

Personnel Committee
1-19-18 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Chairman Kathy Newman, Alex Taylor and June Manning

Also present: Town Employee Representative and Sargent Paul Manning, Town Administrator Jeffrey Madison, Treasurer/Benefits Administrator Sibel Suman, Selectmen Chair Jim Newman, Erik Hammarlund, Assessor Assistant Angela Cywinski, Board Admin Assistant Sophia Welch

The meeting began at 4:15pm.

- Under New Business, the Committee opened a grievance hearing. Kathy prefaced the hearing stating that she and Sargent Manning, Town Employee Representative, had conducted one-on-one meetings with both parties involved in the grievance, Angela Cywinski and Jeffrey Madison, and the two witnesses, Sophia Welch and Sibel Suman. Kathy also stated that the Committee and both parties are here to try and work through the issue together and asked for everyone to try and stay calm during the hearing. Kathy asked Angela to summarize her grievance letter she had filed with the Personnel Committee. Angela stated that her statement is in the letter and that everything in her letter is concise. Erik Hammarlund, Angela's attorney, spoke about the personnel grievance bylaw and stated that Angela had tried to get obtain copy of the procedure but could not. Kathy pointed out that the procedure is in the bylaws and she read section 23 of the personnel bylaws. Erik asked if there was an investigation conducted and if he could have a copy of the investigation notes. Kathy stated that she had hand-written notes, not in full sentences, and could make a copy of them for him. Kathy noted that she had spoken with Jack Collins, Labor Attorney, regarding this meeting and the Town's grievance process. It was her understanding that Jack had asked Erik to allow the Committee to go through the grievance process and that it would be helpful for Erik to be present as support for Angela. Erik stated that in his opinion, the Town has handled this poorly. He disagreed with Kathy in that his conversation with Jack did not include what Kathy had stated.

Kathy summarized the incident from what she thought had happened and gathered from the interviews: Angela had gone into Sibel's office to sign off on her time sheet; in the course of her being in Sibel's office; Jeffrey came in and reminded Angela that in the future she should send her time sheets to him as a representative of the Selectmen and he would pass them onto Sibel; Angela had said that Jeffrey had no right to ask her to do that and he stood in the door way which made Angela feel intimidated. Angela made the following additions: she had emailed Sibel her time sheet because she did not come into work on Monday, when time sheets were due, and Sibel was kind enough to put her time into a time card for Angela to sign when she returned to work; during the interaction, Angela stated to Jeffrey that by law the Treasure receives the payroll. Erik stated that Kathy had skipped over sections within Angela's letter and that the meeting was not for interrogation of his client but to resolve the grievance she has filed with the Personnel Committee. Alexander summerized Angela's letter: Angela had felt demeaned, treated unprofessionally and that she has felt unsafe and that she has requested that the matter be investigated; Angela had requested that the Town Administrator's contract not be extended. After looking into the incident, Alexander felt that the Committee would not make Angela's requested recommendation to the Board of Selectmen but would note Angela's request to record all interactions with Jeffrey. Alexander wasn't sure if the request was realistic but offered the option of having a witness present during any interaction between Angela and Jeffrey. The Committee agreed with this solution, as did Erik.

Sibel stated for the record that the amended personnel bylaws had been emailed to each employee last fall and was a little perplexed and confused as to how the Town had handled the grievance poorly. Erik noted that the bylaws were missing certain aspects that are usually in grievance procedures including detailed events that will happen within the time of the filing of the grievance and the hearing and that Angela had no idea that she was going to have a meeting with Kathy and Sargent Manning and that she thought she was just going to attend the hearing. Kathy stated that she had sent an email to all the parties involved. The Committee agreed that the procedure is not detailed enough and agreed to work on it.

Jeffrey thank Alexander for her comments and asked if he could speak. He made the following comments: he doesn't want to talk to Angela one-on-one and agreed to have a witness present during their interactions; he had

never raised his voice during the event but that he did stand in the doorway and did request for Angela to send her timesheet to him and to comply with the rules that the Selectmen had put forth; every employee follows this request, the Police, the Library and the Highway Department, except for Angela; his job includes administrating in the Town hall; there is a committed group of people who work here and there is only one issue with this place of employment and that issue is Angela; he feels that with any administration decision, Angela rebels against it and this particular incident is no different. Jeffrey reminded Angela that time sheets are due on Monday and that she will submit it appropriately and he expects her to submit the time sheet appropriately. He stated that he is only trying to do his job and carry out the directives from the Selectmen. Alexander reminded Jeffrey that the reason for this meeting was to only address this one incident and that that the issue is larger than what they thought and that she was surprised that it hasn't come before the Committee before.

Erik pointed out to the Committee the change in Jeffrey's tone when addressing the Committee and addressing his client and himself and pointed out Jeffrey's reference to Angela as "that women." Erik stated that, if the Committee is going to further investigate this, they should check on Jeffrey's credibility and if these problems are new to his tenure. The Committee noted that tumultuous relationship will not go un-noticed and they will be addressing this again so that it can become a working relationship. The Committee agreed that a meeting with the themselves, Board of Selectmen and Board of Assessors should take place to address the situation and that both Jeffrey and Angela being accountable is a step forward.

In summarizing the hearing, Kathy stated that no action will be taken in terms of recommendations to the Selectmen, the issue has been noted and in moving forward a witness will be present for every conversation between Jeffrey and Angela. The committee officially closed the hearing.

- Kathy asked if there was any other business to come before the committee. Hearing none, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The committee voted 3 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

The meeting ended at 4:42 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Sophia Welch
Board Administrative Assistant*