

Town of Williamsburg

Finance Committee Minutes

Town Hall

6 April 2023

Finance Committee Members Present: Paul Wetzel, Julia Peters, Richard Kisloski, Melissa Zawadzki, Charles Dudek

Finance Committee Members Absent: Gil Loud, Eric Cerreta, Lisa Sheehy, Gordon Allen

Town Administrator, Nick Caccamo

Fire Chief, Jason Connell

Fire Department Administrator, Kenneth Taylor

Town Clerk, Brenda Lessard

Select Board Member: William Sayre

The meeting was called to order by P. Wetzel at 6:03 p.m.

Brenda Lessard met with the FC to discuss her duties and request a salary increase. B. Lessard is contracted to work 20 hours/week. However, there are times during the year, during elections for example, that she works every day. She also advised the Committee that the State is increasing the duties of town clerks with elections changes and increased cyber security.

B. Lessard received a 14% salary increase in 2022 and requests a 13% increase in 2024 (~\$3.00/hr.) to bring her up to an hourly rate of \$20 to \$21. She stated that she works hard and feels that she is worth that rate.

J. Connell discussed the workload and finances of the Fire Department with the Committee. His current contract is for 20 hours/week, and he is requesting a 40 hour/week position. His reasons for this request and what he plans to do with this extra time are:

- J. Connell is already working more than 20 hours per week—generally 25 to 35 hours each week.
- Maintaining overall administration duties
- Writing and researching grants applications
- Preparing and presenting monthly trainings
- Conducting solar, gas station, propane tanks, and house fire detection inspections.
- The ability to have a first responder that lives in Town and is available most of the time, especially during the workday hours.

Other towns similar to Williamsburg in population and call volumes including Ashfield, Hatfield, and South Deerfield have full time chiefs with salaries ranging from \$65,000 to 78,000.

K. Taylor assists the Chief for 15 hours/week with the following administrative duties:

- Entering all incident reports into the State database
- Tracking the certifications and trainings of all employees
- Reporting and entering all Department inspections into the State database (100-150/year)

J. Connell also discussed capital requests for the Fire Department

1. Replacement of the Chief's vehicle. Considering a hybrid pick up truck with a slide out gear tray (estimated cost ~\$70,000)
2. Utility trailer for all terrain vehicle (estimated cost ~\$6 to 10,000)

He noted that the Department sold one of its trucks for \$8,600 and requested that that money be “returned” to the Department.

The members of Finance, Select Board and Town Administrator had a general discussion on pay raises. Highlights of this discussion included the following. It is recognized that the Town does not have a comprehensive compensation policy. That is a goal to work toward but cannot be turned to for guidance in this budget season.

There is a need for “guard rails” or some sense of what the Town can afford to offer its employees. Related to what can be afforded, when looking at wage comparisons in surrounding communities there is a need to agree on the sample that is being compared. Comparisons with similar sized communities is fine, but the geographic location of Williamsburg must be considered, too. Williamsburg is close enough to Northampton that potential employees will go there to find higher paying jobs. Several Town department managers described that they had difficulty retaining or attracting quality workers for some of their positions.

Finally, it should be recognized that the Town greatly benefits from having highly motivated employees. New employees are not always easy to find. Retaining highly motivated employees is an important aspect of salary deliberations.

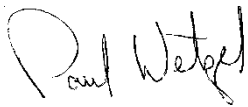
Annual Committee elections were held. P. Wetzel was elected chair of the Committee. J. Peters and M. Zawadzki were elected as Committee representatives on the Capital Planning Committee. It was noted that there is no one currently running the Capital Planning Committee and that capital planning will fall to the Finance Committee.

Minutes from the meeting held 30 March 2023 were reviewed. M. Zawadzki moved to approve the minutes as written; D. Kisloski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The next Finance Committee meeting will be held 13 April 2023 at 6:00 at the Town offices.

There being no further business before the Committee, M. Zawadzki moved to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by D. Kisloski. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Paul Wetzel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul R. Wetzel