Selectmen’s Meeting Minutes January 14, 2015 Memorial Hall 9:00am

**Call to Order**: Chairman Payne called the meeting to order. Select board members Robert Manners and Joseph Judd were also in attendance.

**9:00am Don Jacobs, D J Consulting Services RE: Classification and Wage Study** – Don reviewed the process used to develop the classification and wage plan. The process included: an interview with each employee, creation of position descriptions, development of Grade Level Charts for general government and the police department, obtained salary survey data and developed salary ranges for each grade level.

Before accepting the plan, it is the Board’s responsibility to hear the appeals of any employee wishing to challenge their grade level, determine the financial cost of implementing the plan, vote to adopt the various components of the plan, and bring before town meeting final for approval.

**Appeals**:

Lynn Sibley, Town Treasurer – The position of Treasurer was classified as a Grade III; Lynn requested that the Board consider reclassifying the position to a Grade IV. Her reasons included:

* Works under the direction of the Selectmen (a policy board) and the Town Administrator;
* Responsible for $1.5 million dollars;
* Supervises a part-time Assistant Treasurer when needed;
* Consequence of error would jeopardize departmental operations and the overall financial health of the town and;
* Has regular access to confidential information on a town-wide basis;

Deliberation: Joe agreed that Lynn presented a solid case. Given the level of responsibility; Joe agreed that the position should be reclassified as a Grade IV. Bob reviewed the differences between the characteristics in Grades III and IV. He too felt that Lynn presented a strong case. John wanted to discuss whether the Treasurer should be viewed as a department head or a member of a financial team (Treasurer, Accountant, Collector, and Assessors). Typically, the financial departments fall under the direction of the Board of Selectmen or a Financial Manager.

William Barry, Assistant Assessor – Although Bill was unable to obtain the signature of his Board Chairman on the appeal form, he indicated that his Board is aware of his appeal and they are supportive. Bill explained the complexity of the position which includes a myriad of state laws, assessment/appraisal skills, interpreting deeds/blueprints, the need for a wide range of analytical skills as well as discretion and diplomacy when dealing with the public. His department is responsible for tax billing and assessments of over $200 million in properties; representing approximately $3 million dollars in annual tax revenue. When reviewing the results of the classification study, he was surprised to see that the position was graded lower than the Library Director (Grade IV) and/or the Senior Center Director (Grade V).

Bill and his Board Chairman, Alan Coutinho believes that the position should be between a grade level V or VI. His reasons include:

* The position is responsible for the performance of the department;
* He is the spokesperson for the department dealing with frequent conflict;
* The position represents an opportunity to increase tax revenues;
* Regular access to confidential information on a department wide basis and;
* Managerial level of supervisory responsibility of a department.

Further, Bill believes that it is unrealistic to think that a part-time Board averaging two hours per month can manage a department with such complex duties.

Deliberation: Once again reviewing the varying levels of characteristics used to classify each grade level Bob felt that it is the responsibility of the Assessors to ensure the overall performance of the department. It was determined that conflict typically arises when a taxpayer is unhappy with assessment and Bill estimated that the department receives 8-10 abatement requests annually. When asked about the types of confidential information handled, Bill explained that the detailed data of relating to personal property is confidential as is personal information relating to tax exemptions. The only characteristic in grade level IV that Bob felt was relevant was “works under the direction of a policy board.” Joe felt that the position’s level of responsibility should generate a higher grade level.

**Votes Taken**:

**Town Treasurer Appeal to Change Grade Level** – Joe presented a motion to grant the Treasurer’s appeal to change the position’s grade to level IV. Bob seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Assistant Assessor Appeal to Change Grade Level** – Bob presented a motion to deny the Assistant Assessor’s request to change the positions grade level. The position will remain at grade level III. John seconded the motion. Final vote: 2 in favor; 1 opposed.

**Proposed Grade Level Chart - Police Department** – Joe presented a motion to approve the Point Level Rating Chart consisting of grade levels I through III for the police department. Bob seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**Proposed Salary Ranges for Police Department** – Joe presented a motion to approve the proposed salary ranges for the police department. Bob seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**Proposed Grade Level Chart – General Government** – Bob presented a motion to approve the Point Level Rating Chart consisting of grade levels I through VI for general government. Joe seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**Proposed Salary Ranges for General Government** – Bob presented a three part motion: to place the Town Administrator position at step 4; to compensate the most senior highway employee in excess of the benchmark; and to approve the compensation structure for positions within general government as presented (projected cost $12,000). Joe seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**Further Discussion**:

Longevity Pay – does the program continue until a merit based evaluation system is developed?

Finance Department - Should the town formalize the finance department (Treasurer, Accountant, Collector, and Assessors)?

Autonomy of Positions (elected verses appointed) – Should elected positions fall under the administration of the Board of Selectmen, the policy board?

**Other Business**:

2016 Budget Directives – Members of the Board request level-funded operating budget requests.

Mutual Aid Agreement – Joe asked Terry to research whether the town adopted a state-wide mutual aid agreement whereby police officers from outside of our community can act in his/her official capacity in the event they witness or arrive on the scene of police department related event/crime.

**Adjournment** – Joe presented a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:04. Bob seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Narkewicz

Town Administrator