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By Darlene Brady at 2:59 pm, Mar 14, 2022



Board of Selectmen
Special Meeting

March 8, 2022
3:00 P.M.

The minutes reflect motions and a summary of the discussion. Refer to the attached link for the recording of this meeting.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2KyS6_1e50

Present: Jean Speck, Rufus deRham and Glenn Sanchez.

Also, present: Darlene Brady, Melissa Cherniske, Debbie Devaux, Jen Dubray, Lynn Harrington, Donna Hayes, Barbara Herbst, Ed Matson, Rick Osborne and Lynn Worthington.

Call to order:

Jean Speck called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

Budget:

Jean Speck:

- I just want to have a quick discussion with the two of you.
- I have had a day filled with curveballs and a couple of little urgencies.
- So, I am not I'm not feeling like I'm really going to be ready to move on the budget.
- I just wanted to say that from the get go we'll get through, as much of it as we possibly can.
- I'll be getting in touch after the meeting with Nancy about asking her for an extra few days for before we pitch to the BoF.

Chore Service:

Jean Speck:

- Additional information that the executive director sent us.
- Level number of clients.
- The client contributions were a steady incline.
- The grant that they receive was sort of up and down.
- I think 2020 is an anomaly.
- They are serving a lot of a lot of people.
- The client contributions have gone down considerably.
- Social services is sort of an indicator I think of people needing assistance and social services has been throughout the pandemic, incredibly busy.

- This is, you know one facet of that assistance that.

Budget:

Rufus deRham:

- Proposed 6% across the board.
- I don't think that's enough.
- I think that with the couple of hires that we've made where we've had to raise salaries to get people that we want in positions is an indication that Kent has kind of lagged behind.
- We would have to look at some of the individual ones that maybe didn't ask for 6%.
- After we decide, but I really believe that we should go with an 8% increase across the board.
- I think, in my mind, there are certain areas where we are going to need to cut unreasonable requests and I think we'd end up basically, where we are.
- You know cost of living every year is one thing.
- I tend to agree that these folks have come to work every day through two tough years.
- I think that this is a year, where we maybe say okay you've done a great job and we want you to keep working for the Town of Kent and let's give you a little bump.
- That's where I think we should be at I think we should go with an 8% increase.

Glenn Sanchez:

- I'm going to give a little a little presentation of numbers.
- I'm looking at every Kent budget for the last 15 years.
- Seeing how many across the board increase salary increases the that were what they
- It's been a low of 2%, last year was to a high of 3.6%
- I tried to relate that with Cola.
- I looked up a bunch of Cola numbers, went on social security.gov and looked up all the numbers.
- In the last 30 years Cola was seven times a 3.0 or above.
- In the last 15 years, it's been three times for three years, above 3.0%.
- In 2011 Cola was 3.6% and then of course this year with inflation.
- I wanted to see a precedent, just to see what this town has done has done in the past, regarding salaries.
- Without question, the town has responded to Cola.
- Three times in the last 15 years, Cola was 0.0 actually didn't go up at all.
- When Cola was 5.8 %, similar to today, the increase was 3.6%
- When Cola was up 3.6 salaries went up 3.5%.
- They went back up again and then, for the seven years after that it went to 2.5% and then 3.0% for six straight years.

- It seems like this town has responded to cola when that has gone up and those have been the numbers.

Rufus deRham:

- You said there was years where cost of living increase went up 5.6% or something, and raises were 3%.
- That puts the Kent workers behind.
- And then, even when you match Cola and all the ensuing years they're still behind.
- Because you didn't give them that cost of living increase back in 2007 or 2008 or whatever it was.
- I've been trying to do some research to other salaries and different towns and we're a little bit lower.
- I feel that we should be cognizant of the fact that we have kind of looked at the appointment of the Park and Rec Director, you know we couldn't get a good candidate unless we bumped up the salary.
- I really feel that that is fair to all the people who have been working.
- I have heard what they've been saying.
- I think some of the individual departments that have come to us looking for increased hours or whatever, they are looking at different ways of getting an increase to compensate for what they feel has been the town, not necessarily keeping up over the over the years.
- We need to look at that the reasons why those departments came in whether it's more hours or more people.
- It's time for Kent to catch up and even the playing field.
- If you shortchange somebody on cost-of-living increase in year one, and then you sort of match Cola for the next couple of years, they're still behind.

Glenn Sanchez:

- You know a lot of salary increases generally are 2% to 3.5% generally.
- Most years there are some cases where across the board salary increases.
- 8% would be large.
- I don't I don't think I saw anything like that.
- Certainly, that hasn't happened in Kent.

Rufus deRham:

- Maybe not but maybe this is the year and it's not look at this as a one-shot deal.
- I don't think that because you do it this year, you have to do it next year or the following year I just.
- There's a lot of people who have come for one reason or another, to try to increase their salary lines.

- There's a little bit of unrest in the town as to whether or not the present salaries are adequate.
- I just think it would be prudent use of money.
- To go back into the pockets of the people who work so hard for the town.
- Most of which will be spent in town.

Jean Speck:

- We would have to talk to the Union.
- I don't know how that works if we're going to give some employees a different increase than the Unionized employees.

Rufus deRham:

- That was their contract.

Jean Speck:

- I am concerned, it's a big jump as far as a percentage.
- It's probably unprecedented.
- I don't want to put Barbara on the spot, but I think it's an unprecedented increase.
- There was the Management Review, where the purpose was to understand better where everybody salaries were and do some equalizing by correcting corrective action as far as bringing people up to what a comparable position would be.
- I also have concerns about the disparity with the Union.
- I know that they put more into their pension but I just have some concerns.
- One of the things that we haven't really talked about is some sort of performance measures within departments, so that you can give those.
- Meeting the performance goals that the department and the board would set for that department during the beginning of the year, beginning of the fiscal year.
- Probably should be talked about, as we move along not for today.

Glenn Sanchez:

- Based on the numbers, I told you, based on the history of this town, I was more than comfortable with going to 3.5 %.
- I mean we've done it before.
- Looking at other towns and looking at some other across the board increases I've seen a few 4% and I'm willing to do that too.
- Social Services, making it full time I was willing to go to for doing something we haven't done before in 15 years.
- 8% for me is a lot.
- I am nervous, I hear exactly what you're saying, I hear the folks in town hall, and I do, I do want to close that gap between what we've done with two other departments and what they're asking for.
- But above 4% is big for this town.

Rufus deRham:

- Right now, you're saying you going to go less than Cola.
- You're putting them in a worse position.
- You're not even giving them the cost-of-living and to me that's unacceptable.
- I know other towns are doing different things, but that doesn't mean we do that.

Jean Speck:

- Maybe we think about a bonus.
- I think Cornwall did give their employees last year, a bonus.
- That was a one-time bonus.
- Maybe that's just a different way to think about it.
- I know for essential employees there's a benefit with premium pay.
- That's an eligible bucket under the ARPA.
- Give a flat rate and then giving a one-time bonus.

Town Hall lost power at 3:43 p.m. Two of the board members lost connection in the Zoom meeting.

Glenn Sanchez moved to another location and rejoined the meeting.

Jean Speck rejoined the meeting via Joyce Kearns' zoom link on her telephone and made the following motion:

I will make a motion to adjourn the meeting due to a power failure in town.

Glenn Sanchez:

- So, we can't decide on the next time we meet right now we're just the journey.

Jean Speck:

- Under F.O.I. we shouldn't.
- We should close the meeting.

Melissa Cherniske:

- The powers back on Donna says.

Rufus deRham:

- This is very disappointing.

Donna Hayes:

- I'm at home, and we have power now.

Jean Speck:

- I'm sitting on the side of the road right at my driveway.
- Both Glenn and I are available on Monday, the 14th let's start early and we'll go into we're done.

- Can we please adjourn the meeting, so that we can do this, proper legal way?
- Joyce will send out an email to the three of us all schedule another meeting.

Glenn Sanchez seconded the motion.

Jean Speck:

- Again, this is all out of our control and we're just trying to do the right thing.
- I can't see anybody showing you to hand.
- Glenn and Rufus, I need to hear your vote.

Jean Speck and Glenn Sanchez voted yes. Rufus deRham voted no. The meeting was adjourned.

Joyce Kearns

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.