

**Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard**  
**Executive Session Minutes**  
**December 28, 2016**  
**Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827**

**Entered Executive at Session:** 8:30 pm

**Present:** Daniel F. Devlin, chair, Walter F. Alterisio, Leah D. Basbanes, member(s); Tracey Hutton, Town Administrator; James Dow, Chief of Police

**Executive Session 3) – Union Contract**

Ms. Hutton started off by noting that the budget does not yet include any raise for union personnel. Rather, on advice of the Town Accountant this would be a separate warrant question which would have to be passed at town meeting and the first year of increases would come out of Free Cash. The concept is to otherwise level fund. This helps ensure that the town doesn't tip its hand as to what it is willing to pay before any negotiation occurs. Chief Dow expressed some reservation only because this hasn't been done this way before. Ms. Hutton elaborated on her work and how she's created a spread sheet to help with calculating any percentage increase proposed. The Board noted how important the percentage is in relating to the town's ability to pay. In the past the starting point has been a high figure, such as a request for 7 percent increases. This seems a bit beyond the pale considering the town's ability to pay. The town has to be competitive, but the ability to pay has to be part of the equation. Ms. Hutton noted that Union is already going to be benefiting since the new leadership structure will provide them with two more Sergeants which are seniority positions for the Union.

The Board then addressed some other negotiating points and areas of concerns. Chief Dow noted that the Wage & Compensation Chart was done for every other employee except Police, and he expressed the opinion that there will be questions from the Union regarding what the town has done to determine what the appropriate competitive wage is. The Board noted that Union employees do get benefits that other employees don't get. Chief Dow agreed noting that this point has to be thought about and made ready if necessary. There was some discussion of the grievance provision in the current contract that is expiring which mentions the Lieutenant. This will have to be modified in light of the leadership structure change. Chief Dow elaborated on some conversations he's had with other departments that have the structure he's looking to build. He will contact them to discuss the grievance matter to find out how they handle this. The Board then turned discussion to an attempt that was made by the Union to define how shifts were manned. Chief Dow noted the term for this is "minimum manning." The Board stated it would think this a management decision rather than a Union one.

Chief Dow stated that in the past the town was unable to put two-part time reserve officers on at the same time. He noted that he has the advantage of living in town and is willing to cover where there are gaps. He trusts the reserve officers and does feel they can be counted on. There was then discussion of overtime and the rights of full time officers to request a shift. The Board noted that the smaller the department, the more that the officers have to rely on each other and trust each other. Chief Dow and Ms. Hutton then elaborated on changes they've made to the department's budget and the adjustments being made. Ms. Hutton noted budget wise padding is being taken out and moved to the Reserve Fund so that departments aren't budgeting in emergencies; rather they are then going to the Advisory Board for transfers when and where necessary. Discussion then turned back to the negotiation of the Union contract. This included a question of what kind of tough sell might be made by the Union. Chief Dow stated he is hopeful that the officers will be agreeable to reasonable terms.

He is concerned that the Union might be inclined to arbitration if they don't get everything they are looking for. This led to discussion of what arbitration would mean and what if any cost this would entail. Ms. Hutton suggested that the arbitration might not be as likely as feared. She is concerned, but not super concerned. There was then some discussion of the Lieutenant matter and the leadership structure and whether once the change is in place whether it can be changed again later. Ms. Hutton stated she would look into the matter and what management rights might surround this. There was then discussion of who from the Board should be part of the negotiating process. It was determined that Mr. Devlin would be the designated member of the Board for

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that purpose. It was proposed that Ms. Basbanes observe, but the logistics of quorum and possible postings of meetings indicate that it would be difficult. It was determined that Mr. Devlin would indeed take point.

A motion to adjourn and exit Executive Session was made by Leah D. Basbanes at 8:50 pm. The motion was seconded by Walter F. Alterisio. The motion was adopted without objection by Daniel F. Devlin, Walter F. Alterisio and Leah D. Basbanes.

Respectfully submitted by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jakob K. Hamm". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Jakob K. Hamm  
Admin. Assistant to the Selectboard & Town Administrator

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