position 'Assistant to Building Director':



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- 35 hours/week
- Increase in responsibility has occurred through an increase in volume in the department
- The Department Assistant is in the building while other staff are out doing inspections and handles anything that comes through the door
- Works with Zoning and Planning and interacts regularly

Joe questioned if the Department Assistant is performing duties in lieu of the Department Head. Kim stated that she could not speak to that with certainty.

\*At this point in the meeting: the HR Assistant attempted to invite Reade to the zoom by walking to the Building Department office but she was not available.

Joe stated that the Personnel Board needs more information about how the Building Department Assistant position has changed in order to justify a reclassification.

A decision was made to table this agenda item and revisit at a later date.

**Motion: To adjourn meeting at 12:47 p.m. Moved by Marcel Second by Maureen. Vote Unanimous.**