

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL PERSONNEL COMMITTEE AND SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 2015, AT 7:00 P.M. IN ROOM 207, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

Personnel Committee Chairman Thomas Ruocco; Committee Members Robert J. Oris and Peter Talbot. Council Members - Patti Flynn-Harris, Liz Linehan, James Sima. Absent: Tim Slocum, David Schrumm, Sylvia Nichols. Staff: Town Manager Michael A. Milone; Personnel Director Louis Zullo; Town Clerk Carolyn Soltis

**1. ROLL CALL**

The clerk called the roll. A quorum of the Personnel Committee was determined to be present.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

**3. TOWN CLERK'S SALARY**

Ms. Soltis distributed information to the Councilors regarding the position of Town Clerk per the Town Charter Sec. 2-4, and referred to a 2013 Personnel Committee meeting on setting the salary of the Town Clerk for two years. The salaries of elected officials must be set by the Council by July 6th, which is the 120th day before the November 3rd elections.

In the information submitted to the Council, Ms. Soltis referred to page 3, the CCM comparative salaries in the region for Town Clerks, Assessors and Tax Collectors, showing the average salaries and what Cheshire pays. She noted there is a big disparity between the salaries of the Town Clerk, Assessor and Tax Collector in Cheshire. A Connecticut Town Clerk Association Salary survey shows the comparable salaries (yellow) and same population areas (purple). There is data on Town Clerk offices, with some clerks having fewer years in service with more salary than Cheshire's Town Clerk.

Salary Increases for Town Clerk - Ms. Soltis cited the percentages for 2013, 2.3%; 2014, 2.3%; 2011, 2%; 2009, 0% first year and 3.5% year #2.

Mr. Ruocco asked for data on the average increase amongst department heads, i.e. 2.3%, higher or lower.

In response Mr. Milone said this year the average increase is about 2.5%, and there is a pool of money with everyone getting something based on their performance evaluation.

Town Clerk Soltis reviewed the department accomplishments over the past few years.

- land records are on line which is helpful for out of town attorneys and companies to get information on line
- department accepting electronic recordings
- office still processes documents
- images of online records on the computer, available back to 1993
- grant received annually for back scanning department documents
- staff reorganized the old vault documents; easier access for records
- document management consultant visited offices and found documents that could be destroyed.

In the Town Charter, Ms. Soltis noted that the salary of the Town Clerk is set for the position, not the person, and the information submitted shows what other towns pay for their Town Clerk position. She said the Town Clerk has a standing job description, but does not believe this was adopted by the Town Council. Ms. Soltis stated that State Statute speaks to the responsibilities of the Town Clerk.

Mr. Oris asked if there is comparable information on the size of the office and staff with similar sized towns as Cheshire.

This information can be taken from the Town Clerk web site, and Ms. Soltis can provide it to the Council. She said other offices have more staff, and some have fewer staff, and it depends on the town. The Cheshire office has 2 full time and 2 part time staff people.

It was stated by Mr. Ruocco that he has a hard time comparing the Town Clerk job to the Assessor and Tax Collector, as they are not elected positions. He is not disturbed by the Cheshire Town Clerk's salary compared to other towns. Mr. Ruocco commented on the possibility of inclusion of the Town Clerk's salary in the non-union pay plan.

The decision of the Council on the salary of the Town Clerk is for two years. Mr. Milone said the matter could be on the agenda of the June 16th Council meeting.

The Personnel Committee requested more information on the salary of the Town Clerk. Mr. Oris would be amenable to some modification of the salary. Mr. Talbot asked that information be included for towns like East Haven and Windsor.

According to Ms. Linehan changes made to the department were to make it run smoother, be more efficient, etc.

In that regard, Ms. Soltis said the work load is not decreased; things have been made easier for the customer, not for staff; there is the same amount of steps in the process, with a different way of processing. Ms. Soltis commented on the comparative data showing the size of Town Clerk departments, number of employees under the Town Clerk...Cheshire has 4 staff supervised by the Town Clerk. She noted the number of years of other Town Clerks in their jobs, with some fewer than her years of service.

Mr. Talbot said the number of years of the Town Clerk should not be considered because the compensation is being given to the position, not the person.

Ms. Soltis stated she is advocating for what everyone else gets, about 5%, but would be looking for a 3% increase in each of the two years.

#### **4 PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Mr. Zullo distributed proposed changes to the rules and regulations which were submitted by staff for consideration.

9-5 Sick Leave - current accrual is 150 days/1050 hours; the proposal is to accrue sick leave to a *maximum of 1260 hours/180 days*.

It was pointed out by Mr. Zullo that regardless of the amount of hours accrued for sick time, a person separating from town employment could only cash out 50 days. The benefit for the accumulation of sick days is for a long term illness. Sick days are paid at full pay. The Town does not provide long term disability insurance payments for employees, but some employees do pay for this insurance. The Town Hall union employees can accrue 175 sick days, but can only cash out 50 days upon separation. The Cheshire Police Department is at 150 sick day accrual, and bargained for payment for any days over the 150 sick days. This was approved to keep officers from abusing sick leave. For all bargaining units 150 days is the cap for sick leave.

Mr. Zullo advised that non-union staff supervise union staff who receive 175 sick days accumulation, and they are requesting the 180 sick days.

According to Mr. Milone the origin of the sick day proposal to 180 days is due to staff not having long term disability coverage. For this coverage there is a formula for premium payment, and it is about \$8 to \$16 per pay period. There are 19 people on the long term disability plan. He noted that the extra sick day accrual is not a cash cost program.

(Mr. Sima entered the meeting at 7:45 p.m.)

Mr. Oris stated that if people use the extra sick days there is a potential cost to the Town.

The Council was told by Mr. Zullo that Town staff does not abuse sick days.

In light of sick days having nothing to do with disability, Mr. Ruocco suggested the Council review having a long term disability policy available for staff, at no cost to the Town, and reopen the LTD plan for enrollment.

Mr. Milone stated staff would be receptive to a LTD plan, but he is uncertain of the costs involved.

There must be a look at the total package -- salary, benefits, retirement -- and Mr. Oris sees no reason to go to the 180 sick days. The Council should be looking at the entire package, and what is being proposed is extra days as long term care.

Without a LTD plan, Ms. Flynn-Harris would look at equality to the other unions, and look at the insurance plan as a program for non-union staff.

In that regard, Mr. Milone will look into reopening the LTF program, and provide information to the Council.

Under an LTD plan, Mr. Ruocco explained that an employee uses sick days first, and depending upon the plan, the disability payments start.

10-9 Membership Enrollment - the proposal is to increase the Town's reimbursement from \$250 to \$300, per year, for non-union staff membership in a private health club. Twenty five (25) employees take advantage of this reimbursement, and 6 are non-union employees. Other bargaining units get \$200 per year; CPD gets \$250, and \$400 per year if officers pass the Cooper Fitness Standard.

The Councilors discussed the proposed increase, and a decision was made for the reimbursement to remain at \$250.

Agenda item #6 was moved to current status on the agenda.

## **6. NON-UNION/LIBRARY NON-UNION PAY PLANS**

Updated information on the pay plans was distributed to the Councilors.

Mr. Milone reported that less than 2/3 of non-union staff (E and N classifications) are over 90% of maximum; there are people between 95% and 100% of maximum; there are 39 N and E employees; 7 are not represented because the position is vacant or they work less than 30 hours per week. Of the 32 people, 9 are above 95% of the pay range; 17 are above 90%; 7 or 8 positions are close enough to the max and would not receive a 2.5% salary increase.

Page 7 - percentage increases in pay scale ranges, FY 2010-2015. This page stratifies each pay classification, shows increase in the maximum since FY 2010.

Page 1 - Percentage of current salary to maximum includes: E-5 Personnel Director; E-3 Economic Development Coordinator; E-2 Revenue Collector; N-4 Deputy Town Treasurer, Assistant to Town Manager; N-3 Parks Foreman.

Page 7 - Mr. Milone commented on the areas of greater difference from FY 2012 to now. E-5 had 2.25%, 2.30%, 2.30% raises, 6 year total of 9.85%; E-3 had 3% in 2012, 6 year total of 9.85%, which would have been 11.5% with a 5% raise in 2012 using study recommendations; E-2 has a 2% to 4% swing, 6 year total of 9.85%; N-4 position

has increased by 2.55% since 2012; N-2 is +\$10.55%, would have been 14.55% to 17.55% with study recommendations.

The Council and staff discussed increasing the maximum each year. Mr. Milone noted that 5% of the employees are not unionized, and he is requesting that these people are treated the same way as people in bargaining unions. The Town Manager's recommendation is to increase the maximums by 3%. He said it is an equity issue; these people deserve to have their pay class increased; and these are the people who make the organization run.

Mr. Milone stated that the pay groups for the BOE administration range from \$112,145 to \$146,909. The Council was informed by Mr. Milone that he has a total of \$103,000 in funds to apply to salary adjustments, and he cannot spend more than \$103,000. If the maximum is increased by 2.5% or 3% no more than \$103,000 will be spent, and people will be rewarded based on their performance.

It was stated by Mr. Ruocco that he does not favor raising the minimum or mid levels this year.

The Council was informed by Mr. Milone that over the last 6 years the union maximums grew by 13.9% to 15.5%, while non-unions were at 7.55% on the low side and 10.55% on the high side. Union salaries are getting closer to the low of the non-union salaries.

Mr. Ruocco said there will always be issues regarding parity of union and non-union employees, and he would favor increasing the maximum levels.

It was noted by Mr. Talbot that union staff receive annual increases, not based on performance evaluation, and non-union staff receive raises based on performance.

Mr. Milone restated that it is unfair for non-union staff to not receive raises, and reiterated that they receive salary increases based on their performance evaluation.

Without a salary increase, non-union staff do not build their base for retirement benefits, and Mr. Oris said this is important for these people. He would support salary increases based on performance.

Mr. Zullo explained that "E" staff do not get overtime; CPD and PW staff get overtime which increases their base for retirement.

A comment was made by Mr. Sima about taking into account the next few years when pension numbers grow and grow, and the Town just funded more money into the pension plans. He said there must be a way to reconcile pension plans locally and in the country because towns cannot sustain these pensions. He stated that bonuses could be given for doing a good job.

The Council was reminded by Mr. Milone that the pension plan is closed for new hires; employees are contributing more to the plans; people are not retiring as early as before; and the gap is closing between mortality figures and pay out figures.

Ms. Flynn-Harris pointed out that the national trend is to work longer.

After the discussions, the Personnel Committee consensus was to raise the maximum bracket by 3%.

MOTION by Mr. Talbot; seconded by Mr. Oris.

MOVED that the Non-Union Pay Plans for "E and N" classifications be increased by 3% and the matter be moved to the full Town Council for approval.

VOTE            The motion passed unanimously by those present.

## **5. TOWN MANAGER'S PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

Mr. Milone read his memo of June 2, 2015 to the Council into the record.

Mr. Milone reviewed his goals and objectives and outcomes achieved for FY 14-15. He said the outcomes are the result of efforts, and indicate and identify the benefit derived. Financial sustainability is his highest priority. The Town received AAA ratings this year and this was a top goal of the Town Manager, and it creates benefits in many ways for the Town for many years. The ultimate benefit is lower interest rates. At meetings with credit agencies, Mr. Milone reported they look at commitment, continuity in management, demonstration of being able to carry through with commitments made. He had been working on the credit ratings for a long time, and it is something the Town is happy to achieve, surprised to achieve, and will take the AAA rating. When he next meets with the Council, there will be answers to things not achieved and why. It all comes down to priorities, things which were critical, and other things which could be deferred to a later time.

Ms. Flynn-Harris commented on the succession plan of the Town Manager and senior staff, with more information to be discussed with the Council.

According to Mr. Milone the succession policy is something to be universal amongst all departments. There must be an understanding for formalization of an organization wide succession plan, and it has been discussed at staff meetings. He said there are two different types of knowledge to insure are solidified...the basic policy regulations, formal procedure type things, and insure there are good policies and procedures in place. Where they are not in place, they will be advanced or those in place will be revised, knowing deadlines for certain things, policies for maintaining fund balance, debt service etc. He believes the Town is tight with these. Some of the new software will enable staff to archive many things. There is a good information base, good policy base, which must be expanded. The knowledge base must be transferred in some way. Mr. Milone and staff are working with Anthony Verrill for mechanisms to do this with use

of technology, such as video tapes of department heads over the course of the year talking through happenings, how they are handled, management issues, problems and working through them. It is not simply what a person knows or does not know; it is a culture created in the environment, with the hope it becomes sustainable.

Within any organization, Mr. Sima said people leave in chunks, and there could be many vacancies within a given year.

#### **7. TOWN MANAGER'S FY 14-15 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

At the last committee meeting there were some suggestions made for the Town Manager's Goals and Objectives. These included an employee survey and town resident survey. Mr. Milone did not make any changes to the document until all Council members were able to review it and make their suggestions and recommendations. He reviews his goals and objectives with department heads, and they draw their own goals and objectives from those of the Town Manager. The goals and objectives can be approved in July by the Council.

The Personnel Committee will meet again in June, prior to the 2nd Council meeting, with the Town Manager's Goals and Objectives and Performance Review as the only agenda items.

#### **8. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Mr. Talbot; seconded by Mr. Oris.

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

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Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk

