



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Personnel Committee — *MINUTES*

Date & Time:	Thursday, October 15, 2020, 2:00 p.m.
Location:	Remotely held teleconferenced meeting accessible to public
Facilitator:	Bill Perlman, Chair

Representatives Present:

- Bill Perlman, Regionally Elected
- Kayce Warren, Ashfield
- Jane Peirce, Orange (left at 3:10 p.m.)
- Bryan Smith, Erving

Staff Members Present:

- Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
- Rebekah Boyd, Admin Services Coordinator
- Claire McGinnis, Finance Director

Guests:

- Bernie Lynch, Bernie Kubiak, Deb Radway; Community Paradigm Associates

1. Review and adopt 12/18/18; 11/20/19; 12/5/19 Personnel Committee Minutes

Bill P. convened the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Bill P. moved adoption of the minutes of the 12/18/18 meeting as presented. Kayce seconded the motion, which passed with one abstention.

Bryan S. moved adoption of the minutes of the 11/20/19 meeting as presented. Kayce seconded the motion, which passed with all in favor.

Kayce W. moved adoption of the minutes of the 12/5/19 meeting as presented. Bryan seconded the motion, which passed with all in favor.

2. Organizational Assessment update

Community Paradigm Associates (CPA) described their efforts to gather information about the FRCOG via virtual interviews with 30 employees and affiliated community members. The process has helped them to gain insight into the organization’s current and future challenges and opportunities. They plan to share a full report of their assessment in December.

They reported that the general response was one of respect for FRCOG’s work and the feeling that the agency is accomplishing its mission and offering reliable, helpful services to Franklin County communities. Opportunities for improvement exist, of course, and one area is in the agency’s hierarchical structure, which they characterized as flat. They felt the FROG might benefit from a modification to that structure. They also suggested the need for better communication regarding

programs offered, and for ways FRCOG can achieve more buy-in from stakeholders. Analysis of the work of other COGs will inform their findings further.

The CPA asked about the role of the Personnel Committee (PC) regarding personnel management practices. Bill explained that the main task of the PC is to revise the agency's Personnel Policy — updating it with changing laws and the evolution of the organization, sometimes as problems arise and when clarity is needed. The PC also authorizes changes to job descriptions and employee grades, and recommends studies to enhance recruitment and retention, such as the salary survey of comparable and competing agencies. Linda explained that because FRCOG recently completed a regrading schedule, a new one needn't be created now, as most employees earn less than 50% of their grade salary. Salary grades currently give management the flexibility to offer employment without having to change the overall budget when hiring. One challenge is that FRCOG is perceived as a high salary employer, higher than those of many organizations in Franklin County, which sometimes has resulted in a sense of unfairness among regional stakeholders.

Among other topics, the group discussed: use of performance evaluations; merit raises for employees; a two-year uptick in employee hires (42 to 53); the current grading system (based primarily on the number of people supervised); the possibility of creating separate tracks for upward mobility unrelated to supervisory responsibility; the agency's culture and benefits that help to retain employees; the Committee's longstanding hope that staff view work at FRCOG as a career, not a stepping stone; and the challenges of retaining career-driven staff.

Members thanked the CPA for its work and expressed their eagerness to receive the full assessment.

3. Consider Juneteenth as an employee holiday option

Linda has received requests to allow staff to celebrate Juneteenth (June 19, the day when slavery was finally and fully abolished). The Executive Committee proposes adding the date as an optional "floater" holiday, but refraining from increasing the total number of holidays. Thus, they suggest staff choose to celebrate 2 out of 3 holidays among Juneteenth, Patriots Day, and Columbus Day.

PC members discussed the value of retaining the Shay's Rebellion holiday (an armed western and central MA uprising protesting tax collection, which later informed the debate at the framing of the Constitution), and the possibility of replacing it with Juneteenth. Members acknowledged that the state will likely add Juneteenth to its list of state holidays, and consensus was that adding Juneteenth as a floater, without increasing the total number of holidays, was a good idea. Bill suggested holding off on acting on this until the Executive Committee can give feedback.

4. Review miscellaneous policies and procedures

Primary Workplace Location

Efforts on the part of the FRCOG administration to bring employees back into the office during the state's COVID-19 reopening, and employee hesitation to do so, brought to light the need for new FRCOG Personnel Policy language making the Olver office FRCOG's primary work location.

Examining the new language, members felt this would give the administration the ability to require that staff return when it's safe for them to do so, making remote work not an option, unless specifically negotiated.

Bryan S. moved that the committee support the Personnel Policy change as written, and present it to the full Council as a first reading. Kayce W. seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by roll call vote.

5. Reclassification request

Linda asked that the committee skip over this item, explaining that staff need to further think through this reclassification before the request is appropriate for members to consider.

6. Business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance

Members planned agenda items for their joint meeting with the Finance Committee in December.

Kayce W. moved adjournment. Bryan S. seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- Draft minutes from 12/18/18; 11/20/19; and 12/5/19 meetings
- Personnel Policy revision memo, dated 10/14/20

Minutes taken by Rebekah Boyd.