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**TOWN OF WINCHENDON**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES**  
**MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2021**  
**Conducted by Remote Zoom Meeting**

Present:

Michael Barbaro, Chairman  
Rick Ward, Vice-Chairman  
Barbara Anderson  
Audrey LaBrie

Keith R. Hickey, Town Manager  
Linda Daigle, Executive Assistant

Absent:

Amy Salter

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List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- Town Manager Memo re: Renewal of Employment Contract with Police Chief David Walsh (attached)
    - Draft Chief of Police Employment Contract
  - Town Manager Memo re: Renewal of Employment Contract with Fire Chief Thomas Smith (attached)
    - Draft Chief of Fire Employment Agreement
  - Police and Fire Chief Compensation Comparison (attached)
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**EXECUTIVE SESSION** - Exemption #2 to conduct strategy session in preparation for negotiations with non-union employees and to reconvene into public session for the sole purpose of adjournment.

Chairman Barbaro called Executive Session to order at 6:52PM.

Town Manager Mr. Hickey informed the Board that both the Police and Fire Chief have existing contracts that expire on June 30, 2021 and they both have expressed getting the successor contracts in place prior to his departure. Hickey thought to do the same with the next Town Manager not knowing Chief Smith or Chief Walsh and their work products as well as he has. His impression of both individuals is that they have done well in representing themselves and their departments. He made minor modifications and provided the Board with copies.

Hickey continued addressing Chief Walsh's upcoming three year contract. He said he is proposing to do what he had brought before the Board back in 2018 shortly after the Chief's contract had been signed. The Chief had been looking to move or eliminate the three weeks' vacation buyback and have that money shifted up to the wage line. The Board asked to hold off at that time because the contract was in mid-term. Hickey stated he has no problem moving the fifteen day buyback out as a separate pay and add to his base pay. There would be no additional cost to the Town in doing so and the Chief has agreed to eliminate the buyback in his contract as the Board has sought to do in all contracts coming before them. In addition, Chief Walsh has agreed to reduce the amount of vacation time he accumulates so it is consistent with the personnel policy we are following. He would be moving from an allotment of 35 days to 25 days per calendar year.

Hickey referenced the compensation survey for both the Police and Fire Chiefs he shared with them noting they would find the Police Chief is slightly below the average compensation with the communities we compare ourselves too.

Chairman Barbaro opened it up to the Board for questions.

Ward asked about the education incentive discrepancies between the two Chiefs. Hickey explained he was concerned if he moved Chief Smith to a 10 to 20% incentive, the compensation adjustment for Chief Smith would be more significant than it is being proposed and he wasn't sure if he would receive that type of support for that wage adjustment. He feels both contracts should be consistent but because Chief Smith is not as competitive in wage range in overall compensation as Chief Walsh, he choose to address it through being a bit closer to the education incentive to the Police Chief. Hickey stated he hopes with the next contract, the Town Manager, the Fire Chief and the Board would be supportive in going to a 10 to 20% education incentive.

LaBrie wondered if there was a better way to get the Fire Chief's salary more in line. She recalled the Board having conversations in the past about using some education incentive or vacation time in a way to increase amount of money we pay someone instead of putting into their base salary. Hickey replied that he was trying to keep both gentlemen in the pay grades they were assigned to when the salary survey was done four years ago. Chief Walsh is the highest level, Grade 1; Chief Smith is in Grade 2. He thought he could address the compensation piece through the educational incentive and get where he needed to be compensation-wise. LaBrie asked how often the salary survey should be updated. Hickey replied it probably would be time to do it in the near future and added the Town was lucky to have Community Paradigm Associates conduct it through a state grant the last time.

Anderson asked if the draft contracts where acceptable to both Chiefs. Hickey replied, yes, that they were both pleased.

Barbaro commented both Chiefs have done a fine job for this community, sometimes going above the call. The contracts show we are trying to do something for our employees by way of compensation to bring us in line to what is out there keeping us competitive. He is very happy with the performance of both gentlemen.

With no further questions, **LaBrie moved to adjourn from Executive Session and reconvene into Open Session; Ward seconded. By roll call vote of all aye, Executive Session adjourned and the Board reconvened into Open Session at 7:03PM.**

Respectfully submitted,



Linda Daigle  
Executive Assistant