

**TOWN OF WINCHENDON  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES  
MONDAY, APRIL 25, 2016  
Town Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Auditorium  
109 Front Street, Winchendon, Mass.**

**Present:**

Michael Barbaro, Chairman  
Barbara Anderson, Vice-Chair  
Aubrey LaBrie  
Austin Cyganiewicz

Keith Hickey, Town Manager  
Linda Daigle, Executive Assistant

**Absent:**

Amy Salter

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**List of Documents Presented at Meeting:**

- Town Manager's Memo regarding "Update on Personnel Issues" (attached)
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Executive Session was called to order at 7:50 p.m.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Executive Session No. 3 – To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body:



Update on Collective Bargaining with AFSCME Council 93 Local 1887 – Public Works Union and IBPO Local #538, Winchendon Police Union.

Winchendon Police Union:

Mr. Hickey reported he has informed the Police Union that he is not moving towards their 3% rate increase. He has 1 ½% rate across the board. They have asked for an increase in detail rate because other communities are charging more than the Town is. He is willing to speak with them about this because it is paid privately and through the Town. They seemed to be reasonable guys and thinks he will be able to finalize.

Mr. Hickey informed the Board that the Dispatch and Clerical Unions signed their contracts prior to the Police and Fire union contracts and with the "me too" clauses in their contracts they wouldn't be eligible to get it this upcoming fiscal year. He wants to get the Boards blessing, if he has the funding, to give the increase across the Board. Last year, they did forego their raises.

Winchendon Public Works Union Update:

Mr. Hickey reported Public Works has voted twice and has not ratified the proposal. They have some infighting in Public Works. The main issue focuses around the two foreman positions in relation to the number of hours worked

weekly. The majority of the change he is looking to make is to increase all the employees to 38.5 hours a week. This addresses loss of employees when cuts were made at a cheaper cost. There is no raise the first year of the contract but will have increased hours. In years two and three, they will receive a 1 ½% rate increase. Mr. Hickey mentioned the Fire Dept. union forfeited their raises last year but they have a contract in place that gives them a 3% increase in FY17. This has been included in their budget. He thinks the proposed public work's union contract addresses staffing needs. The union votes again tomorrow; they may vote it down again. He will be back before the Board on May 9<sup>th</sup> on this. It is a three year contract. He mentioned there is reopening language just for health insurance if the Cadillac Tax comes into place.

Executive Session No. 2 - To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel:  
Update the Board on the Town Accountant Search:

The Town Manager informed the Board the Town Accountant Search Committee met last week. The five applications received were reviewed and one person was selected to be worth interviewing. That will take place next Wednesday evening. There is no second choice out of the five. He included text in his memo from an email from our auditor, Mr. Tony Roselli, who feels there are three reasons why we didn't get a big turnout in applicants:

- 1) Unemployment – imbalance of supply and demand
- 2) Unique situation in Winchendon where qualified candidates doing their homework would hear some of the challenges facing Winchendon and may be swayed from applying
- 3) Mr. Roselli feels the salary range we have tops out at \$74,169 and is low. With all the factors the Town is facing, he feels the pay should be \$85,000 to \$90,000.

Barbaro asked if the person coming in for an interview doesn't work out, do we reopen the search and can the Town afford to change the salary structure. Mr. Hickey reported out figures of what current Dept. Heads receive as a comparison suggested possibly bumping it up another \$10,000 in light of what has gone on here. The individual they are interviewing is a Collector/Treasurer in another community and hasn't served as a Town Accountant. This doesn't mean he can't do the job. The candidate has MUNIS and Harper's experience.

Mr. Hickey asked for direction from the Board. If the committee meets on Wednesday and they are not supportive of this candidate, a) is the Board willing to raise the salary, and b) is there any willingness at all at the re-look of Donna Allard. What he's seen in the last four months with her is she has gotten through what must have been a very difficult time. The School Business Office is leaving June 30<sup>th</sup>, Donna Allard is leaving June 30<sup>th</sup> and Eric Kinshurf, independent Accountant assisting monthly, said he can't do any more than he can with his other commitments. We have made some strides with Bernie and Sheryl coming here and with Donna spending more time on day to day stuff. With the turmoil here subsiding, Donna is able to spend her time dealing with the more day to day issues. She knows the books here. He said he has not had a conversation with her about this wanting to first speak with them. He mentioned the bulletin from the Dept. of Revenue he put in their files upstairs regarding changes overall statewide. One of the things they talk about is revolving funds and grant funds that have been in deficit position in the past are now going to be written off against our free cash. Ms. Allard has made the School Superintendent and the School Business Office aware of it as they are still running deficits in their programs. He has heard they are going to make the changes, but haven't yet. He brings this up because Ms. Allard leaves June 30<sup>th</sup>, the School Business Office is done June 30<sup>th</sup>. We need to close our books; we have state mandates on when to get our financial information to them so the tax rate can get set and free cash can be certified and tax bills get out timely.

Mr. Hickey asked for the Board to consider answering the following two questions:

- 1) Would you increase the salary range;
- 2) Would you consider the one year deal with the current Town Accountant with her increase in pay

Mr. Hickey referred to the MMPA Salary Benchmark Survey provided in their packets attached to his memo and pointed out the ranges mentioning \$85,000 is not out of the picture. It was noted the School Business Manager's position top end is \$105,000. Mr. Hickey didn't want to lose the momentum they've gained this past year by making a decision that may come back to bite them.

There was discussion on the need and possible savings if the independent auditor assisting in the Accounting office would be still needed in FY17. Mr. Hickey says if Ms. Allard stays and we have a good Business Manager, his services wouldn't be needed as much.

Selectman Cyganiewicz spoke about setting goals and objectives for the Town Accountant like they should have been and hoped the School Business Manager works out. He still stands by his vote he made months ago seeing some of the issues being resolved.

Selectwoman LaBrie agreed and also stands by her decision to support making her an offer.

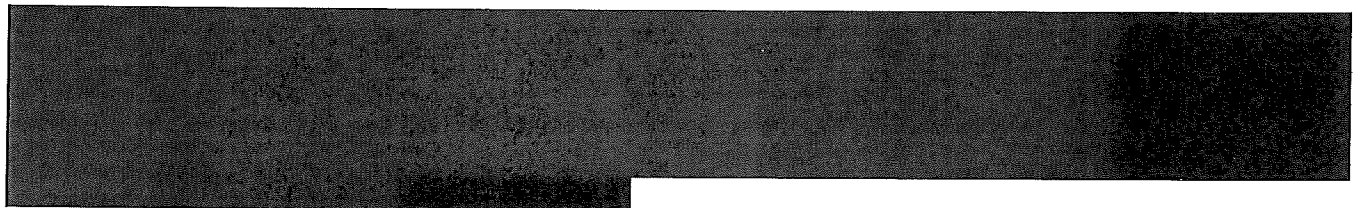
Vice-Chair Anderson stands by her decision to say no. She's not convinced this is the person for the Town.

Chairman Barbaro said we are talking about a one year contract and will address again. He's concerned with the turnovers both here and at the School Dept. He has wrestled with this for two months. He has talked to Ms. Allard. He apologized to her for things he heard that were not accurate. If the interview next week is unsuccessful; he would be willing to go up the next level and offer her a one year contract.

Vice-Chair Anderson said she would be more comfortable voting on a salary increase raising it \$10,000 and have another meeting with Selectwoman Salter present to further discuss.

Selectwoman LaBrie pointed out that elections take place and there could be a new composition of the Board of Selectmen members.

**Chairman Barbaro moved that if the candidate coming for an interview on Wednesday is not selected by the Committee, to offer Donna Allard a one year contract to include a 6% increase in her salary; Austin seconded for discussion.** They discussed on whether or not she would accept an offer at this time. The Town Manager was not sure but thought so. **By a roll call vote of Cyganiewicz aye, LaBrie aye, Anderson no and Barbaro aye, the motion carried by majority vote.**



Selectwoman LaBrie moved to adjourn; Cyganiewicz seconded. By roll call vote of all aye, Executive Session adjourned into Open Session at 8:43 p.m.

Selectwoman LaBrie moved to adjourn Open Session; Cyganiewicz seconded. By a vote of all aye, the meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Daigle  
Executive Assistant