

In 2008 a new employee manual went into effect. In the fall of that year the department heads went before the budget committee and there was surprise and unawareness. Despite some opinions the sky has not fallen since that time. There were some issues within that manual that need to be addressed and both the Department heads and the Selectboard had met and it was determined that they would meet again after the election in March and work on them.

About a month ago I was given a copy of a new employee manual and advised that this would be going into effect as soon as possible. I read thru the manual and was dumbfounded by its contents. The manual was a complete rewrite with numerous additions that had previously mentioned. I asked the Selectmen's Assistant if/ when a meeting to discuss the manual would be held and was advised that one would not be held and if we had questions we should put them in writing. No procedure for answering these questions was provided.

Under the current employee manual Article 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 provides the employees the right to be included in the creation and discussions with regard to all conditions of employment. This did not happen.

To my understanding this manual was written by one member of the Select board that is also a town employee. This individual appears to be one of the few that will receive an increase in benefits under the manual and looks to be the deciding vote as to whether or not the manual is enacted. This new proposed manual appears to include and define Select board members as Regular part time Employees. In the new manual Article 11.6 has a great phrase under the conflict of interest heading that states that employees are required to refrain from engaging in any activities that create an actual conflict or the appearance of a conflict of interest. When the Select board member appears to receive an increase in benefits as an employee, how can that not be considered to have the appearance of a conflict of interest.

As far as the manual itself goes, I have been a full time employee of the Town for about 7 years. In that time frame, if this manual is instituted, it will be the 5<sup>th</sup> dramatically different manual that I have worked under. I do not think it is unreasonable for an employee to expect some degree of stability from an employer.

I have a whole list of concerns regarding this manual and its contents as do many of the other employees. There are a lot of articles that do not make sense or are illegal. These are some of them.

1. According to the most recent monthly release from the LGC Article 7.5 that includes alcohol and drug testing policy is not enforceable.

2. According to Chief Trammell conversations Article Seven. 4 regulating firearms is illegal.

3. Not all of the computers and cell phones are owned by the Town and therefore not subject to the policies.

4. In general, when the name of a municipality is used as a proper term such as Town of Carroll or Town of Carroll's it refers to the Legislative portion of the Town – the voters. Is it the intent of the manual to have the voters be the Authority having Jurisdiction for the majority of the manual? If not then to alleviate any possible confusion the Select board should be written where that is intended.

5. If the manual is instituted the way it is, it will pay me an annual increase of just over \$12,000 in salary to save about \$ 5,500 in overtime.

6. The way the manual is written, in the attendance portion Article six .4 it discourages/ and punishes for employees from adjusting their schedules to allow for the elimination of extra hours.

7. If the manual is instituted the way it is then, to my understanding, it will need to pay a lump sum for accrued benefits. For me it will be somewhere in the neighbor hood of \$7,000. The only real savings in the new manual that I see is a reduction in a week of vacation time. Or about \$ 700/year.

There are many, many more discrepancies that both myself and most of the full time employees have with this manual but more importantly it does not address the current issues that we are/have been talking about such as call out times, and overtime accrued during Holiday periods.

If this manual is instituted it will have to be completely redone in a year or two to address the legality of many of the Articles.

Because of the issues with this manual and possible potential costs associated with it. I would like to request that the Select board works on the existing manual and works towards correcting the issues that have been identified in it like they had said they were planning to do.

(Jeff Duncan)