



# Franklin Regional Council of Governments

## Personnel Committee — *MINUTES*

Date /Time:	Thursday, March 26, 2015 / 3:00 p.m.
Location:	JW Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive Street Greenfield, MA – Downstairs Meeting Room
Facilitator:	Bill Perlman, Chair
Scribe:	Bob Dean

### **COUNCIL REP ATTENDEES:**

- Bill Perlman, Regionally Elected Representative
- Dawn Magi, Warwick Representative
- Gordon Fretwell, Leverett Representative

### **STAFF:**

- Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
- Pat Auchard, Finance Director
- Bob Dean, Director of Regional Services
- Mark Maloni, Public Health Planner

### **REGRETS & ABSENCES:**

- Marilyn Wilson, Rowe Council Representative, Regrets
- Brian Noble, Northfield Council Representative, Regrets

Bill Perlman opened the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

### **1. Adopt 3/12/15 minutes**

**Gordon Fretwell moved to accept the minutes of 3/12/15 as presented. Dawn Magi seconded. Approved unanimously.**

### **2. Discuss potential changes to personnel policy.**

Discussion about the potential changes to the FRCOG personnel policy and what items we want to highlight for our consultant, Mary Aicardi from the Collins Center at UMass Boston. The meeting was scheduled as a time for the Personnel Committee, Executive Director, Department Heads, and the ad hoc staff committee formed by Linda to identify areas in the policy that we think need to be amended as well as areas where content should be added. We should not limit the consultant to this list, but she should also use her expertise to identify areas to improve.

Discussion about whether the official version should be a digital or paper version. Digital has many pros in terms of ease of access, search-ability, and ease of editing in the future as laws change. Cons include the need to track the date of any changes and to keep older versions in case grandfathered

questions arise where we need to refer back to previous versions of the policy that were in effect on a given date. If have a printed version as the official version then it would be easier to ensure continuity. Can still use an electronic version for everyday use. It was suggested that we use a loose-leaf binder to hold the official version, to make it easier to change out updated policies as laws change.

The discussion then turned to an examination of the marked up draft handbook that includes Fall 2010 edits made by Department Heads.

Pat said that the version we are considering does not have the latest version of the retiree health insurance policy

Linda started discussion with her list of issues with the document. Others joined in as discussion moved through the document. The following are the topics discussed:

1. Reformat the organization of the entire document to make it more user-friendly
2. Exempt vs. non-exempt employees needs a better definition
3. Generally, there are many comments throughout the draft that should be carefully considered
4. Standards and conduct section – The word “professional” is misused. The entire section needs a re-write
5. Harassment and other policies – Should be a short statement for each policy in the body of the handbook that points to the actual policy included as an attachment later the document. It will make it easier for staff to find what they are looking for without having to wade through full policies.
6. Some sections of the document are “preachy”. We don’t want to make statements that are not enforceable and that lead to more questions than they answer. The information in the handbook needs to be clearly understood.
7. Solicitations – need to incorporate staff solicitations
8. Combine and shorten the e-mail/phone/computer use sections
9. Outside or conflicting employment – Who is the authority that gives “permission”? (Current practice is Dept. Head gives recommendation to ED who makes final decision.) Suggestion to get rid of the political section, but make sure the reference to the Conflict of Interest Law remains.
10. Northwestern MA Incident Management Team question – Suggestion to ask the staff that went east for snow removal work to draft a sort of user’s manual for how best to implement this. Consensus agreed that the work being done is important and that it reflects well on the FRCOG in the long run but also results in loss of FRCOG productive work time so an approval process needed. Should there be a time limit?
11. Employment practices – Gordon said there are a few places maybe where the word “may” ought to be changed to “shall.”
12. CORI – make sure we are up-to-date with latest CORI requirements
13. Credit checks for financial staff? Should we require them?

14. Driver's license/driving record. Is this section necessary? Staff sometimes drive teens, inspectors drive regularly, and others drive to meetings around the state. What is the FRCOG's liability?
15. Immigration – should refer to federal law, like the ADA
16. Resignation/exit interview – don't be preachy
17. References – confirm what can be given as a reference, both with and without the former staff member's permission
18. We will hold the compensation and reclassification sections for now as we are searching for a consultant to help us address those sections.
19. Direct deposit – can we require all employees to sign up for direct deposit to eliminate the need to create checks for a handful of people? Should we require it? Are there any privacy rights involved if we force it on someone who doesn't want it, or who doesn't have a bank account?
20. Commuting time –staff have identified this as a section that needs to be addressed. Pat mentioned that there are IRS rules that our auditors have identified relative to this subject.
21. Travel – overnight travel to conferences. How much time is paid “on the clock” when traveling? What if you are sitting in an airport for hours waiting for a flight? Homeland Security requires least expensive cost to travel, which often adds hours to the travel time with connecting flights and layovers. How does comp time come into play for this issue? Some staff also would like reconsideration of how regular commute route and time factored.
22. Meal reimbursement policy – suggestion to have a generous per diem for out-of-state overnight travel, rather than restricting certain amounts for certain meals. Pat mentioned the auditor's comments about IRS rules.
23. Hazardous weather closing – we have a new policy that needs to be added
24. Vacation leave – issue with people changing pre-planned vacation time to sick time. Are there policies out there that we could adapt to better handle this? Suggestion that if the trip didn't happen because of illness, the employee should be able to take sick time. That is different than an employee getting back from vacation and saying he/she was sick while on vacation, so taking some of the time as sick rather than vacation.
25. Sick time – need to add a sick bank policy
26. Report of illness – need to re-write to make it clear that a note is needed after 4 consecutive days.
27. Bereavement – suggestion to add grandparents to the list
28. FMLA—return to work section needs work
29. Military leave section needs work
30. Maternity/paternity leave needs work
31. Leave without pay section needs work
32. Cell phone policy – need to make clear that organization has right to access information on a cell phone used for work; disallow reimbursement of personal accounts?

33. Retirement -- switch all references to Massachusetts State Retirement System. Need to understand if part-time for us to pay benefits has to be a 17.5 hours per week schedule per state retirement guidelines. Has benefit implications where we now offer benefits at 20 hours per week.
34. Definitions for full-time, part-time, temporary, seasonal employees. How many categories do we need? How much of the personnel policies apply to the various categories of employees?
35. Disciplinary policy – examine the entire thing to make it clearer and less mean-spirited with clear definitions.

Staff will write up the list from this meeting and prepare for an initial meeting with our consultant.

<b>3. Business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting</b>
--

There was none.

**Gordon moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:45 p.m. Dawn seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

**DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED:**

- Agenda
- Minutes of March 12, 2015 Meeting
- FRCOG Personnel Policy Handbook Draft w/ Fall 2010 edits