

**CHARLOTTE SELECTBOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
TOWN HALL
AUGUST 3, 2015**

APPROVED

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS: Lane Morrison, Chair; Fritz Tegatz, Carrie Spear, Jacob Spell, Matthew Krasnow.

OTHERS: Peter Trono, Moe Harvey, Ellie Russell, Christian Booher, Mary Mead, Janet Morrison, Dorrice Hammer, Vince Crockenberg, Martha Perkins, Charles Russell, Cheryl Sloan, Charles Pughe, David Miskell, Beth Merritt, Robert Mack, Matt Keller, Charlotte Citizen; John Hammer, Charlotte News, and others.

ITEMS TAKEN UP:

- **Salary Administration Policy – discussion only**

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Morrison, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

SALARY ADMINISTRATION POLICY – discussion only

Mr. Morrison reviewed rules for a question/comment procedure related to a discussion of the Salary Administration Policy, and briefly summarized the January 12, 2015 approved policy, the Palmer Survey, Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) State Municipal Compensation Report, a process utilized to evaluate Charlotte Town employee job descriptions, and a job evaluation grid developed from gathered data. The goal was to evaluate jobs, not people or tasks, to develop equity among all Town employees. Each job was rated using a 14 point guide. Regarding the job evaluation grid, it was discovered that some employees had been underpaid and were given raises, some employees only received a cost of living increase, and new hires fell under an adjusted scale. Not all employees were satisfied with the results. As per the New England region CPI the national cost of living increase was zero this year. Town employees will undergo a self evaluation review this month, stressed Mr. Morrison.

Mr. Morrison opened the floor for Selectboard comments/questions.

Mr. Tegatz explained that Charlotte Town salaries were based on job descriptions, not what other towns paid due to many job variables found from town to town.

Ms. Spear noted that Ms. Mead had questions regarding her pay and should have the time to bring those issues forward for resolution. The Town only started to hear she was unhappy 4-5 years ago. All sides should be heard so the Selectboard can evaluate the process, said Ms. Spear.

Mr. Krasnow pointed out that the salary policy was new. It was created to clarify expectations to the Town employees and to create a system of ranking the different jobs, which was not based on pay. The Selectboard looked at a federal model, state model and teacher model. Dealing with employee grievances was missing. A policy was needed versus an ad hoc process like tonight, said Mr. Krasnow. Ms. Booher pointed out that a grievance section was in the Personnel Policy.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

Ms. Perkins asked where Ms. Mead stood in terms of Vermont Town Clerk salaries. Mr. Morrison reiterated that the VLCT guide was used to identify town clerk salaries, which were random samples. For example, there were 11 towns with a 3,000-5,000 population. Ms. Mead's salary is second highest of the 11 towns. Johnson Town/Village is #1. Ms. Mead is #7 of all towns state-wide. Charlotte has a good benefit package that pays for 90 percent of health, dental, and eyes, a generous pension, and 5 weeks of vacation as well as 12 holidays. Ms. Mead is paid \$63,000 plus \$5,000 as delinquent tax collector. Ms. Mead is at the maximum ranking as per the salary grid, said Mr. Morrison.

Ms. Mead stated that all town clerk/treasurers in the state should be included in the analysis. For example, the Underhill clerk/treasurer was paid \$58,000 plus a stipend of \$8,500 for just her signature on records. Underhill uses several other people in that office for bookkeeping, CPA, recording keeping, etc. Those were all pieces that two people in Charlotte perform. Her \$68,000 doesn't compare to what the Underhill clerk does. She was grateful for the super benefits and retirement, said Ms. Mead.

Mr. Tegatz reiterated that the Selectboard didn't use pay data from other towns. Other town clerks and/or treasurer' duties were so widely different from town to town. The Selectboard started with a job description(s) that Ms. Mead provided and that helped to mitigate the 'apples to oranges' job comparisons found around the state, said Mr. Tegatz. Mr. Morrison clarified that there were no issues with Ms. Mead's work, or dedication. He also believed that the pay was in balance, said Mr. Morrison.

Ms. Booher, Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer, said that she has worked for Charlotte less than one year and didn't get the employee's 1 percent increase. Regarding job descriptions - take all those people in other town clerk offices that prep the work and that was what came out of the Charlotte office by two people. We do it all. She was experienced as a bookkeeper; no CPA was coming in to finalize the accounts. The paperwork the auditors needed comes out of our office. During the hiring process she was informed she could learn the job in 6 months, which was false. She still has a lot to learn. The town benefits were fantastic, but she still thinks some town positions were paid too low. There was a comment worded that the Recreation Director handles more money than we do - we handle \$13 million at tax time. She thought that the job description was a

personal opinion versus what we really do. Value was not placed on parts of the job. The Selectboard should come in for a day. She has documentation of her time and what she does. Re-grading herself puts her at Step 2 on a different scale versus Step 6. The grading of jobs was a big issue, stated Ms. Booher.

Mr. Morrison pointed out that Ms. Booher was on Step 6 and didn't receive a 1 percent increase. It was the Selectboard's plan to discuss percentages of maximum growth for the next 5 years for Ms. Booher and Britney, said Mr. Morrison. Ms. Booher replied that the grid put her at Step 6. Doesn't that show how the grading is flawed a bit down ward. A market analysis would show that a capable person wouldn't take this job at \$14-15 per hour, stated Ms. Booher.

Mr. Russell explained a Selectboard decision regarding the 'years in employment'. At one time there was a separation between the 1.0, 0.5 and 0.7 percentages, which would be based on years here versus overall years, said Mr. Russell. Mr. Morrison said that related to growth in the job.

Ms. Perkins said that she was hearing that two valuable employees wanted a change to the way they were being paid. They should create a list of their wants/needs to help the Selectboard make a decision, suggested Ms. Perkins.

Ms. Mead stated that it was not just about her and Ms. Booher. The pay grid affected everyone going forward. She didn't like being put in a box. The new hires, Christina, Britney, Jeannine, and Nicole, should all get the 1 percent increase. The Selectboard put the former assistant clerk/treasurer Sharron Balaban at Step 6, at \$17.75 per hour. Christina, at \$16.68 per hour, should be a higher grade and range. Christina doesn't have 6 years experience and doesn't get an increase as a new employee. The same goes for Britney. Elected officials are not included in the annual employee review, said Ms. Mead. Mr. Morrison said that the years' service curve and time of service in Charlotte would be corrected next. What Ms. Perkins has suggested is called a job description. The Selectboard went through that process with the Library Board, the Senior Center Board and department supervisors. The Selectboard received input and looked at the responsibilities of those above and below each employee, explained Mr. Morrison.

Ms. Booher asked why compare jobs with each other. The Library Director and the Town Clerk shouldn't be compared to each other, each individual job should be evaluated separately, said Ms. Booher. Mr. Morrison replied that is in the Palmer evaluation study, and read aloud appropriate sections. Each can be compared; for example, qualifications to fulfill a job. It was not task oriented. In the case of the Library Director, her qualifications, education, etc. were looked at. You can rate the Library Director to the Town Administrator, and the process works. Interaction with employees was to gather data of all 20 employees, said Mr. Morrison.

Ms. Perkins asked Ms. Booher if she had a system that worked better. Ms. Booher replied that people shouldn't be stuck in a 'box'. If a pay rate is based on performance..., said Ms. Booher. Mr. Morrison stated it was not based on performance.

Ms. Mead asked if other towns used the Palmer report to pre-rank their town employees. Mr. Morrison said that the Selectboard didn't pre-rank anyone.

Ms. Mead said that during the grading process she was invited to sit and discuss Ms. Booher's position with the Selectboard. She wasn't invited during the discussion of her own position. Did other supervisors participate, asked Ms. Mead. In November she was invited back and reviewed Sharron and her positions and made suggestions regarding pay grades. Comments that she received from the Board were inappropriate and as listed in her e-mail to the Selectboard, said Ms. Mead.

Mr. Trono asked how many new employees were hired under the policy. Mr. Morrison replied that Nicole was hired under the principles of the policy. It was based on the market and worked fine, said Mr. Morrison.

Mr. Trono said that the market would determine the pay for a new employee. Mr. Morrison said that he agreed. The employee was hired and she accepted the job at the market rate at that time. There were several very good candidates; one had advanced degrees and was well qualified for the position. The Town couldn't afford to pay that person what they wanted. The Town did hire someone, and they accepted the job, said Mr. Morrison.

Ms. Booher pointed out that she was hired during the middle of the process for drafting the policy.

Ms. Russell, former Selectboard member, recalled that Ms. Mead's input was put into the policy. Mr. Morrison said that the Selectboard did ask Ms. Mead for input during the work session meetings, of which there were many. In November/December there were a lot of adjustments made to the draft, said Mr. Morrison.

Mr. Crockenberg said he was on the Library Board of Trustees during that time and spent hours in meetings with the Selectboard. He agreed that there were many changes to the process regarding the initial decisions related to the pay grid. Everything was reviewed with Margaret, adjustments were made and taken back to the Selectboard. The Selectboard was very receptive to the changes. The Library Director and Library employees went through the number of reiterations. The Selectboard listened carefully to us and we felt we were heard. The Selectboard decisions were reasonable and well grounded throughout the while process, said Mr. Crockenberg.

Ms. Spear asked if it was only the Town Clerk/Treasurer office, the Town Planner, and Planning Clerk that needs to be looked at.

Mr. Russell said that the point was everyone was heard. No one was treated differently. We tried to get an internal equity for all positions. Over the weeks as we talked through a second or third time we realized adjustments were needed. If the process is opened to one group, then it should be opened to all groups. Everyone was listened to equally. Josh

Flores said this was the process done at the Shelburne Police Department and it worked. Some people were pleased, and some were not, said Mr. Russell.

Ms. Spear said she thought that this was early in the way of doing it. The process needs to be straightened out. In a year or two it would all equal out. The Board should meet and listen to Ms. Mead and Ms. Booher, suggested Ms. Spear.

Mr. Mack asked if the policy and grid had been changed since it was approved. Mr. Morrison reviewed that since January 1, 2015 equity of all employees was approved. Mary pointed out some corrections. The policy and grid were implemented July 1, 2015, with no changes. Christina pointed out the issue of 'experience in Charlotte', which will be corrected next week. Last week the Selectboard did discuss the pay issue for the Town Administrator and Town Clerk and decided that the data was correct, said Mr. Morrison.

Ms. Perkins asked Ms. Booher how the Selectboard could meet her needs. Ms. Booher replied that her needs will be met, although she has concerns.

Mr. Harvey said that the Selectboard put a lot of work into the grid, but should be open to the points noted by Mary. For example, go to the different towns with 3,000-5,000 populations and write down what the clerk/treasurers do, what the assistant does and what is spent on salaries. Go to Hinesburg and ask what they have for personnel, what the clerk, treasurer, delinquent tax collector and assistant do and what are paid, suggested Mr. Harvey.

Mr. Morrison reiterated that the Selectboard went through that process already. He personally went to Hinesburg. Hinesburg has a CPA that was a resident in the town who came in and reconciled the town books. State statute lays out what a town clerk does and the state report shows what the pay was. The Selectboard looked at the different town requirements and found that each town was very different. Charlotte has Thompson's Point leases for income and other towns do not. The amount of money handled here was comparable to other towns we looked at. We have detailed surveys of what town clerks, treasurers do by town and their salaries. So we have done just that, stated Mr. Morrison.

Mr. Mack said he didn't think that Charles Russell or Fritz Tegatz looked at the costs of operation. Towns to north and south, and Hinesburg have higher costs of operation, said Mr. Mack. Mr. Tegatz said that the gross dollars can't be used. Is it number of dollars spent, asked Mr. Tegatz. Mr. Mack replied that a multiple of ways could be used. Mr. Tegatz stated that you were talking about number of tasks done. Mr. Mack said that through the process he had asked if the Board was looking at the cost of the office. Mr. Russell said that you don't base pay on what other towns paid. Other towns are all different. It was based on equity. You would need to look at 20-30 towns to get meaningful data, said Mr. Russell.

Ms. Mead stated it was simple. She was the Treasurer and her office handled all the financial aspects of the Town. She made a chart for the clerk, treasurer, delinquent tax collector, and bookkeeper. The Selectboard had added the Town Administrator's salary

in and that skewed the clerk piece. The Treasurer's piece was what the Selectboard was discounting, said Ms. Mead.

Ms. Morrison asked what prompted the Selectboard to initiate a wage policy and when did the activity begin. What did Mary ask for, asked Ms. Morrison. Mr. Morrison replied that several years ago there was a request for a significant raise. It didn't sound reasonable. The request was for \$15,000 for Mary and \$10,000 for Sharron and over the years there has been a level of dissatisfaction that caused the Selectboard to provide a process, said Mr. Morrison.

Ms. Morrison asked if there was any level of satisfaction with Mary and how much time has the Town devoted to this. The Selectboard made a decision and it passed. If someone was not happy then they could leave, stated Ms. Morrison.

Mr. Crockenberg said that the job descriptions were reviewed by employees, and then the Board assigned a scale to the jobs. One issue could be a job wasn't correctly evaluated. Secondly, are people properly placed on the grid. Thirdly, are we in the market place correctly. He understood that we are. He didn't think anyone left Charlotte due to unfair treatment, said Mr. Crockenberg.

Mr. Crockenberg said that he spent 10 years as an academic dean at Johnson State College. He felt he was underpaid for his position after he reviewed what the 5 academic deans working at the 5 diverse state colleges did for jobs and salaries paid. A professional Human Resources consultant was hired by the college to investigate the issue and it was found that there was one universal job description for 5 widely different jobs done under that title. The Town could hire a Human Resources professional to review and make a considered judgment when disaffected employees come to the Board, suggested Mr. Crockenberg.

Ms. Booher stated that judging a salary on a title versus a job done was where it lies. As per the grid, she would like to see a 45 point range versus 25. Look at what was done in the office. Look at production, said Ms. Booher. Mr. Crockenberg said that the point was the Vermont state colleges were 'one' institution and there were 5 positions within that system that were the same dean, but each of the 5 deans did the job differently. The municipality of Charlotte has 5 different offices. If he compared his salary to a UVM academic dean's salary then his salary would have been doubled, said Mr. Crockenberg.

Mr. Tegatz pointed out that the grid tops out a 15 year employee, other than a yearly cost of living increase thereafter. The Town would need to consider something, such as 6 weeks vacation perhaps. Vacation time was in Personnel policy, said Mr. Tegatz.

Ms. Perkins pointed out that this was the public sector, not the private sector. The public sector was different, said Ms. Perkins.

Mr. Spell reviewed that the process was a good process. The Board looked at the grid, the Palmer study, the VLCT report, and at other towns. Ms. Mead has been an elected Town

Clerk for many years. She has a grievance. Shouldn't this be discussed at Town Meeting, asked Mr. Spell.

Mr. Tegatz said that the Board doesn't have any authority on how an elected official does their job. Ms. Mead is a very responsible person and doesn't fit into a 'category'. We can't tell her how many hours to do the job; she is not an employee. The State of Vermont does say that we have to pay the position, said Mr. Tegatz.

Mr. Hammer said he was not sure the Treasurer's job was dictated by state statutes. Was there a way to separate out the different Clerk and Treasurer's jobs and pay each cost, asked Mr. Hammer. Mr. Morrison replied that it was looked at.

Mr. Hammer said then at the Town Meeting the voters could discuss the issues and the Selectboard can rest on this policy – this laid out how we pay our people.

Mr. Morrison reiterated that at the next Monday meeting the Board would discuss how to correct the job growth component for Christina, Britney, Nicole and Jeannine. The process of equity is it affects everyone.

Mr. Krasnow said that he could draft a grievance process for a future meeting for the Selectboard to review. Mr. Morrison suggested that Mr. Krasnow look at the Personnel Policy.

Mr. Spell asked if there a reason the Selectboard decided on a salary range and a 2 percent guaranteed increase every year. Mr. Morrison replied that it was a conscience decision not to have an incentive.

Mr. Tegatz suggested that the Selectboard could have an outside consultant look at job descriptions and pay.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Krasnow, seconded by Mr. Spell, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted, Kathlyn L. Furr, Recording Secretary.