

Town of Independence
Personnel Committee
Minutes
March 21, 2024
11am

In Attendance: Chairman Jason Cassell, Mark Miller, Kit Marshall, Ronald Sexton
Staff: Town Manager Ratcliffe

1) 2025 Budget

- a. Market Analysis/Salary Increase Recommendation – Town Manager Ratcliffe reported she had completed an updated market salary analysis. At this time there are no recommended changes in the paygrades. Additionally, based on her review of other localities, State of Virginia and US Federal annual increases for 2024, she recommends a 3% COLA for all employees, excluding herself and Town Council.
- b. Staffing Considerations
 - i. Special Events – The group reviewed a proposed job description for the Special Events Coordinator. The group made recommendations for additional responsibilities for this role including managing volunteer events and additional events such as the Hwy 21 TAB weekend.
 - ii. Other needs – Town Manager Ratcliffe reported that at this time she did not plan to request additional staffing for the town operations for the upcoming budget year.
- c. Benefit Considerations
 - i. Disability Coverage – Town Manager Ratcliffe made the committee aware those employees hired as a plan 1 or plan 2 employee (pre 2020) are not eligible for the VRA provided long and short term disability programs. These employees personally pay for their premiums. Those employees hired since this date are included and the Town pays for the premium. Town Manager Ratcliffe recommended this be looked at and consideration given for changing the benefit to make it a paid benefit for all employees. Discussion ensued. The committee requested Town Manager Ratcliffe obtain quotes for the coverage before adding to the upcoming budget year.
 - ii. Retirement benefits for permanent part-time employees (over 32 hours per week) – Town Manager Ratcliffe recommended this change be made to the benefit plan. This would impact 1 employee currently and is in line with the current state benefit approach for retirement. Discussion ensued. The committee agreed to take this recommendation forward for Town Council discussion and vote. The 2025 budget will include this change.
- d. Bonus Program
 - i. Current DMV Bonus – Town Manager Ratcliffe communicated the current DMV bonus program which applies to all Town Clerks who process DMV work. The bonus was implemented during Kenneth Vaught's time as Town Manager as an incentive to grow the DMV revenue for the Town. Revenues above the budgeted DMV revenue are split 25% to the GA Capital Account and 75% to the participating clerks, up to 12% of their annual salary. The bonus program has

been successful and most years the clerks have received \$4-\$6k each per clerk; however, there are no other performance-based incentives in place for other Town Employees.

- ii. Consideration for Future Bonus – Town Manager Ratcliffe presented a performance/goal based bonus program for consideration. The program would apply to all Town employees. The proposed bonus would first be paid in the 2026 fiscal year based on performance prior to that time. If approved and implemented, the new program would replace the DMV program and the annual holiday bonus. It would first be paid in November 2025. The bonus plan would be tied to successful outcomes of goals which support the Town Council’s priorities for each operational area. Discussion ensued. The group agreed the discussion should be moved forward to the larger Town Council for discussion.
- 2) Annual Review process update – Town Manager Ratcliffe reported the annual review process is delayed. It has been used for the 6-month reviews for the employees hired in August 2023 and will be used for her review.
 - 3) Town Manager Review/Contract Renewal – Town Manager Ratcliffe left the meeting at this time so that the committee could review as a group the written feedback provided by other council members and employees regarding her performance over the past year. Chairman Cassell will review the results with Town Manager Ratcliffe at a later date. Town Manager Ratcliffe has agreed, subject to Town Council’s approval, to renew her contract for an additional 12 month period, ending 6/30/2025, at the same terms as the 12/1/2023 contract amendment.