

TOWN OF WINCHENDON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES
MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2018
4TH Floor Robinson-Broadhurst Conference Room
109 Front Street, Winchendon, Mass.

Present:

Audrey LaBrie, Chairwoman
Barbara Anderson
Michael Barbaro

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

Absent:

Austin Cyganiewicz

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- Town Manager Memo dated 11/28/18 regarding “Upcoming Collective Bargaining Negotiations” (attached)
 - Comparison of Employee Benefits Provided in each Collective Bargaining Agreement and Non-Union Employees ending June 30, 2019
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EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Exemption No. 3 – To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.

Chairwoman LaBrie called Executive Session to order at 8:13PM.

Hickey provided the Board with a summary of core benefits that the Town offers all employees with the thought of where it would be appropriate to standardize benefits offered to employees. The document list the five union contracts and the non-union personnel policy benefits and asked the Board for guidance if there was one specific type of benefit offered under each category to try and make consistent. He provided his recommendations to the Board in his memo along with which union contract would be impacted by the recommendations if supported by the Board.

LaBrie asked how the Town compared to surrounding towns. Hickey replied he believed the Town was in the same boat as other communities who are also trying to standardize the benefits. There are a lot of communities out there that are not consistent with some of the benefits offered to employees.

LaBrie said it made sense to even out where they can and asked if there were some due to the nature of the beast, as such, that you can't. Keith replied, yes, and explained the different work schedules of the Police and Fire Departments that they have to keep in consideration but whether it be bereavement time, sick time or vacation time, there are some differences. He would like to make everyone as consistent as he can with bereavement, vacation, and sick time. The Board has had a fairly strong opinion on vacation buyback, some union contracts allow it and some don't. “Where does the Board want to go with that,” Hickey questioned? Every contract, as well as the personnel policy, allows for personal days but there are not a consistent in the number of days that are granted.

Barbaro commented in a prior employment of his they combined sick and personnel, up to five days, finding that actually worked better. Hickey said one thing he wanted to look in to that addresses sick time was the cost of a short term disability policy, not sure if it would be cost effective to offer short term disability. Anderson said what they do as teachers is they have a sick bank that employees can donate their sick time and they also received an incentive at retirement of a percentage of their sick time up to a certain amount.

Barbaro brought up the holidays that fall on Fridays and the closing of Town Hall for extended periods of time. Hickey believes the problem has been addressed with AFSME giving back some of those times. LaBrie added you can't have union off and non-union working. Anderson agreed. Hickey said he is not trying to penalize any group specifically but there are contracts that have more generous benefits than others. The Board agreed they would like it to be more consistent.


Barbaro asked about pay raises. Hickey said he is working on them now. Last year every union basically received a 2% increase. He noted there are some inconsistencies with each union having a salary scale when step raises are given and feels this should be standardized. Barbaro commented if you are trying to attract employees and the nearest town offers more, he would like to keep consistent with competing towns to obviously keep staff. Hickey said he is updating the salary survey that had been done to be consistent and understands it's something we need to be sensitive to. He complimented the employees the Town has and said he would hate to see them leave.

Hickey offered to go back to negotiations and where he can standardize the benefits, finish up the salary survey and come back to share with the Board.

Barbaro moved to adjourn from Executive Session; Anderson seconded. With a roll call vote of all aye, the meeting adjourned from Executive Session into Open Session at 8:46PM.

Barbaro moved to adjourn from Open Session; Anderson seconded. With a vote of all aye, the meeting adjourned at 8:46PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda Daigle
Executive Assistant