

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
OPEN & EXECUTIVE SESSION
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 10, 2016**

Present: Dario Nardi, Chairman, Robert E. Lavash; Vice-Chairman, James A. Gagner, Clerk and Selectmen's Assistant, Rebecca Acerra

Chairman Nardi called the Meeting to Order at 3 P.M.

A motion was made to enter into Executive Session under M.G.L. c30A, Section 21 (2) "to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non- union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contracts negotiations with non-union personnel" for the Town Accountant, Administrative Assistant, Fire Chief and Chief of Police made by Mr. Lavash; second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous. Roll Call Vote Taken – 3 Yey Votes

The members of the Board of Selectmen met this afternoon to discuss four (4) proposed contracts with all individuals involved. At the last Executive Session, Chairman Nardi provided drafts of his recommendations for each.

Town Accountant – Madeline Witaszek

Chairman Nardi provided a copy of Mrs. Witaszek's current agreement and proposed agreement. Minor housekeeping changes were made for clarification. The Board of Selectmen's proposal presented this afternoon was for a term of three (3) years with a three (3%) percent increase in the base salary for each fiscal year. Mrs. Witaszek stated that her duties as Procurement Officer should be in her base salary. These duties were originally in the job description when hired. The additional \$1,000.00 for her Certification would remain a separate stipend. After a discussion, it was agreed by all parties that the \$1,000.00 for Procurement duties would also remain a separate stipend. All other terms outlined were agreed by all parties. With no further discussion, the following motion was made: Motion to accept the Employment Agreement for the Town Accountant for FY16-FY19 as presented made by Mr. Lavash; second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous. As required, the Employment Agreement will be ratified in open session.

MINUTES

Motion to approve the Executive and Open Session Minutes of January 14, 2016 and January 20, 2016 as written made by Mr. Lavash; second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous.

Administrative Secretary

Chairman Nardi provided a copy of Mrs. Prokop's current agreement and proposed agreement. The Board is proposing a 1 year term with a 3% increase in salary. In addition, Mr. Nardi is looking to re-evaluate in one year. Vacation and personal days are proposed to remain the same. Mrs. Prokop stated that the statute calls for a 3 year agreement and questioned the Board as to why only a one year is being proposed. After a discussion, the Board stated that consideration would be given to offering a three year agreement, with the option of opening up discussion for further compensation in year 2 & 3. Mr. Gagner stated that he is in agreement with what has been proposed today. Mr. Lavash stated that he would like to see a three year appointment, which is in keeping with the other agreements. After a discussion, it was agreed to omit provision #7 regarding vacation and moving forward, vacation time would be in keeping with the Personnel By-Laws. Again, Mrs. Prokop questioned the board as to their rationale in not offering a three year agreement. Mr. Gagner stated that he has concerns over the lack of follow up on requests that he has made. He stated that he doesn't feel that Mrs. Prokop sees the urgency in tasks that he has requested or the attention he would like to see. Mr. Nardi performed her evaluation as well as having Mrs. Prokop evaluate him. He felt that there are areas that both she and he need to work on in order to improve the daily day to

day operations of running the office. Mrs. Prokop would like a chance to review and to counter. Additional meetings will be held for further discussion.

Fire Chief

Mr. Nardi provided a copy of Chief Lavoie's current and proposed employment agreement. Chief Lavoie was agreeable to re-open his current agreement early in order to get on the same cyclical year as the other agreements. Minor housekeeping changes were made for clarification. The Board is proposing a three year agreement with a 3% increase each fiscal year. In addition, they are proposing a \$1,000.00 in order to maintain his credentials. Chief Lavoie provided a summary of surrounding Fire Chief's salaries and the Town of Warren is considerably less than that of all the rest.

Chief Lavoie reiterated for the Board that he holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Fire Science and has obtained Credentialing from the Massachusetts Fire Chief's Association. In order to accomplish those tasks, there is an extensive program which is quite lengthy and stringent. After the last meeting, Chief Lavoie had a chance to review the proposed employment agreement that the Board presented. Contained within that proposal was a three year agreement with a 3% increase in the base salary for each fiscal year. Within the proposed agreement, was an additional \$1,000.00 stipend should the Chief maintain his certification through the Massachusetts Fire Chief Credentialing Program during the term of the agreement. While Chief Lavoie fully understands the fiscal constraints that the town faces, he strongly feels that not only his performance but the time associated to maintain his credentials warrants additional compensation. He also pointed out that as a full-time Fire Chief, he responds to all EMS calls during his normal shift, maintains two buildings, millions of dollars of equipment and inventory, a staff of approximately 30 people and does all the paperwork/reports as he does not have an Administrative Assistant. This is in addition to maintaining his credentials. Additional meetings will be scheduled in order for Chief Lavoie to have an opportunity to review and consider the current offer. Chief Lavoie expressed his gratitude in the faith the Board has shown to date.

Chief of Police

As with the others, Mr. Nardi provided the Chief with a copy of his current agreement and that of the Board's proposal. Both Mr. Nardi and Chief Spiewakowski met yesterday for his evaluation. Minor housekeeping changes have been made. The proposal presented to the Chief today represents a 1 year agreement with no increase in salary. Chief Spiewakowski feels that the offer of a 1 year agreement sends a message to him that perhaps an alternative employer should be considered. After a discussion on this point, all were in agreement to provide a 3 year term with language that would allow reconsidering additional compensation in year 2 & 3. Reasoning behind the no increase in the first year is that his salary is on the high end compared to other positions. The town is working towards bringing the lower end up. Chief Spiewakowski understood the reasoning and was satisfied with no increase in year one. A question arose regarding the wording between "contract" and "employment agreement". Mr. Nardi requested that Mrs. Acerra check with Town Counsel for a matter of clarification. An additional change was to require a "written" monthly report be provided to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Gagner felt that he should consider holding evening hours. The Chief stated that he tried that in the past and it didn't work out well. All agreed on a "gentlemen's agreement" that he should make more of an attempt to provide better public relations. The Chief agreed. He went on to say that he is also the supplemental patrol Mondays thru Fridays. At this time, he would like the opportunity to discuss the proposal with the Chief's Counsel. All were in agreement to schedule an additional meeting for continued discussions.

Motion to come out of Executive Session and enter Open Session made by Mr. Lavash; second: Mr. Gagner - unanimous. Roll Call Vote: 3 Yey Votes.

Other Business

FY17 Budget

Mr. Nardi met with the members of the Finance Committee and stated that the committee was basically split in terms of support for the increase for the hourly employees on the wage classification. Additional discussions will be ongoing.

Mr. Gagner stated that on Friday, February 12th, Heal, Inc. will be touring the Wright's Facility to reconsider their options for a MMTC. He will keep all update as to the status.

Next Meeting Date for Executive Session is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, February 17th at 10 A.M.

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Lavash; second: Mr. Gagner - unanimous at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Acerra
Selectmen's Assistant

James A. Gagner, Jr., Clerk