



TOWN OF HOLLISTON
CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION STUDY

FINAL REPORT

OCTOBER 2022



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I. INTRODUCTION

GovHR USA, LLC (GovHR) is pleased to have had the opportunity to work with the Town of Holliston on this Classification and Compensation Study. Human resource management is a significant concern as governmental services continue to increase in cost and complexity, and the resources to fund local governments are constrained. Day-to-day operations present challenging administrative problems in planning, organizing, and directing human resource functions in order to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of municipal services. A properly developed and administered Classification and Compensation Plan forms the foundation for meeting these challenges. It helps to ensure that the Town can not only recruit the best and brightest employees but can also retain those employees, even in a competitive marketplace. By retaining qualified, experienced employees the Town avoids the costs of re-recruitments and lost productivity, while maximizing the benefits of the investments it has made in employees and the institutional and community knowledge acquired by those employees over their tenures.

GovHR understands the high expectations that have been established in Holliston for service delivery and competitiveness in recruiting and retaining excellent employees. These factors have been taken into consideration in the analysis and reflected in the Study results.

Scope of Work

The scope of work called for GovHR to carry out the following

I. Meetings and Compensation Survey

Below is a list of tasks included in this component of the Study (listed in the order that the work was performed):

- **Study preparation and project meetings.** Met with Town Administration to discuss Study methods and expectations, and to review the current Classification and Compensation Plan and organizational structure. Determined problem areas, answered questions, and reviewed the scope and schedule of work.
- **Determined comparable communities and collected compensation data.** The Town of Holliston identified a group of “like” communities that impact its compensation market. Then, GovHR designed and sent out the survey for the positions covered in the Study.

II. Salary Survey

The following tasks were included in this component of the Study:

- Tabulated, summarized, and analyzed comparative compensation information obtained from the comparable communities. Prepared pay tabulations that compared the salary ranges of the Town of Holliston to the salary ranges of its comparable communities. Prepared comparison calculations at the 50th, 60th, 65th, 75th and 80th percentiles. Displayed data for each jurisdiction and for each position and summarized the data in table form. Based on discussions with the Town and the gathered data, developed salary ranges that would establish Holliston as a payer at the 50th percentile of the salary data from the comparable communities.
- Based on the above data, developed and recommended new salary schedules.

III. and IV. The Classification Study

The Town asked GovHR to conduct a Classification Study as a result of receiving compensation from the market to ensure that internal equity was established. The following tasks were included in this component of the Study:

- Job Evaluation - A review of the Town's job descriptions for positions included in the Study.
- Position Classification - Grading of those job descriptions and the establishment of a new Classification Plan.

V. Draft and Final Report Preparation

- A preliminary analysis of the data and recommended Classification and Compensation Plan was shared with the Town. Feedback from Town Administration was reviewed and incorporated into the recommendations.
- This final report has been prepared by the Consultant and sent electronically to the Town.

II. SALARY DATA

The Town of Holliston initiated this Study with the objective of assuring that its Compensation Plan is both internally equitable and externally competitive. To achieve external competitiveness, a market survey of comparable jurisdictions was conducted. The following explains the labor market review and collection of salary data.

Selection of Comparable Jurisdictions for Data Purposes

The Town identified thirteen (13) comparable jurisdictions for survey purposes. The list of the thirteen (13) comparable communities is below:

Ashland	Medfield	Upton
Bedford	Medway	Walpole
Concord	Millis	Wrentham
Foxborough	Plainville	
Hopkinton	Sudbury	

Salary Survey

After identifying the benchmark positions, the Consultants then prepared and distributed a salary survey to the thirteen (13) comparable communities. Overall, salary data was collected for twelve (12) of the comparables: five of the communities responded to the survey or supplied GovHR with a copy of their Compensation Plans; compensation data for three comparables was obtained from their Town websites; and GovHR had salary data on file for four comparables that are either current clients of GovHR or had recently participated in another survey conducted by GovHR. The Comprehensive Table is a summary of the benchmark salary survey data. Salary data was collected for the majority of positions covered by the Study.

It is important to make a few of observations regarding the Comprehensive Table.

- 1) The salary data is information that was available as of February – March 2022. The new recommended salary ranges for the Town were developed using this salary data from the comparable communities.
- 2) Some of the comparable municipalities provided salary range minimums and maximums for comparison purposes, while others (those that don't utilize salary ranges as part of their pay plans) provided actual salaries for surveyed positions. The salary range minimums and maximums were analyzed to determine the 50th, 60th, 65th, 75th and 80th percentiles to identify wage ranges

for “average” and “above average” payers. Any actual salaries provided by the comparable municipalities were only analyzed in a few instances when there was not enough salary range information. Salary ranges are a better gauge of market salaries than an actual salary and are thus preferred to conduct analysis.

- 3) Salary ranges associated with positions that have been reclassified may not be consistent with other salary ranges in a particular Grade.

Appraisal and Use of Salary Data

While comparing Holliston’s current salaries to those paid by other employers in the comparable communities, it must be noted that variations in compensation may be due to several factors, including:

- 1) Organizational size and economic conditions can have an impact on positions. In smaller organizations, employees are often asked to "wear many hats" and therefore take on more duties and responsibilities than would normally be required of a certain position. In addition, the economic downturn forced organizations to "do more with less", compelling staff to take on more duties and responsibilities than they have in the past. Therefore, it becomes increasingly harder to compare “like” positions within organizations.
- 2) Some employers place a different relative worth on certain groups of employees. For example, some employers are forced to place a higher value on certain employees or groups of employees because of the market, and therefore, pay them more. Overall, the policies and value judgments of different employers in compensating the same kind of work can vary widely. There is rarely a single prevailing rate for any particular kind of work, even within the same labor market.
- 3) It can be difficult to make exact comparisons among the different employers of the duties and responsibilities of ostensibly similar jobs.

Nevertheless, comparative salary data is widely recognized as a good measure of the appropriate compensation rates with respect to the prevailing market. This data is also useful as an indication of prevailing opinions concerning the compensation relationships that should exist among different classifications of work.

III. JOB EVALUATION

GovHR's approach to Job Evaluation involves a quantitative point and factor comparison method, which cross-compares all positions in the organization against numerous factors such as educational requirements, experience, work conditions, etc. Therefore, all jobs in each organizational unit (e.g., Police, Administration, Finance, etc.) may be compared against each other, based upon the same factors.

In conducting the Job Evaluation exercise, it must be emphasized that the position, and not the incumbent's qualifications, performance, or years of service in the position, is evaluated. An incumbent employee may feel he/she should be placed in a higher level (i.e., receive more points) because the individual performs well, has a long tenure with the organization, and/or has additional education or skills not required to perform that job, or may feel he/she does more tasks than a similar employee in another Department, but these are not valid determinants for a position.

Before reviewing the results of the evaluation of the positions, it is important to note that the purpose of a Job Evaluation is to identify whether a job is more or less advanced than, or equal to, other jobs in the organization, based on nine (9) objective factors. While these factor definitions are guidelines, they are constructed to allow limited flexibility of interpretation while at the same time providing a strict framework and structure for comparison. The nine (9) factors used for the evaluation of the Town's positions are as follows:

- 1) Preparation and Training
- 2) Experience Required
- 3) Decision Making and Independent Judgment
- 4) Responsibility for Policy Development
- 5) Planning of Work
- 6) Contact with Others
- 7) Work of Others (Supervision Exercised)
- 8) Working Conditions
- 9) Use of Technology/Specialized Equipment

As part of the Job Evaluation process, the duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements for each position were reviewed via a thorough reading of the incumbent's current job description. Points were then assigned to each factor by selecting the description that best fit the appropriate level of compliance. In other words, a position that requires a Master's Degree would receive more points under the "Preparation and Training" factor than positions that did not require this advanced degree. Points for each factor were then totaled for each position. The proposed Classification Plan can be found in the Comprehensive Table (Table 1).

IV. THE CLASSIFICATION PLAN

A Classification Plan provides for a systematic arrangement of positions into classifications. A position, often referred to as a job (e.g., Office Assistant), contains a specific set of duties and responsibilities and that is the objective of the classification process – not the person currently holding that job. A classification is a grouping of positions which have similar levels of knowledge, skills and abilities needed to perform the job. The positions are also similar in nature of work, level of work difficulty and responsibilities. Positions allocated to the same classification are sufficiently similar with respect to the types of factors enumerated above to permit them to be compensated at the same general level of pay. The positions do not have to be identical, they can be in different departments, dealing with different subject matters and performing different duties.

It is this arrangement of positions and resulting classification structure that forms the basis for the Classification Plan. As noted in the previous section, a Job Evaluation and Classification Plan is not intended to assess individual performance. To that end, a position that belongs in a certain classification is *not* entitled to be placed in a higher classification simply because the individual performs with a high degree of success and efficiency, nor is it placed in a lower classification simply because the incumbent performs with low competence or productivity. Variations in individual performance are not recognized by differences in classifications, instead they are management issues. Similarly, there is a tendency in some work forces to use the Classification Plan to reward longevity, even though the duties and responsibilities of individual positions may not have changed over time. Longevity is not a classification factor and the Classification Plan should not be used in this manner.

As an assessment of duties performed and of responsibilities exercised, a Classification Plan is an exceedingly useful managerial tool. It provides the fundamental rationale for the Compensation Plan and helps management identify positions which have taken on (or in some cases reduced) duties and responsibilities. Through proper maintenance of the Classification Plan, employees are assured of management's continuing concern about the nature of work that they carry out and its reward in the form of appropriate pay levels and relationships. The Classification Plan also provides the basis for recruitment, screening, and selection of employees in direct relationship to job content. Promotional ladders as well as opportunities for lateral career development are also evidenced by the logical grouping of allied occupational classifications and hierarchies. The proposed Classification Plan has seven Grades and is included in Table 1 of this report.

V. COMPENSATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Development of the Compensation Plan

A basic element in any human resources management program is adequate and equitable employee compensation. A Compensation Plan of this nature is essential if qualified employees are to be recruited and retained. The primary function of the proposed Compensation Plan is to provide a structure that will enable the Town to recruit and retain competent employees. The Plan presented in this report is designed to accomplish the Study goals by:

- 1) Providing for equal compensation for work of equivalent job content and responsibility.
- 2) Facilitating adjustments to compensation levels based on changing economic and employment conditions that impact these interrelationships.
- 3) Establishing compensation ranges that compare favorably with those of other equivalent jurisdictions within the appropriate labor market.

In preparing this Plan, the Study only looked at base compensation. The compensation associated with longevity or other fringe benefits was not analyzed or factored into the Compensation Plan.

Defined Increment Plan and Open Range Merit Plan

A Defined Increment Plan is a pay plan that has salary ranges with a minimum and a maximum with defined percentage increments (e.g., 2%) in between. If an employee has a satisfactory performance evaluation, he/she systematically advances through their pay range. This performance evaluation, and resulting salary increment increase, occurs annually.

An Open Range Merit Plan also has salary ranges with minimums and maximums, but without defined percentage increments in between. Employees are advanced through the pay range based on annual satisfactory performance evaluation, with the “percentage” of their increase determined by their supervisors.

A Defined Increment Plan is recommended for the Town’s consideration.

Pay Philosophy

An important component in the process of developing a Compensation Plan is understanding and applying the pay philosophy of the Town. In Holliston, the Town subscribes to a pay philosophy of compensation employees at a rate at the 50th percentile.

Proposed Compensation Plan and Structure

Pay ranges have a 30% range spread from minimum to maximum. Table 1 combines all of the classification and compensation data at the 50th percentile. It has seven Grades and each Grade has 13 Defined Increments or Steps from minimum to maximum.

Implementation and Administration of the Compensation Plan

Implementation of the Compensation Plan, as it affects individual employees, should be under the following pattern of adjustments:

- 1) Employees whose present compensation is below the minimum compensation of the range for their classification should be raised to the minimum of the range.
- 2) The compensation of employees whose present compensation is within the range for their classification should be slotted into the new Compensation Plan at their current pay rate, to the closest Defined Increment or Step without losing compensation.
- 3) The compensation of employees whose present compensation is above the maximum compensation of the range should be held at their present rate, without a reduction in compensation, until such time that further market analysis indicates commensurate alignment with the marketplace. However, the Town can consider lump sum increases for these employees, which does not impact base compensation levels, until the ranges adjust to include the individual employee compensation rates.

In other studies, GovHR has been asked for ideas on how to address the situation of long-term employees whose current compensation falls near the bottom (within 5 - 10%) of the proposed range. If this occurs, it illustrates that the position has been compensated at less than the market rate for someone with similar tenure. Thus, some communities elect to make additional adjustments for those employees at implementation. This program is discretionary for the Town to adopt and only occurs one time, at the implementation of the new Classification and Compensation Plan. If the Town wishes to consider such a program, an example is illustrated below:

Service	Adjustment
1 - 3 Years	0%
Over 3 and up to 8 Years	1%
Over 8 and up to 15 Years	2%
Over 15 Years	3%

Future Administration of the Compensation Plan

To maintain competitive salary levels there should be an annual review of the Town's salary ranges. The thirteen (13) communities used in the survey group for this Study have been determined to be comparable jurisdictions to the Town. Therefore, Holliston can continue to use these jurisdictions as a comparable salary survey group for annual salary comparison purposes, until it is determined that they are no longer valid comparables. As mentioned earlier, the salary levels for these comparables are current as of February – March 2022. It is GovHR's recommendation that an annual survey of these communities be conducted to determine the percentage increase each organization in the comparable group is granting, either as an annual across-the-board increase to their employees or as a general adjustment to their compensation ranges. The Town may wish to provide an across-the-board increase to all employees based on the information received from the comparable communities. If this is the case, then the increases would be granted separately from any merit increase that would be awarded as a result of a successful performance evaluation.

It is the further recommendation of GovHR that the compensation ranges for each grade be increased by the average percentage increase of the comparable group, even if an across-the-board increase is not given to all employees. Employees would continue to advance through the compensation ranges (provided that the employee is not at the maximum of the compensation range) by virtue of a merit increase granted for satisfactory or above satisfactory performance of their job duties. Finally, it is recommended that the Town review the compatibility of the municipalities after five (5) years.

Appreciation

GovHR has appreciated the opportunity to work with the Town of Holliston on this Compensation Study. A special thank you to the Town Administration for the significant amount of work and support dedicated to the project.

**TOWN OF HOLLISTON
COMPREHENSIVE TABLE**

Table 1

Position Title	Current Grade	New Grade	Salary Survey Data 50th Percentile		Holliston Current Salary Range		Proposed Salary Range (50th)	
Head Dispatcher	400	700	\$ 25.84	\$ 32.70	\$ 24.62	\$ 30.35	\$ 29.50	\$ 38.35
Assistant Assessor	400	600	\$ 28.47	\$ 35.56	\$ 24.62	\$ 30.35	\$ 28.50	\$ 37.05
Assistant Building Inspector	400		\$ 29.98	\$ 36.94	\$ 25.11	\$ 30.96		
Assistant Library Director	500		\$ 34.01	\$ 43.49	\$ 26.71	\$ 32.94		
Assistant Recreation Director	400		\$ 29.74	\$ 39.18	\$ 24.62	\$ 30.35		
Assistant Senior Center Director	400				\$ 24.62	\$ 30.35		
Children's Librarian	500		\$ 27.31	\$ 33.35	\$ 26.71	\$ 32.94		
Community Therapist/Court Diversion Coord.	500				\$ 26.71	\$ 32.94		
Administrative Assessor	400	500					\$ 26.50	\$ 34.45
Assistant Collector	400				\$ 24.62	\$ 30.35		
Assistant Town Clerk	400		\$ 27.43	\$ 35.56	\$ 24.62	\$ 30.35		
Assistant Treasurer	400		\$ 28.94	\$ 37.44	\$ 24.62	\$ 30.35		
Dispatcher	200		\$ 21.73	\$ 27.11	\$ 20.74	\$ 25.56		
Head of Library Circulation	400		\$ 29.86	\$ 39.17	\$ 24.62	\$ 30.35		
Outreach Coordinator	400		\$ 23.94	\$ 30.74	\$ 24.62	\$ 30.35		
Reference Librarian	400				\$ 24.62	\$ 30.35		
Administrative Clerk	300	400					\$ 22.50	\$ 29.25
Assistant Clerk	200		\$ 20.49	\$ 25.76	\$ 20.74	\$ 25.56		
Library Cataloger	300				\$ 21.39	\$ 26.36		
Principal Clerk	300		\$ 23.13	\$ 29.48	\$ 21.39	\$ 26.36		
Principal Clerk - Payroll	300		\$ 23.15	\$ 31.21	\$ 21.39	\$ 26.36		
Tax Clerk (Principal Clerk - Collector)	300				\$ 21.39	\$ 26.36		
Program Coordinator	200	300			\$ 20.74	\$ 25.56	\$ 21.00	\$ 27.30
Custodian	100	200			\$ 17.47	\$ 21.55	\$ 19.50	\$ 25.35
Library Technician	100		\$ 19.24	\$ 23.83	\$ 17.47	\$ 21.55		

**TOWN OF HOLLISTON
COMPREHENSIVE TABLE**

Table 1

Position Title	Current Grade	New Grade	Salary Survey Data 50th Percentile		Holliston Current Salary Range		Proposed Salary Range (50th)	
Crossing Guard	100	100			\$ 17.47	\$ 21.55	\$ 18.00	\$ 23.40
Office Assistant								
Police Matron	100				\$ 17.47	\$ 21.55		
Van Driver	100		\$ 18.67	\$ 23.93	\$ 17.47	\$ 21.55		

**TOWN OF HOLLISTON
PROPOSED COMPENSATION PLAN**

Table 2

Compensation Plan Thirteen Steps - 30% Range													
Grade	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8	Step 9	Step 10	Step 11	Step 12	Step 13
100	\$ 18.00	\$ 18.41	\$ 18.84	\$ 19.27	\$ 19.71	\$ 20.17	\$ 20.63	\$ 21.11	\$ 21.59	\$ 22.09	\$ 22.60	\$ 23.12	\$ 23.65
200	\$ 19.50	\$ 19.95	\$ 20.41	\$ 20.88	\$ 21.36	\$ 21.85	\$ 22.35	\$ 22.86	\$ 23.39	\$ 23.93	\$ 24.48	\$ 25.04	\$ 25.62
300	\$ 21.00	\$ 21.48	\$ 21.98	\$ 22.48	\$ 23.00	\$ 23.53	\$ 24.07	\$ 24.62	\$ 25.19	\$ 25.77	\$ 26.36	\$ 26.97	\$ 27.59
400	\$ 22.50	\$ 23.02	\$ 23.55	\$ 24.09	\$ 24.64	\$ 25.21	\$ 25.79	\$ 26.38	\$ 26.99	\$ 27.61	\$ 28.24	\$ 28.89	\$ 29.56
500	\$ 26.50	\$ 27.11	\$ 27.73	\$ 28.37	\$ 29.02	\$ 29.69	\$ 30.37	\$ 31.07	\$ 31.79	\$ 32.52	\$ 33.27	\$ 34.03	\$ 34.81
600	\$ 28.50	\$ 29.16	\$ 29.83	\$ 30.51	\$ 31.21	\$ 31.93	\$ 32.67	\$ 33.42	\$ 34.19	\$ 34.97	\$ 35.78	\$ 36.60	\$ 37.44
700	\$ 29.50	\$ 30.18	\$ 30.87	\$ 31.58	\$ 32.31	\$ 33.05	\$ 33.81	\$ 34.59	\$ 35.39	\$ 36.20	\$ 37.03	\$ 37.88	\$ 38.76