

**October 3, 2023**  
**Gala Meeting Room & Zoom**  
**Televised on Foxborough Cable Access**  
**5:30 PM**

**Committee Members in attendance:**

Gary Whitehouse, Tracey Vasile & Carrie Weston

**Committee Members in attendance via Zoom:**

Scott Yankee

**Staff in attendance:**

Paige Duncan, Acting Town Manager, Mary Beth Bernard, HR Consultant

**Staff in attendance via zoom:**

Katie Lang, Executive Assistant

**Documents Provided:**

090623\_SAMPLE 2 Remote Work Policy

100423\_Remote Work Policy

Personnel Wage Board\_Meeting Agenda\_100323

Personnel Board Meeting Minutes\_092623

Personnel Board Meeting Minutes\_021523

**PERSONNEL BOARD MEETING WAS RECORDED AND BROADCAST BY FOXBORO CABLE ACCESS ON  
GOVERNMENT CHANNEL 22/38 AND AT [FCATv.org/liv](http://FCATv.org/liv)**

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 PM.

Gary – Remote work policy discussion

Mary Beth – By means of introduction, when I arrived here in July, I noticed that there were people requesting and taking advantage of remote work with not particular standards. Post Covid, municipal government look differently on remote work. No one thought you could do public sector work remotely. There are times where it works for the employee and the department head and just need some guidelines to not be discriminatory. At the last meeting we showed two policies so we showed two from two different communities that I've seen work in these communities that I respect. The first one is a bit more lengthy but it includes every possible situation. There are some roles that cannot have remote work, I.E. police work, DPW but we are here if employees have questions and weigh in, this is why this is televised.

Any questions or comments.

Tracey – Purpose and scope – where it says “special needs” – it sounds ADA like. Is there a better way to phrase? “personal circumstances”. I think that would be better. “Ad Hoc remote work” is identified as occasional remote work – does that mean take the summer off and back in the Fall? Occasional to me sounds like one week a month I’d like to work from home. Is that opening a can of worms? You cannot make an office job a full time remote job.

Mary Beth – Yes, use a stronger word than occasional.

Tracey – Maybe it “temporary occasional remote work”? So people are not wanting their full time position to be work from home.

Paige – What if you worked from home every Wednesday. Is that occasional or routine?

Carrie – That’s routine.

Mary Beth – Electrician is on the way, can I work from home until he gets here. A specific need.

Paige – So unscheduled?

Tracey – Well no because in another section it states that you need prior approval. If electricity is out that morning, you call that day and ask to work from home until that issue is resolved.

Carrie – Maybe this one says non routine?

Tracey – I think there should be one definition. Routine or not routine. Just take out the word routine. Other big concern was data security. Personally, I would like to see if someone working from home, it should be a Town computer.

Mary Beth – I can’t speak to what is being done. We have arranged for Town laptops to be issued with a remote VPN.

Paige – Due to covid, we do have numerous laptops. Every department that is eligible, does have them. During covid, those that did need to do work, were given laptops to VPN in so it is secure.

Tracey – In the example where someone was asking to remote work because electricity out and need to wait for an electrician but would like to work, they would not have a laptop so they would need to take a day or hours off of work. Or they could come in, be approved, grab laptop and go home.

Paige – Well if they didn’t have electricity then they wouldn’t have wifi so maybe a different example.

Carrie – There should be loaners available.

Tracey – No one should be able to use their personal equipment. Take out the employee owned equipment and put in the policy.

Katie – I did take a look and from what we talked about last September, this board decided that if there was ever work from home during Covid that it had to be a Town issued laptop. It’s the Electronic Communications and Usage Policy.

Mary Beth – Then we should refer to that.

Paige – But we do have section H on page 6 that reviews that.

Tracey – Then we should pull that

Mary Beth – Then we should just replace that with the Electronic Communications and Use Policy.

Tracey – “Supervisor shall use the following guidelines in selecting employees for remote work: The employee has completed any probationary period or has demonstrated...” What if someone is on a PIP?

Mary Beth – Personally I would advise the supervisor not to grant that employee any special permissions since they have enough trouble adhering to the normal guidelines. Let’s add that to page 2. No PIPS.

Tracey – Policy - the prior authorization, if we mandate the use of Town lap top only or does this section come out or stay in? Someone wouldn’t routinely take home a lap top every night.

Paige – Some of us do. I always have a lap top at home just in case.

Tracey – So without prior approval should stay in. Should we designate how much time in advance?

Paige – I think you want flexibility. Just so we can work with that employee so we can work with them especially if we/Town needs them.

Mary Beth – I would think just as much advance notice as possible.

Paige – We will add that.

Tracey – A lot of employers have now to the decision that remote work needs to be done at their home and not on the beach. Should we include where? Says “primary location should be stated.”

Carrie – What If working from Mom’s house for the day.

Tracey – I think the work location needs to be confirmed by the supervisor. Should be within the United States.

Tracey – Should this to be United States and not just Massachusetts. This states that no cost of working remote will be incurred by the Town. Standard workers compensation. If I was working from home and fell down the stairs – that should not be a workers comp.

Mary Beth – Then it would be our insurance company who would do an investigation. It wouldn’t be up to us or the employee.

Carrie – Take out the “are” and replace with “may” under 3a for Workers Compensation.

Paige - Page 7. Note the Commonwealth of MA. Section acknowledges that you may be in another state which we just talked about.

Mary Beth – I think some of these situations are extreme. If our library director had a report due but was taking care of her mother in Alabama. I can see how that might possibly happen.

Tracey – Out of state is fine but not out of the USA.

Mary Beth – That would have to be vacation time.

Tracey – When I travel internationally on the senior executives get full access to the server. Maybe we should ask our IT person to see if this should have international.

Scott – But with these positions, no one should have international travel. There might not be a need.

Tracey – But someone could ask so we should put it in there.

Gary – That should be vacation time if you are traveling for that purpose. That would not be for the Town benefit.

Tracey – I agree. Just to me there is no reason someone should be working outside the US for the Town. Just want to put it in there.

Carrie – Page, C2. Do we need to provide a reason if a remote work is terminated. We don't need to have a reason so that language should state that. Do we need to provide a reason? We should word it that way.

Page 5, 2B. What about a neutral site? Like Starbucks.

Tracey – Any confidentiality?

Scott – Is there a reason to work at Starbucks v coming into Town Hall? I can see needing to be home for family or what not.

Carrie – On the remote work agreement, under hours of work. If such schedules should be reduced to writing? Page 1. Just did not know what that meant.

Mary Beth – Just to have it written down. Just poor wording.

Tracey – Is remote work allowed for just Department Heads or is this for everyone?

Mary Beth – I think since it is the Town Managers discretion then it depends on the situation.

Paige – I don't think we are that rigid. Who would approve the Town Manager?

Mary Beth – Select Board.

Tracey – Do we need to state what unions this would apply to?

Gary – Policy dose state that it is not available to all employees.

Mary Beth – Yes, I think there needs to be a disclaimer. So just Steelworkers A and B and other administrative office employees that are non-union.

Paige – Do we think the purpose and scope is strong enough?

Gary – My problem is with the first section. This should not be a routine thing that is for the employee benefit. Should not be routine.

Tracey – Maybe a management tool that should be used at the discretion of the supervisor/department head/Town Manager.

Gary – Should be the benefit for the Town.

Tracey – Am I allowed to do this because it is being productive employee and still get my job done because I want to get my job done?

Gary – It would depend on the employee and what the position is. I think people will try to abuse.

Mary Beth – Add something like extenuating circumstances in the beginning.

Gary – Just a rare occurrence. If we need you to do the work.

Mary Beth – Use time or if we really need you to do something.

Gary – That is what it should be .... If “we” need you to.

Carrie – Is this going to be a push or a pull?

Mary Beth – it will be incorporated into the policies and it will give us a baseline because some people are already doing it. And I am just not sure if we are doing this fairly.

Tracey – How is this working? Any holes?

Mary Beth – People have deals.

Gary – Doesn't the tax payer have the right to see who they are paying to do the job?

Tracey – I think that is a good point.

Paige – So what about the first sentence? Needs to benefit the Town.

Gary – Need to strike the mutually beneficial. Second sentence works good.

Carrie – Maybe add a section that has list the benefit to the Town (??). Like a check box or identify.

Gary – The Department Head should be able to back to the Town Manager as to why they

Mary Beth – You are using the HR Director and the Town Manger as to why allowed.

Tracey – We should take out Monday, every other Monday.... This makes it should like a schedule and a benefit. Take out the start end date and check box if temporary. Not go on forever but can be extended. Need to be reviewed.

Gary – Covid would be a good example.

Mary Beth – For the RWA, need to delete the column for personal devise and employee owned property section.

Tracey - I would take out the office furniture and possibly phone.

Mary Beth – I have seen phones. Town could give phone and then put the number on the website for residents to call.

Paige – Under hours of work is an “approved flexible work schedule on file for this employee.” For the agreement.

Tracey – I think that should be deleted. Take out regular and “re-occurring.” Put in the word temporary. Take out the reimbursement – take out the word “generally.” Take out employee computer security as well.

Carrie – Will you require everyone that is doing remote to review this and go through it.

Mary Beth – I think that is the best way. We do have a few doing this.

Gary – How can this be a few when this covers only about 12 people?

Mary Beth – We will have to negotiate with Steelworkers so it so more.

Tracey – How do we ensure this is applied equally? If one supervisor is more strict than others.

Mary Beth – I think using HR and/or the Town Manager as the final filter.

Tracey – I think it needs to be one or the other or both.

Paige – All sign.

Mary Beth – All circumstances will need to be revisited. This is a whole new world post covid.

Tracey – Do you think it is currently being abused in general?

Mary Beth – No. It’s just management styles.

Gary – Should we do a vote?

Mary Beth – I think we have a lot of notes so maybe throw out one more draft. We encourage employees to come to these meetings to give their input.

Paige – We will let the general population know when we are having our next meeting.

Mary Beth – We did the FMLA and that went to the Select Board.

Paige – That was impact bargained with the Steelworkers with no problems.

Tracey – So we will see edits of this policy and the cell phone policy?

Mary Beth – One thing I suggested would be to move on a hiring policy.

Tracey – If you could pass along a few good examples.

Mary Beth – Will do that before I leave. Not sure about the cell phone policy as I think it’s covered in some of our other policies so just want to learn more about what is needed. Will take a look at the Electronic Communications and Use Policy. Unless it is who gets a cell phone that then would be operational and it wouldn’t come to this board.

Tracey – Motion to adjourn.

Carrie – 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Gary – All in favor.

All Yes.

Gary – meeting adjourned.