

MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20, 2012 AT 7:30 P.M. IN ROOM
207, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present

Thomas Ruocco, Chairman; Sylvia Nichols and Peter Talbot.

Staff: Town Manager Michael A. Milone

Others Present: Registrars of Voters Aleta Looker and Susan Pappas, and
Deputy Registrar Ann Marie Hearn.

1. ROLL CALL

The clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined to be present.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

3. REGISTRARS OF VOTERS SALARY

Ms. Pappas stated that under State Statute, the salaries of the Registrars of Voters must be approved by the Town Council 120 days prior to election day, and that date is July 6, 2012. Ms. Pappas referred to a memo sent to the Town Council on June 6, 2012 which stated the request of the Registrars for a 5% increase in 2013 and a 3% increase in 2014. In 2011 the Registrars received a 1% salary increase and in 2012 received a 2% increase, which Ms. Pappas said was less than other Town employees.

Mr. Ruocco said he does not see an increase of 5% and 3% for the Registrars, but is willing to go with a 2% increase in each of the two years, 2013 and 2014.

According to Ms. Pappas the goal is to get the Registrars' salaries up to that of other non-union employees, which would be 5.25% over two years. The Registrars are not asking for more than other employees, but just want equality. She commented on the fact that the office had 6 staff members which was cut to 4 members, yet the work load continues to increase. Ms. Pappas noted that the Registrars have asked for more money in the department budget to hire additional people before the election in November in order to handle the work load.

Ms. Looker questioned whether the public realizes that the Registrars do not get any of the benefits of other Town employees.

With the 5% increase, Ms. Pappas said the monetary number is \$202. The Registrars work 18 hours a week, are part time employees, and during election time work more hours. Last year there was no election taking place so the office closed one day a week, but that will not happen this year.

Mr. Milone informed the committee that the Registrars salary is \$21,081.

With regard to comparing Cheshire's salary to other towns, Ms. Pappas said that Wallingford was the town used for best comparison by Councilor Schrumm. The Wallingford CT registrars are paid \$25,000 annually and receive an additional payment of \$1,000 for each election. The November election is included in the salary of the Cheshire Registrars, and they receive \$450 payment for each special election. Ms. Pappas said that the staff must attend training sessions, and meetings at least twice a year.

Mr. Milone stated that his recommendation is to use the benchmark for other non-union employees, which is budgeted at 2.25% annual increase, and this is now in the Registrars' budget. \$21,081 annual salary x 2.25% would be a gross salary of \$21,292 for each Registrar, split between two years.

It was clarified by Ms. Nichols that the Registrars are requesting more of an increase because their salaries are behind other employees from the prior two years, and they want to catch up.

Mr. Ruocco stated he does not believe in catch up salary increases.

Regarding the work load increase and the work getting done, Ms. Nichols asked about the impact on a daily work basis.

In response, Ms. Pappas said that on off times the work load can be handled, but at election time more people are needed to handle the work load.

Ms. Nichols commented on concerns about misunderstanding out in the public dealing with percentages, and people not understanding everything that goes into the decisions made. 5% seems to be a high increase, and she asked about a compromise between 2.25%/2.75% and the 5% request.

It was explained by Ms. Looker that the salary request is over two years and other employees go on a yearly basis, and 5% of the Registrars' salary is less than any other employee. For the payment for special elections, she said the law states there should be compensation but does not state the amount. In Cheshire it has been \$450 for many, many years.

Mr. Milone stated that the difference between 2.5% and 5% is \$318 over the course of the fiscal year for each Registrar, a total of \$636. This equates to a salary of \$21,608 for each Registrar per year.

A recommendation was made by Mr. Talbot that for the primary election on August 14, 2012, the Registrars receive an extra \$318 payment (plus the \$450), with a salary increase of 2.25% for each of the two years. This would make up the difference and is one time only stipend for the Registrars, and this would even up with the 5% request. The Registrars would then receive a 2.25% salary increase in each of the two years.

Mr. Talbot stated that the extra \$318 payment for the special election on August 14th would bring the Registrars salaries in line with other Town employee salary ranges.

Ms. Nichols agreed with Mr. Talbot's recommended extra payment which would give the Registrars a one time payment of \$768 for the special election.

There was a discussion on the percentage salary increase and whether it should be 2.25% or 2.5% in each of the two years.

With these percentages, Ms. Looker said the Registrars salaries would still be lower than other employees and there would still be lack of parity.

MOTION by Mr. Talbot; seconded by Ms. Nichols.

MOVED that the Personnel Committee enter Executive Session at 8:00 p.m. to include Town Manager Milone to discuss salary adjustments, past, current and future.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

MOTION by Mr. Talbot; seconded by Ms. Nichols.

MOVED that the Personnel Committee exit Executive Session at 8:12 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Following the executive session, Mr. Milone advised the committee that the correct amount of the extra payment would be \$316 (not \$318). With a one time stipend of \$316 plus the regular \$450 payment for special elections, the total payment would be \$766.

MOTION by Mr. Talbot; seconded by Ms. Nichols.

MOVED that the Personnel Committee recommendation is to increase the salary of the Registrars of Voters by 2.25% effective January 1, 2013, and by 2.25% effective January 1, 2014. And that the Registrars receive a one time stipend of \$766 for the primary election to be held on August 14, 2012. Thereafter, the stipend for a special election would return to the \$450 payment.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

4. NON-UNION PAY PLAN.

Mr. Milone explained to the committee that all of the bargaining unions have a pay plan, minimum and maximum and step levels, and the same is done with the

non-union pay plan. Until last year the pay plan had not been increased since 2008, and the Council requested justification for a change in the plan by way of a salary survey. This survey was conducted two years ago with a report to the Personnel Committee 12 months ago. 18 towns similar to Cheshire were asked to complete the survey; 12 responded; and a comparison was done on titles, job descriptions across classifications, job responsibilities, and salary ranges. As a result of this report from the salary survey, the Council's decision was to increase the maximum by 3% for E5, E3, E2, N4 and N2 positions. E4 and E1 and N1 positions did not receive new job classifications and pay ranges because they were comparable to the market. There was a wide range between some of the minimum and maximum and in some cases it was 6% to 8% increase in the minimum and 3% in the maximum levels.

Mr. Milone said we are now at the point where we want to continue to move the minimum and maximum by the value of the increase or there will be a situation where an employee cannot have a raise. In a case where no raise will be given, the employee would get an increase to the maximum and then the balance in a lump sum. People at the max in the union would get the value of their contract increase, but would not benefit from moving a step. The Town Council votes on the effect of the union contract, and does not look at the entire pay plan, and makes an adjustment of a 2.25% increase.

It was stated by Ms. Nichols that some jobs are not worth over a certain amount of compensation, and she asked how this is handled. She noted there are business perceptions of salaries being 30% of a company's expense.

Mr. Talbot asked how many people are affected in the non-union category.

On the non-union side there would be six (6) people affected out of 40 employees. At the Library there are about 20 non-union employees.

The committee briefly reviewed the pay plan for 2011-12 and 2012-13 pay plan with a 2.5% increase.

For the pay plan, Mr. Milone said there were some classification changes with no increase, and a 3% increase in some of the pay grades. His request to the Council this year is based on the results of the survey, and without movement in the minimum and maximum levels he has concerns about people falling behind other communities. Mr. Milone commented on the value of the person increasing over the years, their becoming more important, and as costs are cut, job efforts must increase. The people on the non-union list are those on whom the Town Manager relies.

It was stated by Mr. Ruocco that with increases in the minimum and maximum levels they are getting up there in compensation. He asked about the "35 hours and 40 hours" notation for the job classifications.

Mr. Milone explained that in some departments people work 35 hours and some work 40 hours, i.e. Parks and Rec and Public Works. He said that the union salaries are adjusted every year, and he does not want to mistreat non-union employees as this would not be fair and is something he would not support.

A question was posed by Ms. Nichols about someone getting a raise and then leaving their job.

Mr. Milone said that only one person has left, and last year the 3% raise alleviated the situation.

Chairman Ruocco stated that the committee would be reviewing the pay plan further with more discussion and decision to be made.

5. TOWN MANAGER'S FY 12-13 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Mr. Milone reviewed his FY 12-13 goals and objectives with the committee. He said that the goals have remained consistent for the last 6 or 7 years and they are the five most critical things which the Town Manager must address. The measurement criteria are cited to give the Council a sense of what to look at to judge and evaluate whether the goals are being met. In his evaluation with the Council he will review accomplishments in the goals.

Mr. Milone noted that the objectives and strategies in italics are new or enhanced.

I. Ensure continuing fiscal stability of Town operations.

The first four and part of #5 are new. The debt/bonding refunding will take place on June 21st. Fiscal sustainability includes pensions, medical benefits, OPEB and debt mitigation, and these are fixed costs and must be controlled. Debt mitigation is a planning strategy and the debt must be paid down.

Town/Board of Education joint services initiative – this takes place in some areas, and Mr. Milone said prequalification bidding procedure means hiring pre-qualified vendors, in advance, rather than hiring on an as needed basis, and providing a core contract process.

II. Continue to provide programs that support staff morale and enhance Effectiveness of staff to ensure highest level of customer service.

Mr. Milone advised that there are continued efforts to improve the service delivered and the way our customers are treated, and to meet the expectations of the people in the community.

For staff, there are programs to support high morale; webinars are conducted with staff, followed by a dialogue session; changing work rules and management prerogatives, and enhance services with contract changes.

III. Improve operational efficiency and effectiveness.

Mr. Milone cited “explore the development of a long-term planning process to create a document that will help ensure operational sustainability” as a major goal. In 2002-03 the Town had a five year Strategic Plan, but funding was not available to redo this plan. He said that “operational sustainability” goes across everything, and there is continuous change to meet the demands of customers. We must continue to evolve and function at a level to meet the needs of the community.

The committee was informed that next year department head goals and objectives will include operational sustainability. Department heads will identify things of importance to them which relate back to this goal. Mr. Milone wants to develop a document that identifies specific long term goals as a planning tool to meet what the community needs and wants and what is important to sustain us.

Complete the revision to our Emergency Storm Shelter Operation and Response Plan – Mr. Milone commented on the emergency storm operation and response of last year when there was a plan in place, but no one addressed what the Town faced with a 5 to 7 day need for sheltering people. He said there must be a plan based on what was learned last year. With a 7 day storm there are several things which must be instituted, and he will be meeting with the Fire Chief Casner, Police Chief Dryfe and Ms. Piccarello to establish such a plan. Mr. Milone commented on the need to establish a formalized relationship with the utility companies and their liaison to Cheshire.

Expand use of e-Commerce for various Town Departments – Mr. Milone advised that the Parks and Rec Department can now have credit card on-line registration for its programs. Other departments such as the Library will also have e-Commerce capabilities.

Modification of the labor contracts will impact the operation of all departments.

WPCA user fee study has been completed on consumption based user fees.

Another goal is formation of a Community Pool Competitive Swim Team under Ms. Adams.

IV. Evaluate and enhance communication efforts to enhance citizen Awareness of and involvement in Town government, and maintain high level of communication with all stakeholders.

Mr. Milone commented on the many services and programs offered to the people in the community. There is a plan to have department heads write a feature

article in The Cheshire Herald on department programs and services and initiatives. For example, the CAD/RMS system at the police department; the GIS system which the public can access through the Town's web site. Mr. Milone noted that some of the cable access channel programming is outdated, and the goal is to make improvements with the video group at the high school.

Mr. Talbot stated that at Cox Cable he has an engineer who could present ideas on what could be done on the access channel, and there is free money out there for this purpose. He suggested an "Ask the Manager" type program. Cox Cable is adding a video on demand feature for the government channel.

V. Continue or complete or advance key Town projects – Mr. Milone said this goal talks about taking projects to the next level of achievement.

Chairman Ruocco requested committee members to review the goals and objectives, and if they have any suggestions, additions, changes, deletions, they should be forwarded to Mr. Milone.

6. TOWN MANAGER'S PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The committee and Mr. Milone discussed the fact that the full Town Council should meet in a special meeting for this performance review. The tentative date is July 12th or July 13th, which will be confirmed by the Town Manager's office.

Before adjournment, Mr. Talbot asked Town Manager Milone to give the Council an update on the status of union negotiation. This will be an agenda item at the next Personnel Committee meeting.

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Talbot; seconded by Ms. Nichols.

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk