

CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION REVIEW

WARREN, MASSACHUSETTS

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Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management

McCORMACK GRADUATE SCHOOL OF POLICY AND GLOBAL STUDIES

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Introduction

The Town of Warren retained, under a grant provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Community Compact Program, the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management (Collins Center) to conduct a classification and compensation review.

Methodology

The Collins Center met with the Classification and Compensation Working Group to plan the logistics of the project. The steps of the process were:

- Review of existing descriptions, pay scales, and organizational structure.
- Orientation to provide an overview of the project to participants.
- Position questionnaires distributed and completed by employees.
- Interviews to discuss questionnaires and positions.
- Draft position descriptions were distributed for comments and suggested edits.
- Labor market survey was conducted.
- Final position descriptions were created coalescing comments and edits.
- Draft report with findings and recommendations submitted for comments.
- Report was finalized after receiving comments.

Position Descriptions

The most vital component of a classification and compensation review is ensuring position descriptions are accurate. The process of developing accurate position descriptions begins with employees completing a position description questionnaire. The questionnaires elicit information about the essential functions, the nature and complexity of the work, and the education and experience requirements for the position. Interviews were also conducted with employees to review the questionnaires and add any additional information or clarify information as needed.

After gathering relevant information from existing descriptions, completed questionnaires and employee interviews, draft position descriptions were developed and submitted to the Town for review and comments by incumbents and supervisors. The Collins Center received feedback and finalized the position descriptions.

Position Description Evaluation for Classification & Internal Equity

Once descriptions were drafted, a point factor rating method was used to objectively evaluate the classification of positions. Using an objective position evaluation system that is consistently applied to each position is critical in ensuring the internal equity of the classification plan. The evaluation system utilized by the Collins Center is one that has been successfully implemented in many municipalities and other governmental organizations in the Commonwealth. Each position was evaluated on key characteristics including those listed below to determine the classification or “grading” of positions. The categories include:

- Supervision Required
- Supervision Responsibility
- Accountability
- Judgement
- Complexity
- Nature & Purpose of Personal Contacts
- Confidentiality
- Education
- Experience
- Work Environment
- Physical Requirements
- Motor/Vision Skills

Creating a fair and equity classification structure is critical. The position descriptions and the structure, or classification plan, are the most important aspects of a classification and compensation system. Having an objective classification structure addresses equity across departments and types of work. Ensuring accuracy in requirements will help the Town in recruitment and evaluation. The accuracy of titles is important in any classification structure. The Collins Center recommends standardizing and simplifying selected titles. The following Tables reflect the Collins Center’s recommended classification structures.

DEPARTMENT	POSITION TITLE	RECOMMENDED TITLE	GRADE
Accountant	Accountant		Contract*
Clerk	Town Clerk		Elected
Fire	Fire Chief		Contract*
Highway	Highway Surveyor		Elected
Police	Police Chief		Contract*
Selectmen/TA	Town Administrator		Contract*
Treasurer/Collector	Tax Collector		Elected
Treasurer/Collector	Treasurer		Elected
Sewer	Chief Operator		A
Assessor	Assistant Assessor		B
COA	COA Director		B
Sewer	Assistant Chief Operator		B
Board of Health	Administrative Assistant	Board of Health Administrator	C
Highway	Foreman		C
Highway	Mechanic		C
Parks & Rec	Administrative Assistant	Program Supervisor	C
Selectmen/TA	Administrative Assistant	Executive Assistant	C
Clerk	Assistant Town Clerk		D
COA	Lunch Coordinator	Meals Coordinator	D
Highway	Mechanic/Laborer /Driver	Heavy Equipment Operator	D
Highway	Secretary	Administrative Assistant	D
Planning/Building	Secretary	Administrative Assistant	D
Police	Secretary	Administrative Assistant	D

DEPARTMENT	POSITION TITLE	RECOMMENDED TITLE	GRADE
Sewer	Operator/Mechanic		D
Sewer	Secretary	Administrative Assistant	D
Treasurer/Collector	Assistant Tax Collector		D
Treasurer/Collector	Clerk	Assistant Treasurer	D
Assessor	Clerk	Department Assistant	E
COA	General Helper	Program Assistant	E
COA	Van Driver/Custodian		E
Conservation	Secretary	Department Assistant	E
Highway	Laborer	Driver/Laborer (No CDL)	E
Selectmen/TA	Facilities Custodian		E
Parks & Rec	Lifeguard-Seasonal		SEASONAL
Parks & Rec	Camp Supervisor-Seasonal		SEASONAL

FIRE			
Fire	Firefighter/EMT		FD-2
Fire	EMT in Training		FD-1

POLICE			
Police	Police Lieutenant		PD-3
Police	Sergeant		PD-2
Police	Detective*		PD-1
Police	Police Officer		PD-1

*Police detective, is stipend for a patrol officer, not a separate classification

Labor Market Salary Survey

A labor market salary survey was conducted to determine the ranges within which other area municipalities compensate the positions studied. A summary of the results can be found on pages 8-11. Obtaining survey data is one of the most challenging aspects of a classification and compensation review. Not all municipalities have the same titles or definitions of duties under a specific title, which can make exact comparisons difficult. The following municipalities responded to the survey: Barre, Brimfield, Brookfield, Hardwick, Monson, North Brookfield, Oxford, Palmer, Southbridge, Spencer, Ware, and West Brookfield. The Collins Center was able to collect data from twelve municipalities, which is significant and ensures the data is a true representation of the area's labor market.

The Collins Center evaluates both the average and the median pay to obtain accurate information. The analysis of median pay removes the outlying data points. The labor market salary data is gathered using hourly rates for the purpose of comparisons.

The following Table highlights common challenges when reviewing survey data and should be taken into consideration when making evaluative determinations.

FACTOR	DISCUSSION
Title Comparison/Complexity of Operations	A survey of titles can be challenging. Oftentimes, the same title in another municipality may have different levels of responsibility, which can skew the results.
High Demand Positions	In a challenging labor market, many municipalities need to make recruitment decisions for particular, high demand or specialized positions which can impact the classification and compensation plan data analysis
Data Points	The Collins Center provided analysis with three data points or greater. Using fewer than three data points can have a skewed average and median and is not mathematically accurate.
Organizational/Staffing Structure	Staffing levels and classification structures can impact salary survey results. For example, a large municipality may have more positions, which may be specialized, or have narrow responsibilities, whereas a smaller municipality, with fewer staff, may have broader responsibilities within a title.
Reporting Relationship	Depending on the municipality and organizational structure, titles may not be truly comparable. In larger municipalities, the same title can be department head, division head, or professional staff.
Salary Ranges	It is common for salary ranges to be outdated, which contributes to data being skewed. Even though many municipalities report minimum salary ranges, it is not known if they actually hire or compensate employees at the minimum.
Elected and Appointed Officials	It is common for appointed officials with the same title as elected officials to be compensated at a higher level because of the professional education and experience required to be hired into the job. Elected officials have no such minimum requirements and as such are oftentimes paid differently than their counterpart in other municipalities.

As detailed in the Table above, not all positions have a counterpart in other municipalities and no exact pay rate comparison can be made. Warren has a few unique titles that do not align with positions in survey municipalities. However, the Collins Center is able to “benchmark” the titles by grouping them based on the application of the evaluation system discussed above and determine the relative pay for all positions in a recommended grade. Additionally, the market survey is of base hourly pay, not total compensation, and does not take into consideration benefits, separate stipends, educational incentives, or differential pay. The Town should consider total compensation when making final policy decisions.

Development of Salary Schedules

In classification evaluation, it is important to note that each municipality is different and the comparability within an organization is as important, if not more so, than external comparability. It is also important to remember that a classification and compensation structure is based on the sum of the parts of the positions classified in the same grade and not about an individual data point within a survey (see Table

above). In developing the recommended salary schedules, the Collins Center coalesced the position classification with the results of the market salary survey to establish salary ranges for each of the grades. The salary ranges were established by evaluating the survey data and the existing pay of the positions in each grade. If fewer than three data points were available no average, or median rates were calculated.

A standard compensation plan, with standard ranges and policies is critical to an equitable system. The industry standard and recommended pay range for each grade is 30% to 40%. The labor market survey analysis reveals that Warren’s pay rates need to be adjusted to align with the labor market and provide for pay equity across the organization.

The following Tables represent the Center recommendation salary schedules for Warren. The Center has provided a sample compensation schedule that has fifteen steps at 2.6% (attached).

RECOMMENDED GRADE	RECOMMENDED MINIMUM	RECOMMENDED MAXIMUM
CONTRACT/ELECTED		
A	\$31.84	\$45.00
B	\$30.44	\$43.00
C	\$24.78	\$35.00
D	\$19.82	\$28.00
E	\$17.70	\$25.00
SEASONAL	\$17.50	\$22.00

FIRE		
RECOMMENDED GRADE	RECOMMENDED MINIMUM	RECOMMENDED MAXIMUM
FD-2	\$21.23	\$30.00
FD-1	\$18.41	\$26.00

POLICE		
RECOMMENDED GRADE	RECOMMENDED MINIMUM	RECOMMENDED MAXIMUM
PD-3	\$31.84	\$45.00
PD-2	\$26.90	\$38.00
PD-1	\$24.78	\$35.00

The compensation schedule does not include specific recommendations for contracted or elected officials. As noted in the Table discussing outliers in data points, oftentimes elected officials and contracted titles, by the nature of their positions, are not assigned a classification. Similarly, the Center understands that the role of Detective is that of a Patrol Officer which receives a differential or stipend

for serving as a Detective. As such, the function of Detective is not included in the compensation structure.

Implementation

The Project Team recommends placing employees on the scale that provides for an increase. The Town will need to make policy decisions on any other adjustments such as the length of service in position and across the board or cost of living adjustments (COLA) to the entire pay scale. For example, if an across the board (aka COLA) is planned, that increase should be applied to the existing rate prior to placing the individual on the scale so that each employee receives the same base percentage increase and may mitigate some of the costs of equity and market adjustments.

Conclusion

The Collins Center would like to thank those who participated in the process. We are grateful to the Town Administrator who assisted in the facilitation of this project. We believe the recommended position descriptions and recommended classification and compensation plan will serve the Town well for many years to come.

Summary of Market Salary Survey

DEPARTMENT	POSITION TITLE	*WARREN FY25 MINIMUM HRLY RATE	WARREN FY25 MAXIMUM HRLY RATE	**MARKET SURVEY AVERAGE MINIMUM	**MARKET SURVEY MEDIAN MINIMUM	MARKET SURVEY AVERAGE MAXIMUM	MARKET SURVEY MEDIAN MAXIMUM
Accountant	Accountant		\$37.86	\$40.44	\$38.90	\$47.42	\$47.78
Assessor	Assistant Assessor	\$26.34	\$35.40	\$27.44	\$23.64	\$35.46	\$31.97
Assessor	Clerk	\$17.06	\$22.93	\$22.52	\$21.92	\$25.94	\$25.53
Board of Health	Administrative Assistant	\$22.75	\$30.58	\$21.80	\$21.24	\$24.09	\$24.12
Clerk	Town Clerk		\$42.37	\$35.60	\$33.25	\$40.53	\$40.47
Clerk	Assistant Town Clerk	\$18.73	\$25.17	\$24.38	\$24.10	\$27.41	\$26.08
COA	COA Director	\$26.34	\$35.40	\$31.79	\$30.70	\$34.83	\$34.62
COA	General Helper	\$16.13	\$21.67			\$21.03	\$19.64
COA	Van Driver/Custodian	\$16.13	\$21.67	\$17.42	\$15.61	\$19.78	\$18.00
Conservation	Secretary	\$17.06	\$22.93			\$23.10	\$21.61
Fire	Fire Chief		\$44.80	\$42.78	\$43.74	\$50.94	\$53.80
Fire	Firefighter/EMT	\$22.42	\$30.13	\$23.78	\$23.88	\$29.27	\$29.45
Highway	Highway Surveyor		\$36.12			\$41.76	\$40.82
Highway	Foreman	\$27.65	\$37.16	\$30.69	\$30.35	\$35.80	\$34.02
Highway	Mech./Laborer /Driver	\$23.28	\$31.29	\$23.63	\$24.66	\$27.87	\$29.98
Highway	Mechanic	\$27.91	\$37.51			\$33.18	\$32.38
Highway	Secretary	\$18.73	\$25.17	\$22.25	\$22.44	\$26.99	\$28.11
Highway	Laborer	\$17.27	\$23.21	\$21.29	\$21.71	\$26.52	\$25.98
Parks & Rec	Administrative Assistant	\$22.75	\$30.58			\$23.84	\$23.37
Planning/Building	Secretary	\$18.73	\$25.17	\$24.75	\$23.42	\$27.11	\$26.11
Police	Police Chief		\$52.94			\$59.58	\$57.73
Police	Police Lieutenant		\$41.32	\$41.17	\$41.55	\$45.61	\$45.48
Police	Police Officer	\$27.81	\$33.24	\$27.76	\$26.00	\$35.00	\$33.70
Police	Secretary	\$18.73	\$25.17	\$24.04	\$23.56	\$27.92	\$28.45
Selectmen/TA	Town Administrator		\$46.43			\$45.23	\$44.18
Selectmen/TA	Administrative Assistant	\$22.75	\$30.58	\$24.69	\$25.49	\$29.54	\$29.40

DEPARTMENT	POSITION TITLE	*WARREN FY25 MINIMUM HRLY RATE	WARREN FY25 MAXIMUM HRLY RATE	**MARKET SURVEY AVERAGE MINIMUM	**MARKET SURVEY MEDIAN MINIMUM	MARKET SURVEY AVERAGE MAXIMUM	MARKET SURVEY MEDIAN MAXIMUM
Selectmen/TA	Facilities Custodian	\$17.27	\$23.21	\$20.83	\$19.56	\$21.66	\$20.08
Sewer	Chief Operator	\$36.08	\$48.49			\$42.35	\$43.06
Sewer	Asst. Chief Operator	\$29.71	\$39.93			\$34.43	\$34.60
Sewer	Operator/Mechanic	\$23.26	\$31.29	\$27.12	\$26.15	\$29.82	\$29.33
Sewer	Secretary	\$17.06	\$22.93			\$26.45	\$24.12
Treasurer/Collector	Treasurer		\$39.62			\$41.87	\$40.48
Treasurer/Collector	Tax Collector		\$39.62			\$34.24	\$35.13
Treasurer/Collector	Assistant Tax Collector	\$17.06	\$22.93	\$24.95	\$23.64	\$28.54	\$29.40
Treasurer/Collector	Clerk	\$17.06	\$22.93	\$21.87	\$22.14	\$26.94	\$27.54

*Blank cell indicates Warren does not have a minimum rate.

**Blank cells indicate that survey data did not have at least three data points for comparison.

Note: Survey data for titles that did not have at least three data points for both minimum and maximum for comparison are not included.

Sample Compensation Schedules

General Government

Step/ Grade	STEP 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
A	\$31.84	\$32.64	\$33.46	\$34.30	\$35.16	\$36.04	\$36.94	\$37.86	\$38.81	\$39.78	\$40.77	\$41.79	\$42.83	\$43.90	\$45.00
B	\$30.44	\$31.20	\$31.98	\$32.78	\$33.60	\$34.44	\$35.30	\$36.18	\$37.08	\$38.01	\$38.96	\$39.93	\$40.93	\$41.95	\$43.00
C	\$24.78	\$25.40	\$26.04	\$26.69	\$27.36	\$28.04	\$28.74	\$29.46	\$30.20	\$30.95	\$31.72	\$32.51	\$33.32	\$34.15	\$35.00
D	\$19.82	\$20.32	\$20.83	\$21.35	\$21.88	\$22.43	\$22.99	\$23.56	\$24.15	\$24.75	\$25.37	\$26.00	\$26.65	\$27.32	\$28.00
E	\$17.70	\$18.14	\$18.59	\$19.05	\$19.53	\$20.02	\$20.52	\$21.03	\$21.56	\$22.10	\$22.65	\$23.22	\$23.80	\$24.39	\$25.00

Public Safety - Fire

Step/ Grade	STEP 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
FD-2	\$21.23	\$21.76	\$22.30	\$22.86	\$23.43	\$24.02	\$24.62	\$25.24	\$25.87	\$26.52	\$27.18	\$27.86	\$28.56	\$29.27	\$30.00
FD-1	\$18.41	\$18.87	\$19.34	\$19.82	\$20.32	\$20.83	\$21.35	\$21.88	\$22.43	\$22.99	\$23.56	\$24.15	\$24.75	\$25.37	\$26.00

Public Safety – Police

Step/ Grade	STEP 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
PD-3	\$31.84	\$32.64	\$33.46	\$34.30	\$35.16	\$36.04	\$36.94	\$37.86	\$38.81	\$39.78	\$40.77	\$41.79	\$42.83	\$43.90	\$45.00
PD-2	\$26.90	\$27.57	\$28.26	\$28.97	\$29.69	\$30.43	\$31.19	\$31.97	\$32.77	\$33.59	\$34.43	\$35.29	\$36.17	\$37.07	\$38.00
PD-1	\$24.78	\$25.40	\$26.04	\$26.69	\$27.36	\$28.04	\$28.74	\$29.46	\$30.20	\$30.95	\$31.72	\$32.51	\$33.32	\$34.15	\$35.00

Note: The sample compensation schedule is fifteen steps with 2.6% increments. The Town may implement a different pay schedule, which could change the percentage between the steps or the spread from minimum to maximum. Additionally, rounding formulas may also change rates slightly.