

Board of Selectmen
Special Meeting

January 29, 2019
11:00 A.M. Town Hall

Present: Bruce Adams, Chris Garrity and Jeff Parkin.

Also present: Patty Braislin, Darlene Brady, Karen Chase, Debbie Devaux, Jennifer Dubray, Jan Gadiel, James Hurlbut, Joe Manley and Stan MacMillan.

Mr. Adams called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

Mr. Adams stated that there would be seven possible Executive Sessions, one with each of the following Department Heads:

Tax Collector
Assessor
ROV - Republican
ROV - Democrat
Town Clerk
Building Inspector
Fire Marshal

Mr. Adams made a motion to go into Executive Session with Tax Collector Debbie Devaux to discuss her salary and performance. Mr. Garrity seconded the motion. Ms. Devaux stated that as a public official she declined Executive Session. The Tax Collector's Assistant Jennifer Dubray also declined Executive Session. Mr. Adams withdrew his motion, and Mr. Parkin withdrew his second to the motion. Mr. Adams explained that this meeting is not a budget meeting but to talk about salaries and performances. Mr. Adams read the following paragraph on page 4 of the Management Review, which talks specifically about the Tax Collector:

Based on comparability data, which principally involved the most recent NWCOG salary comparisons and previous CCM study, most Town positions appear to be in line with the salary surveys and comparability data examined. Such positions include: First Selectman, Treasurer, Assessor, Tax Collector, Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, Parks and Rec Director, Registrar of Voters, Transfer Station Manager (recommend title of Coordinator) and Transfer Station Assistant (recommend title of Attendant).

Mr. Adams stated that one of the exceptions discussed in the Management Review is the Tax Collector, and he read the following paragraph from page 4:

In at least one instance, it was difficult to assess how much the individual is actually earning. A case in point is the Tax Collector. When comparing salaries to comparable towns the position appears to be in line. However, when one begins to look at the salary from an hourly rate perspective the data becomes skewed. To illustrate, if the employee is only working 18 hours as represented in the spreadsheet, then her hourly rate is \$41.11 which exceeds comparable towns. If you go by the posted hours and use 24 hours as a basis for determining the hourly rate, then the salary appears to be in line as the hourly would be \$30.83. This needs to be addressed both from a wage standpoint and as a matter of policy.

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BY *D. Brady*
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Mr. Adams stated that the Board of Selectmen has discussed and resolved the "assistant" issue. Mrs. Dubray stated that the Assessor Assistant position was discussed and resolved but not the Tax Collector Assistant. Ms. Devaux stated that she has never worked on an hourly rate. Mr. Adams confirmed that the salary review was converted to an hourly rate for basis of comparison. Ms. Devaux pointed out that her total compensation is her salary only. She added that she does not get health insurance, 5% pension, life insurance or any paid days. Mr. Adams stated that she is receiving the same salary working three days a week as she was making when she was working four days a week. Ms. Devaux stated that she was able to reduce her hours because she put a lot of things on line, so she does not need to sit in an office for people to get information. She added that she was able to reduce her hours because she became more efficient. The collection rate is up, and the office hours are down. Ms. Dubray stated that Ms. Devaux works longer than a six-hour day and comes in when the office is not open to get work done. Ms. Devaux believes the whole building should work on a part-time basis, and she should be an example for the entire building. Mr. Parkin stated that no one is suggesting reducing the Tax Collector's salary, and he would fight against anyone suggesting such. He asked how many hours does it take to run the Tax Collector office? Ms. Devaux did not answer the question. Mr. Adams expressed his concern with the office not being manned for Thursday and Friday. Ms. Dubray stated that is because her hours were cut. Ms. Devaux stated the law of average would cover the few complaints that her office receives. Ms. Devaux asked if, in the 2019-2020 budget, there would be two different pay rates for the elected officials, one for the current incumbent and a lower one for a new incumbent? Mr. Parkin stated that that concept follows the "range" system they would like to implement but not the focus. Ms. Devaux stated that she believes that the salary should be based on experience. Mr. Adams asked how to explain to the taxpayer that the Tax Collector's office is now closed Thursday and Friday, and yet the Tax Collector is still making the same salary. Ms. Devaux stated that the office is always open during collection time and the same could be said about the Town Clerk's Office. She added that that office is now closed on Friday afternoons, too. Mr. Garrity asked specifically how many hours does it take to do the job. Ms. Devaux talked about other towns, and her office being efficient but stated 9-5. Mrs. Dubray said Ms. Devaux works 7 hours a day so 28 hours but added that Ms. Devaux works 21 hours and she works 10 hours per week. Ms. Devaux said that the BOS needs to look at total compensation. Mr. Garrity stated that is not his priority. The Board of Selectmen talked about succession of the positions in the office. Ms. Devaux stated that the Tax Collector's Association defines the job.

Ms. Devaux asked what information would be required to discuss Ms. Dubray's salary as she feels she should get an increase. Ms. Devaux added that no one ever asked her about her assistant's salary. Mr. Garrity stated that the BOS had addressed the following three office assistants: Assessor, Treasurer and Town Clerk. Ms. Devaux stated that Ms. Dubray should get an increase as she is doing the job beyond expectations. Mr. Garrity stated that the BOS took several assistant positions that were "clearly" out of whack and brought them to a level playing field. If the request is to say that the performance in 2018 was above standard and you are requesting an increase for 2019, this is not the time. The time is during the budget meetings. Mr. Garrity stated

that the department head should document to prove how the employee is above and beyond. He added that the review should reflect several components: dollars saved and customer service reliability.

Ms. Devaux left the meeting. Ms. Dubray stayed. Mr. Adams welcomed Assessor Patty Braislin and Assistant Assessor James Hurlbut to the meeting. He asked if Mrs. Braislin would like to go into Executive Session, and she declined. Mr. Adams stated that the Assessor's Office was not one that was specifically mentioned in the Management Review but he did read the following paragraph from the review:

Based on comparability data, which principally involved the most recent NWCOG salary comparisons and previous CCM study, most Town positions appear to be in line with the salary surveys and comparability data examined. Such positions include: First Selectman, Treasurer, Assessor, Tax Collector, Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, Parks and Rec Director, Registrar of Voters, Transfer Station Manager (recommend title of Coordinator) and Transfer Station Assistant (recommend title of Attendant).

Mrs. Braislin stated that their office is running smooth, they stay on budget, they want to be paid fairly, and she loves the people she works with and they do a decent job. Mrs. Braislin stated that lots of work comes out of her office: upgrade in software, which is part of the reval funds, tax maps, cards will be the same in the office and online. Mr. Hurlbut saved money by doing some of the reval work in-house. He added some of the savings might be used to upgrade monitors, and the software upgrade will be compatible with the server. There was discussion regarding software that would make the building department compatible with the assessor's office. Mr. Hurlbut confirmed that the current system of receiving a monthly report works fine for a town of this size. Mrs. Braislin suggested that three departments that run the Town - finance, land use and administration and one selectman - meet three times a year at a luncheon to round table.

Mr. Parkin stated that through the whole process of the Management Review meetings, he learned that all departments run really well. Mr. Garrity agreed, very well.

Mrs. Braislin stated that she had the grand list and was going to provide copies to the BOS, but decided this meeting was not the right place to do so. Mrs. Braislin, Mr. Hurlbut and Ms. Dubray left the meeting.

Mr. Adams welcomed Registrar of Voter Jan Gadiel to the meeting. He asked if she would like to have her meeting in Executive Session. Mrs. Gadiel declined. Mr. Adams read the following paragraph from the Management Review:

Based on comparability data, which principally involved the most recent NWCOG salary comparisons and previous CCM study, most Town positions appear to be in line with the salary surveys and comparability data examined. Such positions include: First Selectman, Treasurer, Assessor, Tax Collector, Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, Parks and Rec Director, Registrar of Voters, Transfer Station Manager (recommend title of Coordinator) and Transfer Station Assistant (recommend title of Attendant).

Mrs. Gadiel stated that she is comfortable with the current three hours per week. She stated that some weeks she could use more hours, and some weeks three hours is more than enough. Mrs. Gadiel is concerned about the budget as it relates to the replacement of the voting machines. She also expressed some concerns with regards to IT issues between the State system and the Town system. Mr. Adams asked that she write down her IT concerns and give them to him to be resolved. Mrs. Gadiel stated that Maureen Brady is her new deputy and will be covering the office for three weeks when she is out of the country. Mrs. Gadiel left the meeting.

Mr. Adams welcomed Town Clerk Darlene Brady to the meeting. Mr. Adams made a motion to move into Executive Session with Town Clerk Darlene Brady to discuss her salary and job performance at 12:23 p.m. Mr. Parkin seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Mr. Adams made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 1:47 p.m. Mr. Parkin seconded the motion and the motion carried. No action taken.

Mr. Adams made a motion to move into Executive Session with Registrar of Voter Karen Chase to discuss her salary and job performance at 1:48 p.m. Mr. Garrity seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Mr. Adams made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 2:00p.m. Mr. Parkin seconded the motion and the motion carried. No action taken.

Mr. Adams made a motion to adjourn the meeting to reconvene around 3:00 p.m. Mr. Garrity seconded the motion and the motion carried. Mr. Adams noted that Mr. Parkin did not return to the meeting.

Mr. Adams made a motion to reconvene the meeting at 3:04 p.m. Mr. Garrity seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Mr. Adams made a motion to move into Executive Session with Building Inspector Joe Manley to discuss his salary and job performance at 3:05 p.m. Mr. Garrity seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Mr. Adams made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 4:00 p.m. Mr. Garrity seconded the motion and the motion carried. No action taken.

Mr. Adams made a motion to move into Executive Session with Fire Marshal Stan MacMillan to discuss his salary and job performance at 4:01 p.m. Mr. Garrity seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Mr. Adams made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 4:11 p.m. Mr. Garrity seconded the motion and the motion carried. No action taken.

Mr. Parkin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:12 p.m. Mr. Garrity 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.

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