

## ➤ **Article 1: Personnel Bylaw**

Derek Brindisi, Assistant Town Manager, presented Article 1 which asks Town Meeting to amend the Personnel Bylaw in regards to the Executive Group (Department Heads). This change would allow that group to buy-back 5 days of earned time each fiscal year while reducing the number of earned days each employee is allowed to accrue from 45 days to 40 days. This would allow them to receive payment for a week instead of using a week of vacation and help minimize the number of days a department head will be absent from work each year. The amendment also includes a longevity stipend of \$2,000 for those in the Executive Group with 25 years or more of service to the town. The longevity table currently maxes out at \$1,000 at 15 years or more of service. The cost for these new options is \$25,000 per year. Savings will be realized over time because they will be paid five days at their current salary rather than at a higher rate later when they retire.

Questions:

- How many are in the Executive Group of Department Heads? (S Stephenson) 10. Only three of which have 45 days of earned time accrued right now.
- How is the time accrued? (S Stephenson) It is accrued weekly.
- By reducing the maximum from 45 days to 40, what will make them choose the buy back instead of using those days for vacation? Has the value of wage vs. the value of leisure time been looked at? (K Canty) This is voluntary, they may choose to take the payment or take the days off, it is up to them. Many municipalities offer this and typically the employees choose to take the payment rather than the additional time off. As far as the value of wage versus leisure time, we have not done an analysis of that. Many of our other employees who work evening meetings choose to receive comp time rather than overtime pay.
- 45 days is not accrued in single year but rather a carry over limit, correct? 45 days is 9 weeks, is it common to allow this in municipalities? (J Moody) Correct, 45 days is the maximum limit to carry at any time and we are lowering that limit to 40 days. Some municipalities offer similar maximums. Worcester had a requirement that all time be used by June 30<sup>th</sup> otherwise it would pay employees out for the unused vacation time. Then on July 1<sup>st</sup> each employee would receive 6 more weeks to use by the following June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Has the town looked into decreasing the maximum to 25 or 30 days instead? Private businesses made that practice go away 10 years ago, when are municipalities going to catch up? (J Moody) No, the town has not looked into decreasing to those amounts mentioned. Other unions do have that more typical limit. The town is trying to limit its long term liabilities and this is start.

**Patrick O'Brien made a motion to recommend Article 1 to Town Meeting. Harry Salerno, second.**

Discussion/Comments:

- Plymouth residents are going to be shocked by this, most residents typically max their vacation out at 2 weeks, this is too lucrative and I can not support this. (S Stephenson)
- I was unaware of this limit. I work for the state and receive 6 weeks vacation, unlimited sick days and 5 personal days. The math does not make sense. (K Canty)
- You have to remember the 45 days is for everything: vacation, sick and personal combined into one bucket. As a former employee, I lost weeks of time that I was unable to use and unable to buy back. This is not a high paying community so these benefits help with retention and recruiting. (P O'Brien)
- This has been an interesting revelation. The private sector can carry over 2 months and use it or lose it. The executive level of this town is not living in the same world as the taxpayers. (H Helm)

**The motion carries (5-4-0). Scott Stephenson, Kevin Canty, Peter Mador, & Harry Helm, opposed.**