

**Approved**

A special budget workshop meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held on Monday, March 23, 2010 at the Town Hall.

**Present for the Board:** First Selectman Kate Donnelly, Selectman Roger Dionne, Selectman Mike Chapel

**Staff Present:** Marlene B. Aulten, Recording Secretary, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez

**Item 1: Call to Order:** First Selectman Donnelly called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

**ITEM 2: Discuss Budget Issues:**

**A. Salary Increases**

Selectman Chapel noted that many towns are freezing their wages, and some are seeking give-backs on health insurance. He noted that the Librarian and Transfer Station Manager have requested wage increases. First Selectman Donnelly noted that she had not received a request from the Transfer Station Manager.

Selectman Chapel questioned if the Librarian was indeed a Town employee since the Library is a non-profit entity. He noted he would like clarification as to the flow of Town money that is given to the Library.

First Selectman Donnelly noted that the Road Crew Foreman is seeking a wage increase for all road crew employees. First Selectman Donnelly asked Selectman Dionne said he would like more information about the health insurance increase before arriving at a decision.

First Selectman Donnelly questioned if we can afford raises in light of the increased cost of insurance and much needed road improvements. The other large increase the Town is faced with this year is in replacing the current server, whose capacity has been reached.

Selectman Chapel noted that we do not yet have the education budgets, and that we need that information before moving forward. Selectman Dionne concurred. First Selectman Donnelly noted that Parish Hill will again be a 0% increase budget, and less students attending will result in a reduction in costs. While the Hampton Board of Ed has been working hard to minimize increase, there may still be an increase. She noted that some of this year's expenses will be offset by grants. She noted that the Town is debt free at the moment, and in good shape overall.

**B. Individual Requests:**

**Librarian:** The Board received a request from Linda Gorman for more hours per week, as well as an adjustment to her hourly wage. Jim Ryan, Chair, Library Board of Directors, spoke on Mrs. Gorman's behalf. Mr. Ryan noted that the Library is set up solely as a service to Hampton. Their total yearly income is \$31,400.00, of which \$12,000 comes from the Town, \$8,000 from a trust fund, \$4,000 from fundraising, \$3,400 from a Savings Institute grant, and \$1,300 from the State of Connecticut. They are requesting an increase for Mrs. Gorman that cannot be covered by the \$31,400. Mr. Ryan noted that her present salary is \$15/hr. for 16 hours. He is requesting \$16.50/hr. for 20 hours. Mrs. Gorman noted she has many volunteers assisting her, averaging 45 volunteer hours weekly.

First Selectman Donnelly inquired if records are kept of the number of patrons that utilize the library, and the services they utilize. Mrs. Gorman will provide her with a report. Selectman Chapel noted he would like to see Mrs. Gorman's salary increased slightly. He noted that at the level requested, the increase amounts to approximately \$4,500.00 per year.

**Treasurer:** Treasurer Rodriguez has asked for a 5% increase. First Selectman Donnelly noted there is a glaring inequality with the Treasurer's salary as compared to other elected officials. In addition, the Treasurer's hours have increased substantially due to legal and audit requirements. Treasurer Rodriguez is also the bookkeeper; a large majority of towns have one individual who serves as Treasurer, and another who serves as bookkeeper.

**Registrar:** Joan Fox has requested that her salary be increased to \$18.00/hr to be on par with that of her predecessor. Treasurer Rodriguez has researched registrar wages and found that, historically, successors were paid what their predecessors had been paid. Mrs. Fox spoke with a representative of the State's Registrar's organization, and was informed that a Registrar's beginning salary need not be based on prior experience. Dayna McDermott-Arriola noted that the directive at the last BOS meeting was for there to be a meeting to discuss this issue. The registrars will arrange to meet before the next budget hearing.

**Road Crew Employee Brad Waite** - Selectman Dionne recommended a 1/3<sup>rd</sup> (33%) increase for Mr. Waite. Selectman Chapel concurred. First Selectman Donnelly asked about granting a COL increase to all road crew employees, as requested by Foreman Christadore. Selectman Dionne noted that if we do, then all Town Hall employees should receive the same.

**Transfer Station Employees:** First Selectman Donnelly noted that both employees are paid a low hourly wage. Selectman Chapel noted that DEP certification is required for their positions. He suggested that perhaps Town employees not covered under the Town's health insurance be considered for an increase.

C. **Other Items**

**Paving:** Increased to \$300,000. First Selectman Donnelly noted that \$31,000 will be received from LOCIP. Selectman Chapel inquired about transferring money from the general fund to cover the increase. First Selectman Dionne noted that if wanted to adhere to the 5 year road plan, the cost would be well over \$200,000. First Selectman Donnelly noted that repairs to South Bigelow and Bigelow will run approximately \$300,000. Selectman Dionne recommended the paving amount stay at \$300,000.

**Gazette** - First Selectman Donnelly sought the advice of Town counsel regarding this line item. She was advised to ensure that any monies granted be used solely for distribution costs, and that the Gazette Board sign a statement to hold the Town harmless. Selectman Dionne and Selectman Chapel concurred. Treasurer Rodriguez noted that the individual(s) who deliver the Gazette could bill the Town directly.

**ITEM 3: Audience for citizens:**

Wayne Kilpatrick spoke regarding eliminating COL increases and instituting merit-based language/increases.

Joan Fox noted that the Registrar's budget will be \$2,000 less than anticipated, as the State will pay for memory cards.

Vi Marquis inquired as to why the Tax Collector's assistant is being considered for a raise.

Dayna McDermott-Arriola spoke regarding the following:

- A. She concurred with Wayne Kilpatrick regarding COL vs. merit-based increases/language.
- B. Employer provided health insurance, and how that factors into hourly wages.
- C. The state of the economy, and wage increases being inappropriate for this year.
- D. Her salary as IWWA recording clerk, which is lower than that of other recording clerks, and she will not be asking for an increase.
- E. The Democratic Registrar of Voter's salary issue.
- F. The Board of Selectmen's need to consider implementation of a salary scale.
- G. The level of legal liability that Registrars must remain attentive to.
- H. More specificity and transparency in BOS agendas.
- I. Taking a year hiatus from contributing to the rainy day fund.

Linda Gorman expressed her opinion that a chain-of-command as pertains to job descriptions and evaluations be established, and that everyone be held to the same system.

Randy Thompson inquired about the street light line item he noted in the budget, and where that street light was. (at the junction of Rt. 6 and Old Rt. 6 West)

Alan Cahill asked that the Board take into account the grand list when determining our ability to pay. He noted there was an increase in insurance costs last year as well, which was, in effect, a wage increase.

Vi Marquis asked the Town is buying land it does not use thereby removing from tax base. Selectman Chapel noted that a Green Valley Institute study noted that it is actually more cost effective to keep the land in open space.

***NEXT MEETING:*** Next meeting for April 13, 2010, is re-scheduled to Thursday, April 29<sup>th</sup> 7:00p.m.

**ITEM 4: ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION:** There being no further business to come before the Board, Selectman Dionne moved to adjourn the budget workshop meeting at 11:24a.m.; Selectman Chapel seconded; all in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Marlene B. Aulten  
Recording Secretary