

Board of Selectmen
Special Meeting

March 2, 2018
2:00 P.M. Town Hall

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KENT TOWN CLERK

2018 MAR -6 P 8:33

BY *D. Brady*
TOWN CLERK

Present: Bruce Adams, Chris Garrity and Jeff Parkin.

Also present: Darlene Brady, Donna Hayes and Rob Hayes.

Mr. Adams called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Mr. Adams stated that this is the 5th budget meeting. He started by running through the summary (attached). Mr. Adams stated that he put the incorrect amount on the Town Clerk's request to raise her assistant's hourly rate. Mrs. Brady confirmed her assistant is currently making \$19.57, and she has requested to increase her hourly rate to \$21.16, as well as any increase given the treasurer's assistant.

Mr. Adams reported that he spoke with the five individuals who participate in the pension, as requested of him at the last meeting. He stated that all five were in consensus and agreed: yes in concept, but none of them would give a definitive yes without better information on the salary increase.

Mr. Adams reported the following few things to the list:

- Health Insurance - Mr. Adams stated that he spoke with Sam Herrick who has been looking into alternatives for insurance other than Aetna, which has proposed a 19.2% increase. Mr. Herrick and the broker have been looking at the State Partnership Plan. He stated that if "we" switched to that plan, there could be approximately a 30% savings. Mr. Adams confirmed that there is much to consider before a change of that magnitude is made.
- Kent Center School - Mr. Adams stated that it was in today's paper that they are going to offer a 2.7% salary increase to their non-certified staff.

Mr. Adams stated that he and Mr. Garrity met a few days ago to try to get things moving, and they came up with some thoughts and proposals. Mr. Garrity confirmed that it was not a consensus. Mr. Adams stated that the discussion regarding assistants was focused on trying to balance out inequities. Mr. Garrity stated that the goal is to raise all the assistants to an equitable level while realizing that there are some assistants currently at a higher level that "you" wouldn't get to right away. Mr. Adams stated that the Board of Selectmen is ready to compromise and the following is a proposal:

- Town Clerk's assistant increased from \$19.57 to \$21.16 per hour, to match the hourly rate the same assistant is making in the Treasurer's office, but the assistant would not get any additional increase in either department this year.
- Assessor's assistant and Tax Collector's assistant's (same person) hourly rate of \$21.32 and \$24.70 for an average of \$23.45. That would necessitate a decrease in one and a substantial increase in the other; that person would receive an overall 4% increase.

Mr. Garrity suggested taking each request individually and getting a consensus of the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Parkin would like to see the variances from department to department: the first two proposals are 5% and 4%. Mr. Adams stated that would happen, and the hope is that over 2-3 years all the assistants would be at the same hourly rate. He added that to put them all at the same hourly rate now would be expensive. Mr. Adams stated that his recommendation would be to wait until the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Tuesday, March 6, 2018 to vote on the approval of a budget. Mr. Garrity stated that there are requests in front of them and, in all fairness, he would prefer to take them separately and speak to the department heads. Mr. Garrity stated that there is also a request from the ZEO for her assistant. He asked if bringing the Land Use's assistant up the \$21.16, thereby making the Town Clerk, The Treasurer and the Land Use's assistants all equalized at \$21.16. Mr. Adams stated that increasing the Land Use's assistant to \$21.16 would increase her hourly rate by \$2.16 per hour, and he added that there would be no additional increase to that position this year. Mr. Garrity stated that the Land Use Clerk currently makes the following in her three departments: \$20.16, \$20.16 and \$22.15. Mrs. Hayes corrected him and stated those are the budgeted amounts from the prior clerk. She added that the current clerk makes \$19.00 per hour. Mrs. Brady asked if she respectfully could request a document be provided to all three of the selectmen that accurately represents each department's hourly rate and hours worked. She added that so when the conversation continues it could be based on accurate information. Mrs. Brady stated that she advised Mr. Adams that the information provided at last Friday's meeting was wrong and misleading. Mr. Garrity confirmed with Mrs. Hayes that the hourly rate on the budget request is incorrect. Therefore, he agrees that the Board of Selectmen should have a document that reflects the department, the hourly rate and the number hours worked, both weekly and yearly. The two department heads present expressed their concerns with the concept of equalizing all the assistants. Mrs. Hayes stated that the Board of Selectmen needs to equalize the rates for the right reason and not just not to have a battle next budget. Mr. Garrity stated that it is this Board of Selectmen's role to have a philosophy to try and get some understanding and parity. Mr. Adams asked why the two department heads present are opposed to the proposed equalizing of assistants. Mrs. Hayes stated that equalizing hourly rates to make future budgets easier is the wrong philosophy. That is not the philosophy in which her department operates; it is the philosophy in which the Board of Selectmen choose to operate. Mr. Garrity stated that he believes that this Board of Selectmen is trying to start to level the field, with these proposals and he would advocate, next year, to meet with each department and try to understand what they do and how they do it. Mr. Parkin stated that trying to give merit-based increases to assistants in the past was shot down because it was unfair. He would agree with going to a flat hourly rate within a couple of years. He added that merit-based raises do not work because it is all public record and that is what lead to the "issues" in Town Hall now.

The Board of Selectmen agreed to put the salary requests aside until they get additional information. Mr. Garrity suggested going back to Mr. Adams' list:

- Health insurance was next on the list. Mr. Adams stated that he provided an overview earlier and much could be saved with a potential change. Mr. Garrity stated "we" need to move forward, so "we" should put the Aetna increased number in the budget and do due diligence to get that number changed.
- Paramedic is a contractual obligation. Mr. Adams stated Kent is in the third year of a three-year contract. He added the increased number is in the budget.
- Police, Mr. Adams stated, also contractual. He added the Town still pays 85% of the fee; also over half is paid for by donations from the private schools and Highwatch.
- LCD, Mr. Adams confirmed, also contractual.
- Litigation has been increased from \$5,000 to \$30,000, confirmed by Mr. Adams.
- Land Use Copier was agreed upon at a prior Board of Selectmen's meeting.
- Civil Prep reflects a small increase primarily for radios, confirmed by Mr. Adams.
- Highway Equipment Repair line, Mr. Adams stated that Rick doesn't ask for something he doesn't need. Mr. Garrity confirmed this was agreed upon at a prior meeting, as well. Mr. Adams stated that the highway department used to have a full-time mechanic; now the mechanic is the foreman.
- Grease trap at Community House, Mr. Garrity stated, also agreed upon at prior meeting.
- Pension, Mr. Parkin said that "Mr. Garrity got overly wrapped around his underwear about compensation package." He does not feel that there is a need to broaden it to that analysis. Mr. Parkin would advocate keeping the percentage of the pension at 5%. Mr. Adams suggested that a compromise might be to increase the pension contribution 6.5%, half of the requested amount. Mr. Parkin stated that the contribution to pension increases as the salaries increase. He does not see a need to change the percentage. Mr. Adams stated for discussion purposes, he would agree to no increase in the pension percentage.

Mr. Adams stated that the follow non-assistant salary requests that could be looked at:

- Treasurer's request for the second half, \$2,500, of the \$5,000 request made in 2015. Mr. Adams stated that he would advocate for the increase for three reasons:
 - Personally work with her a lot and always gets quite extremely professional, well laid out responses.
 - Badly unpaid according to the COG salary survey.
 - The auditor gave the treasurer high praise for her efforts in preparing for the audit and presenting anything the auditor needed.

Mr. Garrity stated that he is still at the same juncture. He has worked with the treasurer while she cleaned up from the prior treasurer, she presents well and accurate information, she works well with the Board of Finance. Mr. Garrity stated, that being said, it is hard for him as the new person to understand the history of her asking for more money and more money. All he has to go on is his gut, and he does not want to make a decision based on

his gut and, if he went on his gut, almost everyone in Town Hall would get a raise. He added everyone is working really hard. Mr. Garrity asked for help, saying he was having a difficult time valuing her, the treasurer, over everyone else. He clarified by stating in the context of her performance. Mr. Parkin stated that he believes that Mr. Adams is giving the treasurer a review. Mr. Adams stated that he has said it before; he does not feel qualified to give departments in Town Hall reviews. However, that is one department he feels he could give a fairly accurate review particularly because it is located right down the hall from his office and because it is an office he deals with on a regular basis. Mr. Garrity stated that that rationale made him more uneasy. He said it fosters that sense of, I work with this department but not this department, and that is not a good practice. Mr. Garrity stated that this is going to be a consistent argument from him on the following departments request: Transfer Station, Treasurer and Social Services. He will be looking to the two other Selectmen to help him over the hump, and they establish, well before the next go around, rules to help the department better themselves, better us and we can feel confident to stand up in front of the town and say this department/person did this and this department/person did that and that is why we gave him/her an increase. Mr. Adams stated that he agrees with some of what Mr. Garrity said. He feels he knows that department (treasurer) well. He feels he knows his department (Selectman's office) pretty well. But, he stated again, he does not feel comfortable performing evaluations. He does not feel qualified. Mr. Parkin stated that he would like to revisit his concept of "per capita" theory for the treasurer's request. Mr. Garrity clarified that Mr. Adams is basing his approval of the treasurer's request on the salary survey, because you cannot base it in the proximity of the offices or the opinion of the auditor. Mr. Garrity added he does not want other departments walking away saying, "there they go again. Mr. Garrity stated then you have to go down the COG salary survey and adjust all the salaries affected. Mr. Adams stated that is what was already done.

Mr. Garrity stated that if they are going to use COG, then it needs to be used across the board. Mr. Adams confirmed that he would use it for any request. He added that the Land Use Administrator used it in her request. Mr. Parkin stated that COG is a little "squirrely", not all towns are the same size.

- Social Services Director is requesting an additional two hours per week, going from 27 to 29 hours per week. All three Selectmen were in general agreement with the request.
- Highway Foreman compensated for additional overtime hours in addition to the 300 hours of overtime calculated in his salary. It has been documented for the past five years that he has consistently worked over 500 hours of overtime. Mr. Adams proposed a compromise of 100 additional hours. Mr. Garrity does not deny that the foreman is working the additional hours. He stated that the

- foreman negotiated a salary rate which included a set number of overtime hours, and now it seems a little late in the game to come to this board and request additional hours. Mr. Parkin asked for the foreman's current salary and what percentage of an increase that would give him.
- Transfer Station Employees requested salary increases. Mr. Adams provided an over view of the staff and the hours they work at the transfer station. Mr. Hayes corrected him and stated that he and Mr. Kaminski work 16 hours and Mr. Peatfield works Sunday afternoons, approximately 3 or 4 hours per week. Mr. Hayes added that there used to be one more employee, he was a volunteer, but there used to be four workers at the Transfer Station. Mr. Hayes stated that in August or September, Mr. Adams stated that it was his oversight, and Mr. Hayes should have gotten an increase and he would like to bring him up to the same rate as Mr. Kaminski. Mr. Hayes added that he has stepped up to the plate and wants his increase. Mr. Adams stated that he would get a raise. Mr. Hayes asked if it would be the increase that they talked about. Mr. Adams stated that it is not his decision. Mr. Hayes reminded Mr. Adams that he is his manager and he should fight for him. Mr. Adams stated that he would like to discuss the matter with Mr. Hayes privately. Mr. Garrity requested the revenue for the Transfer Station. Mr. Garrity stated that paying Mr. Hayes \$13.11 per hour, he can not believes that he is still working.
- Land Use Administrator requested a 5% salary increase. Mrs. Hayes stated that the COG salary survey was based on a 30-hour work week. She stated that she was hired to work 30–35 hours per week, but she has been working 38 hours per week on average. Mr. Garrity asked if the job has gotten bigger? Mrs. Hayes confirmed that, in fact, it has. She added that she oversees the Building Department, the prior LUA did not, which makes the department down half a person. She also added that she does a lot more legal research now and attends two additional meetings a month and has the office open five days a week. The Board of Selectmen suggested that Mrs. Hayes review the job description and make any necessary changes, especially the hours worked. Mr. Garrity stated that the Board of Selectmen are in agreement with the request.

The Board of Selectmen recapped the meeting as follows:

- Mr. Parkin will review his "per capita" worksheet for the Treasurer and the Town Clerk.
- Avail the Highway Foreman the opportunity to discuss his request for additional overtime hours.
- Pension contribution will remain at 5%.
- Discuss 2% cost of living increase and not automatic 3% across the board.
- Revisit the clerk/assistant salaries.
- Review the ZEO's job description with highlighted responsibilities that are new within the past two years.
- The Board of Selectman agreed on the Social Services Director and the ZEO's requests.

- The Board of Selectmen agreed on the Park and Rec's request.
- Requests still opened: Treasurer, Assistants, Highway Foreman and Transfer Station.

Mr. Garrity stated that he would repeat that he does not think "we" should do anything until next year with respect to salaries, until the Board of Selectmen sit down with the employee and board and/or commission that person reports to and understand what their job description is, understand why their job descriptions have changed and altered and what "we" are going to do with respect to compensation.

Mr. Garrity made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:34 p.m. Mr. Parkin seconded the motion and the motion carried.


Joyce Kearns
Administrative Assistant

These are draft minutes and the Board of Selectmen at the subsequent meeting may make corrections. Please refer to subsequent meeting minutes for possible corrections and approval of these minutes.

2017-18 BOS Budget				
increase as of today= \$191,911				
One mil = \$590,000				
uses over \$1,000. Those we have no control over highlighted in yellow				
Health Insurance	\$52,793	No control over increase		
		but other actions we could take.		
8% to Pension	\$8,750			
Land Use copier	6,000			
Litigation	\$30,000			
Paramedic	\$6,680			
Police	\$5,888			
LCD	\$1,554			
Civil Prep	\$1,210			
Highway equip. repair	\$10,000			
CH repairs	\$4,800			
Salary/hours requests	\$33,850			
	\$161,525			
	66,915			
	\$94,610	We can control		
Breakdown of # 11 in list above				
A.	Town clerk requests her assistant be paid = to pay in Trasurers office			
	\$19.57 to \$22.15	No budget impact		
B.	Assessor requests to combine Asst assessor & Assessor asst into			
	Asst Assessor . \$21.32 to \$24.70 No budget impact			

B.	LUA requests 5% increase for herself and assistant	
	ZEO= \$27.69 to \$29.22	Budget impact = + \$2,749
	Clerk= \$19 hr to \$19.95 hr	Budget impact = + \$1,981
C.	Treasurer requests \$2,500 raise. This is the other half of a request made in 2015	
		Budget impact = + \$2,500
D	Social services Director request an increase in hours from 27 to 29 at \$28.98 hr	
		Budget impact = +\$3,014
E.	P&R Director proposes a slight increase to seasonal employees	
		Budget impact= +107
F.	Highway foreman asks to be compensated for additional OT	
	Request is for an additional 200hrs	Budget impact= +8826
G.	Transfer station employees request a pay increase	
	Employee 1 & 2 both earn \$13.11 hr.	
	Request increase to \$16.95 for one and \$15 for the other.	
		Budget impact= + \$14,780
	Breakdown of # 2 in list above	
A.	5 employees receive a town pension. Town presently contributes 5%	
	Request is for 8%	Budget impact = + \$ 8750
Question about less in salary for more in pension		
	Met with all 5 pensioned employees. Consensus was yes in concept but none would give a definitive YES without a better idea of what will be done to salaries	

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BY *S. Bracy*
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