

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

February 11, 2019

Meeting held at Town Hall, 139 Main Street, Rowley, MA
6:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Cliff Pierce; Vice Chairman Joseph Perry; Clerk Robert Snow; David Petersen (Town Administrator Deborah Eagan, Assistant Town Administrator Amy Lydon)

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Larry White – FINCOM; Henry Rolfe – 73 Plantation Drive; Maggie Lemelin – 22 Bennett Hill Road; Bernie Cullen – 283 Wethersfield Street

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chairman Pierce called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. He said the meeting is being audio and video recorded and broadcast live via Rowley Community Media.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Massachusetts Coalition of Police (MCOP) Local 360 pursuant to State Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30A section 21(a) (3)

Chairman Pierce called for a motion to go into Executive Session for the following purpose:

To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Massachusetts Coalition of Police (MCOP) Local 360 pursuant to State Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30A section 21(a) (3) because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Town and to return to open session.

Bob Snow so moved, Joe Perry second, all in favor roll call vote: Joe Perry – aye; Bob Snow – aye; Cliff Pierce – aye; Dave Petersen – aye.

Executive Session opened at 6:32 p.m. and Open Session resumed at 7:17 p.m.

7:15 to 7:20 p.m. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Letter from Board of Water Commissioners regarding Water Superintendent vacant position

Chairman Pierce read the letter. Water Commissioner Bernie Cullen said the workload has increased for the staff of the Water Department, not just for the Commissioners. Pierce said it is commendable that the workers have taken this extra work load on. Pierce said the pay and benefits offered for the Water Superintendent position is inadequate to attract candidates. Cullen said this is correct, and if there was an internal candidate, they would be taking a pay cut if they were promoted into this role.

2. Discuss revised Personnel Plan and proposed FY 20 Compensation Schedule

Chairman Pierce read the memo prepared by Deb Eagan regarding the Updated Personnel Plan and FY20 Compensation Schedule. Joe Perry left the Selectmen's table at 7:21 p.m. and returned at 7:22 p.m. Pierce read the third paragraph of the report submitted by Human Resources Services, Inc., the consultant who conducted the survey of a cross-section of non-union positions.

Petersen said he is the chair of the Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC), along with Larry White as the Finance Committee Chairman and Mo Levasseur as a citizen representative, as outlined in the Personnel bylaw. He said the PAC has worked diligently with Eagan and Lydon over the past three years, and Eagan and Lydon did an unbelievable job completely re-writing the employee manual. He said the pay scale for employees are extremely low, and the annual 1% COLA and 1.25% spread between steps is not keeping Rowley up with inflation and with what other towns are paying their employees. He said we have been operating under these parameters due to budget constraints and the amount of money going to Triton for their budget. He said grant money was used to hire Human Resources Services, Inc. to do a salary survey. He read the communities that were used as comparable communities for the survey, and said 19 upper management positions were surveyed. He said other than a couple of positions, many were below market significantly. He read the percentages below average for various positions such as 42% and 21%. He said there are a variety of differences, but the glaring issue is that Rowley employees are paid well below their peers in surrounding communities. He said Eagan and Lydon did a huge amount of work on this, and the PAC goal was to get the employees pay into the mid range of the comparable communities, but we cannot afford this. He said the compromise schedule is attached, and we aren't going to get into specific positions, but the PAC is looking for the support of the Board of Selectmen to update the Personnel Plan and the updated

FY20 compensation and classification schedules. He said the total cost to implement this will be over \$100,000, and that doesn't include union positions. He said the meals tax increase from 6.25% to 7% will result in increased revenue of \$120,000 to \$150,000 per year. He said we are upgrading the pay, not to where it should be, but making a big step in the right direction. He said we are fortunate that people haven't left the Town, and if they do, we won't be able to attract replacements. He said Triton's budget is probably affordable this year, and the money being used to fund the new compensation schedule won't add to the tax rate for the Town. He said the employees deserve to be paid equally to what other towns pay. He said we have been frugal over the years, but the employees have paid the price.

Perry said he read through all the paperwork, it is incredible, and he commends the Committee for doing this. He said it is well done and he thinks the Board should support this. Petersen said the credit goes to Eagan and Lydon, they did a fabulous job, and it took a few years to do while doing all their other work. Snow said we need to attract and retain employees, and the compensation plan needs to be upgraded like we have upgraded infrastructure such as the Fire Station and Water Treatment Plant. Petersen said this is for non-union positions, and doesn't include elected positions. He said the PAC doesn't set the pay for elected officials. He said employees with contracts need to renegotiate their contracts. He said now is the time to do this, he fully supports this and will go before the Finance Committee. He said this is long overdue and covers all Town departments. Pierce said we have been trying to get away with 1% COLAs for years, we have a very good workforce, and if these people leave, we will have a difficult time attracting qualified applicants.

Eagan said a crucial piece of this is the State minimum wage increase to \$12 per hour requires a recalibration. She said people can work at McDonald's or Dunkin Donuts at \$12 per hour, and next year get an increase to \$13 per hour. She said we need to be able to compete for employees, and recalibrate the schedule to account for this.

Henry Rolfe said the hotel tax is a new source of revenue, which he guestimates to be \$42,000 in year one and \$100,000 per year once the hotel is up and running. He said these funds can be earmarked. Bernie Cullen added to the plaudits to Eagan and Lydon on the Personnel Plan. He said he worked in Human Resources for 35 years and knows how complicated and detailed it can be. He said the new plan provides flexibility in the ability to look at the full range of pay in the grade when hiring someone versus just the new hire rate. He said this is important and a step in the right direction. He said it is a double edged sword and we don't want to open up and give everyone large raises, and the constraints from Proposition 2^{1/2} need to be adhered to. He said we can take advantage of these new revenues and earmark them to racket up the pay

scale and give a better chance to the Town to compete. He said this is his position as one Water Commissioner.

Petersen said we need to increase the pay rates, but we need the revenue, and we can use the meals tax. He said the Town has given 1% COLAs consistently, but Triton has given out COLAs of 2%, 2.5% and 2.75% over the past three years, plus the step increases. He said the Town employees for the past ten years has fallen behind, but the School Department has kept up. He said this is the attempt to bring the employees a little more in line, and we aren't giving a license to the school to do more.

Cullen said this provides flexibility, but there are open issues on the benefit side. He said people applying for senior positions come in with expectations, and we need an effort to bring the benefits in line as well.

Joe Perry made a motion to approve the revised Personnel Plan and proposed FY 20 non-union compensation schedule, Bob Snow second. The vote was not completed.

Joe Perry withdrew his previous motion.

Joe Perry made a motion to approve the revised Personnel Plan, Dave Petersen second, all in favor - aye (4-0).

Joe Perry made a motion to approve the proposed FY 20 non-union compensation schedule, Bob Snow second, all in favor - aye (4-0).

3. Discuss FY 20 Budget Guidelines

Chairman Pierce read the following:

Wages will be set by the non-union compensation schedule and union agreements. Debbie is recommending that expense budgets be level-funded. However, departments needing operational increases must clearly identify the reasons why the increase is needed. The request must be submitted on the "Issues and Options" form.

Joe Perry made a motion to set the guideline for level funded expenses, Bob Snow second, all in favor - aye (4-0).

Bernie Cullen said each expense budget line needs to be fully examined so we aren't putting money there that is not needed. Petersen said most departments have small budgets and have been level funding them for as long as he can remember. He said the departments are doing a great job keeping expenses down, and the Finance Committee does an incredible job questioning the budgets. He said the process is working well. Eagan said the budget forms reviewed by the Selectmen and the Finance

Committee shows a great amount of detail, and expenses are categorized into items such as stamps, telephones and utilities. She said it also shows the past year expenditures, the current year expenditures, and the proposed next year expenditures.

OLD BUSINESS

1. FY 20 Triton Budget Update

Chairman Pierce said at the School Committee meeting last Wednesday the budget numbers didn't change a lot. He said there was a lot of discussion about adding two social workers and the late buses, but in the end they voted to hold the line. He said the estimated increase is \$1,700,000, and the assessments to the Towns hasn't changed. Bernie Cullen said on Wednesday the School Committee will vote a tentative budget and the budget won't go up from that. Snow asked how Rowley's assessment compares to the half of new growth. Perry said the letter sent to Triton offered \$290,000 as half of the Town's new growth, and the current assessment for Rowley is \$120,000 above that. Pierce said Salisbury is being assessed a 8.41% increase of almost \$1,000,000. He said Harrington from Salisbury has said they can't afford this increase.

2. Pine Grove School Project Update

Perry said he spoke with Dore & Whittier about the rising costs of the project, and they said think about what you are getting for the money. He said the project is just over 60% complete. He said Phase 3 was completed on Friday and Phase 4 begins on Tuesday. He said things are progressing well.

3. Fire Station and Police Station Addition Project Update

Chairman Pierce read the following:

Finish work continues in the existing police station and fire station. The epoxy paint will be applied in the cell areas and fire station this week. The handicap door and toilet in the cell area will be installed this week. The plan is to finish the project and obtain the certificate of occupancy at the end of this month.

Eagan said there are still punch lists. Petersen said there are a lot of little things, and the paving and landscaping will be done in the spring. Snow said the project is within budget.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Town has the following vacancies:
 - a. Agricultural Commission Associate;
 - b. Cultural Council;
 - c. Zoning Board of Appeals Associate – two seats; and
 - d. Deputy Shellfish Constables – two positions.For more information on these positions, please contact the Selectmen's Office at 948-2372.
- The following offices are on the May 14, 2019 Annual Town Election Ballot:
 - Board of Selectmen – two seats for three-year terms
 - Constable – one seat for three-year term
 - Board of Assessors – one seat for a three-year term
 - Planning Board – one seat for a five-year term
 - Municipal Light Board – one one-year unexpired term
 - Municipal Light Board – one seat for a three-year term
 - Municipal Water Board – one seat for three-year term
 - Cemetery Commission – one seat for three-year term
 - Shellfish Commission – one seat for three-year term
 - Trustees of the Public Library – one seat for one-year unexpired term
 - Trustees of the Public Library – one seat for two-year unexpired term
 - Trustees of the Public Library – three seats for three-year term
 - Triton Regional School Committee: Newbury Member – one seat for three-year term; Rowley Member – one seat for three-year term; and Salisbury Member – one seat for three-year termFor information on the election and for deadlines to take out and submit nomination papers, please contact the Town Clerk's Office at 948-2081.
- The Rowley Food Pantry is in need of donations. Donations can be left at the Rowley Public Library. The Food Pantry is open on Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and on Thursdays from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURN

Chairman Pierce called for a motion to adjourn. Bob Snow so moved, Joe Perry second, all in favor - aye (4-0).

Open meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Lydon
Assistant Town Administrator

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Written Executive Session Motion
2. Letter from Board of Water Commissioners regarding Water Superintendent vacant position
3. Memo from Deb Eagan regarding Updated Personnel Plan and FY20 Compensation Schedule
4. FY19 Non-union Compensation Schedule
5. FY 20 Non-Union Compensation Schedule
6. Report from Human Resources Services, Inc. regarding updated compensation and classification analysis for FY19/FY20.
7. Meeting memo regarding New Business #3: Discuss FY 20 Budget Guidelines
8. Meeting memo regarding Old Business #1: FY 20 Triton Budget Update
9. Triton Regional School District 2019/2020 base budget for discussion purposes only 1/26/19
10. Meeting memo regarding Old Business #2: Pine Grove School Project Update
11. Meeting memo regarding Old Business #3: Fire Station and Police Station Addition Project Update