

**COMMITTEE MEETING
LAKE PLEASANT, NY
MONDAY NOVEMBER 18, 2013**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE
BUDGET REVIEWS
1:00 PM**

Present: John Frey, Rick Wilt, Brian Towers and Neil McGovern

Also present: Bill Farber, Brian Wells, Clark Seaman, Bob Edwards and Frank Mezzano

John announced the purpose for the Finance Committee meeting was to discuss Department Head requests for salary increases.

There are eight Department Heads that are asking for more than the COLA.

Bill reported Tracy requested the two Senior Custodians get step and grade increases. Marsha requested the Account Clerk in the D.A.'s office for a change in title and grade. There are two employees in Social Services that are asking for job title changes and/or an increase in step and grade. That makes five non Department Heads and then the Department Heads. If there is any inkling of talking about job performances specific to Department Heads we need to separate between Elected Officials and Department Heads in term of what is eligible for Executive Session. We have previously been advised with Elected Officials that it is all open session.

John stated he does understand the rationale behind some of the Department Heads requests. Staff is closing the gap with Department Heads; salaries are getting closer each year due to holding Department Heads salaries flat.

Brian Wells stated for Indian Lake; their Department Heads always get 1% over whatever the employees get.

John stated that quite a few of the requests have surpassed 5% and he is not in favor of going that high. John and Frank discussed this and John feels anywhere from 2.5% to 3.5% increase. Frank suggested 3%.

Rick asked if there were any issues with anyone who had their pay held back because they were a new Department Head. The policy is in two years we bring them back up.

John stated we had a request along those lines from the D.A.

Bill stated several have made the point that we had an unwritten policy that we reduced newly elected salaries down when first elected; then increased them back a portion of their past predecessors. Usually we do this in year two of employment.

Appointed employees are usually a negotiated rate. Elected Officials are a set salary.

Brian Towers asked what Jim Curry's salary was for 2011, John stated \$88,416. Brian stated Marsha requested this amount, which is what Jim was at when he left.

John feels the Department Heads should be across the board for any increase and they deserve this.

Bill asked who this includes; for your across the board thinking? Are you isolating around the eight Department Head requests from the 1.75%.

John stated he is talking about Department Heads. He doesn't feel it is fair to those who continue to hold the line.

Bill just wanted to make it clear, because he didn't want us rewarding someone just because they asked for more or are we awarding someone because it is the right thing to do.

John stated unless we do this individually and that is a danger for moral.

Bill stated the danger for doing only a few is because we're not doing what we ought to be doing and that is Department Head evaluations. We need to update the form and start doing evaluations. If we could get the evaluation form trimmed down to four or five key categories that a Committee Chair could feel comfortable rendering an opinion on a Department Heads ability to lead, inspire etc. Then we have the ability to say no you get nothing; yes you get cost of living etc.

Bob stated that he would be opposed to piecemealing out the raises.

Neil stated that he is opposed for any across the board raises. It sends a message of convenience and the lack of real evaluation from those who need to do it. He does agree with Bill that we have been lax in true, fair, consistent evaluations on Department Heads. For that reason he is for an across the board now, but he doesn't feel that it's at all wrong for us to be evaluating open or in closed session even the elected officials.

Bill stated when we have elected officials that are comfortable asking for salary increases above and beyond it stands to reason that the Board would have to make a value judgment before they offer those increases.

Neil stated that the job of the County Clerk, that is elected, is a completely different job than the County Sheriff's job who is also elected. I feel that I would not have a good handle on whether either of them are doing a great job and that is why they say that is what elections are for. If you take that full circle what the elections of us is for is to represent the people and what we hear from them. It may alter slightly from what the elected person sees it as.

Bill stated that we are fortunate that our elected officials do a very good job.

Bill asked the Budget Officer what impact an additional 1.25% increase has on the budget for Department Heads.

Frank stated if we give everybody what they asked for; that would be an additional \$25,000.00.

The Chairman stated that was for only the people who asked for additional monies and Frank stated yes.

To simplify this Frank suggested that they start with the two new elected officials regarding increases and then do the rest of the requests after.

Rick stated that this might not work with the Sheriff, because if you bring him up to what he is supposed to be at that would be a 1.75% increase anyway.

Frank suggested that they do the special exceptions first then the others.

Neil stated that the Sheriff is finishing a four year term and the only other elected official is Marsha with the shortest time. Marsha should fall under a different category from the Sheriff.

Rick stated that he is in favor of 3% across the board.

Brian Towers asked how many are in the same situation as the D.A. and the Sheriff.

Bill explained what they did with Beth and Jane. When they were elected they took the salary of the predecessor and reduced it by 10%. Then in year two we increased it back up 5%. It was a non-issue for them because the County previously did something very similar to what Indian Lake did and that was saying that Department Heads were not eligible for merit and/or step increases. Then for several years they were given a certain percent above what the employees were receiving. He believes what happened with Beth and Jane was that allowed them to catch back up and then the no increases for the elected officials is what is driving the mindset now.

With respect to Marsha and Karl he thinks it became more of a burning issue because we basically went into this mode of holding elected officials flat. Karl got back part of the decrease, but it was only part; he didn't go back to Doug's salary. Then we froze elected officials salaries. Marsha is speaking a similar case. So theirs are slightly different circumstances from the others.

Discussion continued on salary increases.

Neil feels they can't get Karl and Marsha to where they want to be even though they are doing a wonderful job and he sees their point.

Neil stated he would go for 3%, John 3%, Rick 3% and Brian Wells 3%. John recommends this across the board.

Bill apologized for repeating himself but he feels they need to double down and start doing evaluations.

Rick stated the only department that could cause a problem is Elections, because they need to be paid the same.

Bill stated that they have to be judged on how they work together. This is a tough area and we are going to have to figure out a system for them.

For non-department heads, Marsha wanted Connie Mahoney who is an Account Clerk be promoted to Senior Account Clerk which is a grade 8 at the salary of \$34,317.00. She is in the budget for \$30,182.

Neil asked how many jumps in grades is that, Frank stated it is from a 4 to an 8.

Bill stated the challenge here is that you have two positions within the department one is a Confidential Secretary and the other an Account Clerk. The Confidential Secretary should be at the higher grade due to higher end tasks.

Neil felt that a 4 grade jump is too big.

Brian Towers asked if that department needs a Confidential Secretary and a Senior Account Clerk, he doesn't think so; it would be hard to justify.

Senior Custodians, Tracy is requesting for them to be increased to \$40,000 each.

Rick stated the way Tracy looked at this was that the two employees they replaced, it was a big savings to the County and the job performances are way up. Both are highly skilled.

After a short discussion, Neil stated he is willing to go with this.

Bill reported that they are in the step and grade so you have either a 2.5% or 5% increase between grades and they will have to find a grade that they will fit in. The Committee looked over the grade scale.

Rick suggested that they go from a grade 16 to a 17, Neil agreed.

Brian Towers, Brian Wells and Bill suggested that they leave them where they are.

After a short discussion the decision was made to keep them where they are.

For Department of Social Services, Diane is a step 5, grade 8. Stephanie is a grade 6. Roberta was looking for a title change for Diane to a Senior Support Collection, due to the role she has in preparation of court documents etc.

Neil asked about Stephanie, Bill stated Stephanie is doing Social Welfare Examiner work such as HEAP.

Brian Towers felt that if this is part of the restructuring of the department then he supports the title changes, Neil agreed, as did Clark and Brian Wells.

As there was no further business the meeting ended.