

Approved May 3, 2023

**Advisory Committee Meeting
Faculty Dining Room
Wellesley Middle School
50 Kingsbury Street
Monday, April 24, 2023, 6:00 p.m.**

Those present from Advisory Committee included Shawn Baker, Doug Smith, Madison Riley, Susan Clapham, Al Ferrer, Rani Elwy, Gail Sullivan, Bill Schauffler, Pete Pedersen, Jenn Fallon, Neal Goins, Wendy Paul, David Prock, and Andrea Ward.

Chair Shawn Baker called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Citizen Speak

There was no one present for Citizen Speak.

Minutes Approval

Jenn Fallon made, and Doug Smith seconded a motion to approve the April 3, 2023, minutes. The minutes were approved 12 to 0 with 1 abstention.

Rani Elwy made, and Pete Pedersen seconded a motion to approve the April 4, 2023, minutes. The minutes were approved 10 to 0 with 3 abstentions.

Andrea Ward made, and Bill Schauffler seconded a motion to approve the April 10, 2023, minutes. The minutes were approved 12 to 0 with 1 abstention.

Jenn Fallon made, and Pete Pedersen seconded a motion to approve the April 11, 2023, minutes. The minutes were approved 12 to 0 with 1 abstention.

2023 ATM Warrant Articles

There was no business under this agenda item.

Consider and vote the following matters for further study/investigation or recommend action to the Human Resources Board regarding the Human Resources (HR) department structure

Advisory discussed considering a recommendation regarding the structure of the HR department. The HR department currently reports to a Board and not to the executive function of the town. It was felt that perhaps HR should be more closely connected to the operations of the town since the HR Board is not involved in the day-to-day operations of the town. This could be a recommendation from Advisory to the HR Board and potentially the Select Board. It was suggested that other towns' HR structures be examined as a comparison. This would be like the recent change with the Climate Action Director and the Fire Chief which report to the Executive Director.

Advisory's discussion and comments included the following:

- The problem needs to be defined first.
- Is the Executive Director amenable to adding this change to the chain of command?
 - This would be a very preliminary step to make a recommendation and would not be a detailed investigation.
- It was felt this was a good idea, but the process should be thought through before leaping into topic.
- It was felt like this is a step out for Advisory even though it is allowed in the bylaws.

- Will Advisory discuss what is observed and heard, or say these things have been heard as part of presentations over the past year? It was felt that it would be preferable to obtain data on this recommendation rather than simply respond to what was heard in the context of other things.
- What will Advisory do with the recommendation? It was felt that the recommendation has a higher chance of disappearing if it is sent to the HR board and Select Board. The recommendation could be included in Advisory's report in the Annual Report.
 - Advisory would consider this and then the next step would be to consider what the process would be
- What is driving this? Is the concern from anecdotal information?
 - In other organizations, including other towns, the HR department reports to the executive function. Advisory has not engaged in researching and making a recommendation in recent years. Advisory heard frustration with the HR department when other departments presented to Advisory. Structure can drive performance. The outcome of the research would determine if there is an issue. Advisory would not be the right body to go deeper because it too does not interact with the day-to-day operations of the town.
- A comment was made that it was felt that there is a problem. People are leaving the town to take higher paying and more flexible positions. HR or someone should talk to employees as to why they are leaving; the understanding is that employees are not formally interviewed as to why they are leaving. The HR Director claims that the town trains people so well that they go elsewhere. This was felt to be a waste of resources and training. It was felt someone needs to find out why employees are leaving.
- A comment was made that the attraction and retention of people is important and a holistic look at the town was needed. It was felt it is important to talk to the Executive Director and look at the HR structure in other towns.
- A comment was made that the research question drives the methodology and that these need to be connected.
- A question was asked as to the role of the HR board if the HR department is moved? It was felt that the issue is more complex. If we are bringing in new employees who have worked in other towns, then perhaps it is an even exchange.
 - The proposal is not to change the HR Board. It would function as the Climate Action Committee (CAC) does, with the CAC Director reporting to the Executive Director.
- A comment was made that this should be socialized before commencing as there is a risk of triggering the town manager discussion.
- A comment was made that HR plans to propose a retention study. It is not clear as to the cost and who would do this.
- Due to time constraints this can't be a deep dive into the structure of the HR department, but it could be a recommendation for a change in the structure.
- A comment was made that it is important to understand what other towns' experience with retention issues. The question needs to be defined as there seem to be a lot of questions. Concern was expressed that Town Meeting could view this as raising the town manager issue again.
- A comment was made that this is a precedent for Advisory and caution was advised to move slowly and define the question. Support was expressed that this might be a way in which Advisory can help the town in other ways besides Town Meeting.
- A comment was made that Advisory heard comments from various boards about the difficulty in retaining people and in bringing in new people.
- A comment was made that it is important to look at the structure of HR in other towns and large companies.
- A comment was made that this has been socialized with the Select Board and HR Chair. Both groups are open to the idea.

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Susan Clapham made, and Doug Smith seconded a motion that Advisory Committee consider whether to make any recommendation on the town's current reporting structure of HR Department to be completed by June 30, 2023. Motion was unanimously approved.

The agenda item "Bylaw Change – Appointees, removal, or replacement" has been deferred to the May 3, 2023, meeting.

Administrative Items

- There will also be a Lessons Learned meeting before the end of FY2023.
- A questionnaire is to be sent out.
- The format of next year's meetings is TBD.

Adjourn

Andrea Ward made, and Madison Riley seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at the close of Town Meeting tonight. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 p.m.