

Town of Pownal
Select Board Minutes
Monday, January 9, 2023 6:00 pm
Workshop & Regular Meeting

I. **Call to Order** by Chair Morris at 6:00 pm.

Members Present: Jon Morris, Andy O'Brien, Heidi Cushman Curry

Town Administrator: Becky Taylor-Chase

Road Commissioner: Matt Nielsen

Fire Chief: Jesse Peters

II. **Pledge of Allegiance**

III. **Workshop**

- **Discuss COLA**

The Town Administrator introduced the topic stating that a determination of COLA is needed to work on the upcoming Compensation Budget. She printed a copy of a compilation survey of what other towns are using for COLA. Selectperson Curry asked what we capped it at last year. The answer was 3.5%. Selectperson O'Brien doesn't feel we can cap it at that percentage. Selectperson Curry agreed. Selectperson O'Brien stated he was working on getting other town's pay rates. Chair Morris talked to the department heads about how they felt the pay was comparing. He suggested 7% for COLA. Selectperson Curry had that same percentage in mind. Selectperson O'Brien agreed.

Selectperson O'Brien introduced an edited compensation policy and summarized the edits. Selectperson Curry overall doesn't like incentive-based increases. She prefers incentives based on performance. Chair Morris stated we could have a separate line item to cover certain incentives like certified clerk, MMA classes etc. He agrees with Selectperson Curry basing increases on performance. The Board discussed promoting continued training and education. Selectperson Curry is in favor of tuition reimbursement. We should consider having a professional development expense line.

- **Compensatory Time Update**

The Town Administrator discussed the current policy and the correction needed to be in compliance. Selectperson Curry asked if there was language around when comp time can be used in place of time off. The Town Administrator stated not in the current policy. She will add language and present edits at the next meeting.

- **Accrued Time Off Cap**

The Town Administrator introduced the topic asking if we should consider a cap on PTO accumulation. Or how do we want to consider budgeting for it each year in the off chance an employee leaves. Selectperson Curry felt we should cap it. There was some discussion about should we break it out in vacation and sick time or keep it labeled as PTO. There was some question about whether the new paid earned leave law set perimeters around that. Selectperson O'Brien suggested that in lieu of a payout the town could contribute it to the retirement account. There are yearly contribution limits so this may not be an option. Some more research will be done and the topic will be discussed at the next meeting.

- **Set Evaluation Schedule**

January 23, 2023 at 6 pm Town Administrator and Deputy Clerk

February 13, 2023 at 6 pm Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief and Fire Department

February 27, 2023 at 6 pm Road Commissioner and Public Works crew.

Chair Morris asked if the Board wanted to consider an opportunity after evaluations for staff to evaluate the Board. This is based on previous conversations. It was determined that an opportunity for feedback would be available at each executive session for employees to give feedback to the Board.

The workshop was closed and Chair Morris opened the regular meeting at 6:50 pm.

IV. Accounts Payable & Payroll Warrant

- **AP Warrant #17 in the amount of \$35,520.13.**

Selectperson O'Brien motioned to pay AP Warrant #17 in the amount of \$35,520.13.

Selectperson Curry seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: Yes 3; No 0

- **Payroll Journal #181 in the amount of \$8,930.11.**

Selectperson O'Brien motioned to pay Payroll Journal #181 in the amount of \$8,930.11.

Selectperson Curry seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: Yes 3; No 0

III. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- **December 27, 2022**

Selectperson Curry motioned to approve the minutes of the December 27, 2022 meeting as written. Selectperson O'Brien seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: Yes 3; No 0

V. Public Comment – Non-Agenda Items

Arnold Blackstone stated the Red Men disbanded a couple of years ago and they have some funds left over. He was trying to decide on what they could do for the town with those funds. He thought Welcome to Pownal signs on the major roads leading into town might be a good idea. He talked with Graphic Signs and had a print of a possible simple aluminum sign. Depending on the cost of the sign will dictate how many they could have made with the funds. He also asked for help from Public Works for installing the signs and then a small operation cost be factored into the budget for upkeep and replacement. Chair Morris would like the sign to state it was donated by the Red Men. He also asked if he could write a small summary of what the Pownal chapter did to go along with the introduction of the sign. Mr. Blackstone will go back to the members and they will work on a design to present to the Board. Chair Morris stated to add a fund to the Public Works budget to maintain the signs.

Kathy Hogue has set up a meeting with Bailey Sign to get ideas about the electronic sign. She has invited the Mallett Hall Buildings and Grounds Committee, Recreation Committee and town staff. All are welcome to the meeting on January 31.

X. Department Head Reports – Submitted Electronically

(Department head reports can be viewed on their respective website page(s))

- **Select Board**

Selectperson O'Brien thanked Road Commissioner Matt Nielsen for his help with the PCWA generator during the wind storm last month.

X. New Business

- **Mallett Hall Use Form**

The language from MMA was added to page 3 of the form. Mrs. Hogue asked for clarification on how many members need to be present for an event to be considered committee sponsored. The answer was one.

Selectperson O'Brien motioned to approve the Mallett Hall Use Form with the typo correction on page 3. Selectperson Curry seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: Yes 3; No 0

- **Pole Permit: Lawrence Road**

Chair Morris motioned to approve the pole permit on Lawrence Road. Selectperson O'Brien seconded.

Discussion: Mr. Nielsen did state he had gone to inspect the placement of the pole.

Vote: Yes 3; No 0

Mr. Nielsen asked for clarification of the process. Chair Morris stated when receiving a permit, he is to go inspect the site and then put the permit on the agenda for the Select Board to consider and approve.

- **Keeping Cumberland County Warm Grant Program Contract**

The Town Administrator stated she had not yet received the contract and suggested the Board approve her to sign it when it is received. Chair Morris motioned to allow the Town Administrator to approve the contract. Selectperson O'Brien seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: Yes 3; No 0

- **Mission Square Retirement Plan: 401A vs 457**

The Town Administrator stated that recently we found out that our employee contributions are post tax but had been set up as pre-taxed. She arranged for our Mission Square representative to do a presentation to all employees to hear the differences between the current 401A plan and a 457 plan. We also found out employees can never change their contribution amount because of the way the plan was set up. After the presentation and some follow up discussions and questions all employees would like to move to a 457 plan. The members of the Board agreed to move forward with the change. She then summarized that each employee will have a tax liability when they file taxes and wondered since this was an error on the set up if the Town should pay. She presented a spreadsheet with the amounts. Chair Morris asked if there was money in the budget to cover this. The Town Administrator stated yes. The Board agreed to have the town pay the taxes.

- **Rail Use Advisory Committee Vote**

Chair Morris summarized his knowledge of the project. Selectperson Curry received a call by resident Rodney Richards regarding the project as he would be directly affected by it. Selectperson O'Brien motioned to abstain from the vote. Selectperson Curry states that

doesn't answer the question. She is finding it difficult to submit a vote without getting feedback from the town through a public hearing. Selectperson O'Brien personally does not want to see the rails go away. Chair Morris stated abstaining would eliminate our participation in the future. Selectperson Curry stated by abstaining we haven't represented anyone. Selectperson O'Brien rescinds his motion. Chair Morris motioned to vote for trail and rail. There was no second. Seeing no second the motion cannot carry forward.

X. Old Business

None

VIII. Correspondence

The Town Administrator received a call from Judy Hilton regarding mailboxes being vandalized on Allen Road. She had notified the Cumberland County Sherriff's office and they are looking into it.

Chair Morris stated his wife counted 5 telephone calls where he was called an inappropriate name.

IX. Any Other Business

None

X. Adjournment

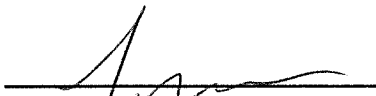
Chair Morris motioned to adjourn the meeting. Selectperson O'Brien seconded.

Discussion: None

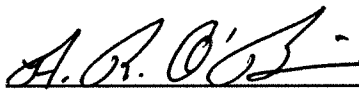
Vote: Yes 3; No 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

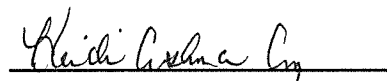
Respectfully Submitted,
Becky Taylor-Chase
Town Administrator



Jon Morris



Andy O'Brien



Heidi Cushman Curry