

**CHARLOTTE SELECTBOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
TOWN HALL
NOVEMBER 30, 2015**

APPROVED

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

OTHERS: Ellie Russell, Moe Harvey, Mary Mead, Virginia Spell, Jenny Cole, Janet Morrison, Charles Russell, Christina Booher, Robert Mack, Adam Spell, Jill Lowery, John Hammer, Charlotte News, and others.

ITEMS TAKEN UP:

- Employee pay-rates for budgeting
- Charlotte Solar – authorize Town Attorney to enter an appearance in Docket 8638

CALL TO ORDER

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

EMPLOYEE PAY-RATES FOR BUDGETING

Mr. Morrison explained a calculation error in the employee pay rate grid. The grid did not come to 140 percent growth, minimum and maximum. A 1.5 percent Cost of Living (COL) increase adjustment did not happen in 2015, and was not anticipated for 2016. The Selectboard explored options and came up with a 1.5 percent factor across the pay grid to get the range expected. A growth factor and a 1.5 percent factor puts the grid the way it was intended. He would suggest adding the 1.5 percent factor retroactively back to July 1, 2015. When there is a COL, then the grid could be adjusted, said Mr. Morrison.

Mr. Tegatz explained a proposal to correct the math error as shown in a proposed graph charting data points using the current percentages of 1 percent for years 1-5, 0.75 percent for years 6-10, and 0.5 percent for years 11-15; a second proposal using 2.5 percent-years 1-5, 2.25 percent for years 6-10, and 2 percent for years 11-15; or a third proposal using 3.5 percent for years 1-5, 2.5 percent for years 6-10, and 1 percent for years 11-15. Using the second proposal would generate the numbers wanted to correct the math error, said Mr. Tegatz.

Mr. Mack stated that he was not in favor of the pay grid, which left people out of the pay raise steps. The Selectboard has four different documents that did not address the crux of the problem. There were Town employees that are already above the pay step increases. It was a pay cut for Mary Mead, said Mr. Mack.

Mr. Tegatz said that a pay cut was defined as getting less money then before. Did it happen, asked Mr. Tegatz. Mr. Mack replied no. The issue was Mary Mead went from working 35 hours to 40 hours. When the Library Director went from 35 hours to 40 hours she was given a pay raise, said Mr. Mack.

Mr. Morrison explained the process using a span 15 years versus 20 years in order to go from 100 percent of pay to 140 percent of pay. If the time range was dragged out to 20 years then there was less money for all employees as they went through the steps. Regarding hours, Mary Mead is a salaried person. NEMRC has her at 35 hours. Ms. Mead also receives retirement, health and vacation benefits. Nothing changed in her hours from 35 to 40 hours. The Library Board added specific tasks to the director's position and increased her hours from 35 to 40. Also, the Library operated separately from the Town. The Library has consented to be combined with the Town budget, said Mr. Morrison.

Ms. Booher stated that the Library Director was also a salaried position. Mr. Morrison reiterated that Mary Mead's job was capped out and would be compensated with additional benefits. She has no added work assignments, said Mr. Morrison.

Ms Mead said that she was an elected official and could come and go as she pleased. Her pay changed from \$34+ per hour for a 35 hour week to \$30.25 per hour for a 40 hour week. Margaret Woodruff had a 16 percent pay rate increase, stated Ms. Mead. Mr. Morrison suggested that Ms. Mead could go back to 35 hours at the old rate.

Mr. (Adam) Spell suggested that the Selectboard look at the Vermont Department of Labor for rules related to definitions and salaried workers. Mr. Morrison said that was done and elected officials were exempted positions.

Mr. Russell explained that a Town Clerk was a salaried position as per state statutes. The terms for 'salaried' and 'exempt' were two different terms, pointed out Mr. Russell.

Ms. Lowery, resident and taxpayer, said that the Town's people aren't aware of the 'pay grid'. Women's pay and women in the work field were under-valued. This should be discussed more publically. A pay grid for over 20 years experience was left out. The process should be looked at with a new Board. Two years ago she pointed out that the Town did not have an HR person. Her husband has 50 employees and she deals with this issue all the time, said Ms. Lowery.

There was lengthy discussion regarding the process to develop an equitable and fair pay schedule for Town employees over a nine month period that included the Palmer survey, using the Vermont League of Cities and Towns manual, visiting 10 different Vermont towns of a similar size/population, reviewing each Charlotte job description, and interviewing each Charlotte Town employee; the hiring of an HR professional to guide the process; basing pay on the job description and not a personality; factoring in an extra vacation week for capped out employees as a benefit in lieu of a salary increase; and 10-12 data points gathered for town clerk/treasurer positions that included a job experience factor.

Mr. Krasnow explained that the rationale for choosing 15 years versus 20 years was to maintain the 140 percent range. If a 20 year step period was used that would have been a

160 percent range. Mr. Morrison said that the Board felt that a shorter range was better for employees so they could get up to scale sooner. Going longer would mean a smaller change per year and end up cutting pay already given. People's pay was changed to come up to the 15 year standard. To get a 2.5 percent growth in 20 years would mess up those employees, said Mr. Morrison.

Ms. Russell suggested hiring a different HR person to verify what the first HR person did, or to challenge the work.

MOTION by Mr. Tegatz, to change the percentage for Table 1, Section 3 of the salary list to reflect a 2.5 percent plus COL in the first 1-5 years, 2.25 percent for years 6-10 plus COL, and 2.0 percent for years 10-15 plus COL, and to enact the change retroactively to July 1, 2015. The motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. Krasnow said that he would like to continue looking at the proposed fix to the math error. It still doesn't bring fairness to the pay grid. This does put pressure on the Town budget. The top value of a 140 percent cap is an industry standard. Today, the average career is 5 years before a job change is made. The Motion didn't allow everyone to appreciate, said Mr. Krasnow.

Mr. Morrison said that for those beyond the 15 year steps the Town would offer an additional week of vacation, which was 2 percent of pay as a compromise. We should acknowledge a long term employee and keep the cap, said Mr. Morrison.

Ms. Booher pointed out that vacation time was not totaled out, it was accumulated. If you pay out a week's vacation you must calculate the vacation time, said Ms. Booher. Ms. Cole said that part time employees don't have benefits, or vacation time. Mr. Krasnow replied that part time employees have a pay increase as per the steps. There were working one-half as much and getting a pay increase, said Mr. Krasnow.

Ms. Spear said she would like to see the process re-evaluated.

Mr. Krasnow said that people with issues should come in with solutions so we can work collaboratively on the issues.

SUGGESTIONS/TASKS:

- Consider a Selectboard meeting for Monday, December 7, 2015.
- Mr. Morrison would report back to the Selectboard regarding HR options.
- Set up a January, 2016 meeting to continue discussion of employee pay rates.

CHARLOTTE SOLAR – AUTHORIZE TOWN ATTORNEY TO ENTER AN APPEARANCE IN DOCKET 8638

MOTION by Mr. Krasnow, seconded by Mr. Tegatz, to authorize the Town Attorney to enter an appearance on behalf of the Town of Charlotte in Docket 8638, by the Public Service Board for a Wednesday, January, 13, 2016 hearing.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Mack asked what the cost to the Town was. Why wasn't the Public Service Board chasing it down, asked Mr. Mack. Mr. Morrison replied that the Public Service Board was calling the hearing. Mr. Tegatz explained that the Town was entering an appearance to stay in the loop.

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

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