Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, December 6, 2022 beginning at 5:30 pm in the Selectmen's Conference Room, Town Hall.

Members Present: James Gennette, Manuel Silva, William Rosenblum and Derek DeBarge

Members Absent: Antonio Goncalves

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

Mr. Strange: We had our monthly department head meeting last week and for the first time, and we've been meeting monthly probably since April or May, we had each department go around the room and provide their updates, a couple, two or three projects that are underway. I was really impressed with how much is going on in town. I know from my own perspective how busy I am, so it's not always easy for me to know what's going on with the other departments, but there's a lot going on in town. Our department heads are doing such an outstanding job. It was the first time I was really able to realize and appreciate everything that they've got going on. I just wanted to make sure that I gave them a shout out. Thanks to you and your staff and everything that you do for us, appreciate it.

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Mr. DeBarge: Great.

Mr. Strange: Next Wednesday, the Department of Revenue is coming in, the Division of Local Services, to interview our finance team, which is our treasurer, accountant, assessor and collector. They are also interviewing Selectman Gennette, Selectman Goncalves, the chair of the Finance Committee and myself and this is a free service that DOR provides. They do a financial management review for towns, and we had one done back in 2004. They look at overall management, overall financial management, technology, the treasurer's department, the accountant, the collector, and the assessor's departments and their practices. This is a document I refer to a lot when things come up. If something strikes me in the course of a day that we might be able to do something better, I take a look at that document to see what the state had recommended if they had picked up on it back in 2004. Some of the recommendations provided in that report we have addressed such as hiring a Human Resource Director, addressing and making our ambulance fee collections more efficient, creating a budget calendar which we did this year, holding monthly finance team meetings which we just started to do and hiring IT professionals and making the IT professional accountable to the Town Administrator. There are a couple other things, but for the most part, most of the recommendations have not been adopted yet. I suspect that after they meet with our team, and they write this new report that they're probably going to reiterate some of the recommendations that had not been adopted from the 2004 report. I did think it was interesting that the two highest priority recommendations from that 2004 report have not been implemented, but they speak directly to the special meeting articles for January 9th. The number one recommendation was empowering the Town Administrator with appointing authority. I'm just going to read straight from the report and we're going to put this report on the website. It says, "Consolidation of appointing authority in the Town Administrator makes all employees accountable for the performance of their requisite responsibilities. Under the structure, part-time boards and commissions can have input on appointments and can in any event continue to provide expert guidance, make customary decisions and formulate policy. However, the responsibility to oversee town government will be more squarely placed in the hands of a full-time professional hired for that purpose." I see this every single day and I know that everybody sees it and I know you see it too, but this is something that we live every single day and all of this rings very true to me and I think it speaks to the situation with our DPW staff and our BPW interaction. That's just one example of how implementing recommendation one could help curb that particular problem. The second recommendation was converting the treasurer and the collector to appointed offices and note that this report was written in 2004 which was before you could, in one action, combine the treasurer and the collector into one position and make that position appointed. The recommendation here was, "A clear trend has emerged from among Massachusetts communities in favor of appointed positions. Most act under a prevailing theory that policymakers should be elected, but operational positions where a certain skillset is required, such as the treasurer, collector, accountant, assistant assessor should be appointed. As appointed positions in town hall, the treasurer and collector would be placed on equal footing with other finance officers and

department managers who have similar level responsibilities." And then last but not least, this last passage I really could not articulate better, what's the dynamic in the town. "Characterized by a collection of independent part-time boards, elected department heads and widely dispersed appointing authority, the success of town operations is tenuously dependent on people's willingness to communicate, cooperate, and make things work. While most fundamental day-to-day tasks and procedures are getting done, broader management issues persist, and important periodic responsibilities are neglected or casually pursued." It really speaks to the fact that we have all these different sorts of domains, and it really depends on each domain's willingness to communicate with each other and that could not be more true. Again, the interviews are Wednesday. We expect this new report will be available sometime in early 2023. Then we also started to include some reports from various departments. I think for this particular meeting, we have a report from Human Resources, from our Vets Services Department and from our procurement agent. Eventually we want to provide that information from all the departments and that's really for the Selectmen's information. If you have questions or if you want further updates about anything that's in there, I'll be happy to answer those.

Mr. DeBarge: Great, thank you.

Mr. Gennette: Marc, any news on the new website; how it was received, that kind of thing?

Mr. Strange: I haven't heard too many things, so that's probably a good thing. I think we need to do a little more marketing and publicizing to make people aware that we know what the capabilities are and really get people involved once we populate the database of contacts and people can see how easy it is to get information. For example, if we pop up the Town Administrator's report onto the website, that can automatically be sent out to people who are signed up for a particular list. I think we're still early in the process, but I'm really proud of the way it came out. I think it looks great and I think it's super user-friendly.

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Mr. Gennette: Excellent. Thank you.

CORRESPONDENCE:

179. Chief Valadas - letter informing MA Civil Service 2022 Promotional Exam Cancellation.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge to file, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 4-0.

180. William N. Simons - Board to appoint William Simons to the Pond Committee.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge to appoint William N. Simons to the Pond Committee, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 4-0.

Mr. Gennette: I have a motion and second. Any discussion?

Mr. DeBarge: We had a couple resign so I know there's openings anyway.

181. Joe Alves, Assistant Assessor - requesting the Board to schedule our Fiscal Year 2023 Tax Rate Classification Hearing for Tuesday, December 20, 2022.

Mr. Rosenblum: Are we good for that day?

Mr. Strange: It was originally supposed to be for tonight, but we're a little behind in the process so it is going to be December 20th.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum to schedule our Fiscal Year 2023 Tax Rate Classification Hearing for Tuesday, December 20th, 2022, seconded by Mr. DeBarge. Vote 4-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Board to discuss and vote on updated non-union employee classification plan. This was tabled from the last meeting.

Mr. Gennette: We will do it right now that way we can let you go home. We will do the reclassification.

Ms. Ribeiro: Okay, so there's no new information that I sent. I believe that there's no changes to anything. I believe you should have a copy of everything. I have copies if anybody needs them. What we discussed at the last meeting was the new proposed classification plan for managers and non-managers. This is all non-union employees. The managers were part of the original comp and class study that HRS did, and the non-union hourly people were not. However, they're included in the new classification plan as well. They are separate. Then we also discussed the recommendations for salary increases for both the management titles and the non-management titles. So, these are all non-union positions; all positions that have no employment contract or are not part of a union. These are positions that I think we've discussed in length that over the last several years ever since I've been here and probably a good 10, 12 years before then at least have not been looked at. They've been just receiving the cost of living increase every year. Most of these people and positions are maxed out where they're at in the step scale and they're getting the 2% cost of living increase, which as we know, especially in the last year or two, is not cutting it with inflation where it is. I think it's time to re-look at these and specifically I had a proposed plan for the hourly non-union, which included all of the building individuals which would be the maintenance supervisor at the boys and girls club, the custodians, the cable, the office assistants, production studio assistant at the cable TV, the youth services assistant librarian, the health program coordinator. Those are the examples of the positions that we're looking at for non-union hourly increases. That is the sheet that I gave you. That is what that looks like. We talked very briefly at the last meeting about a 5% increase across the board for these individuals, which would be roughly $17,521. It's very minimal. A 5% increase on some of these scales right now is not even a dollar increase for some of the custodians and the maintenance supervisor. It's less than a dollar. So that's some of the information we need to decide on, the hourly increases and the hourly classification plan. The larger portion of that is obviously the management classification plan proposed and then the proposed increases that go along with that and then the new compensation scale that looks like this. Certainly, we can accept these documents the way they are this evening and make changes to them. This is not set in stone. These aren't concrete. We can accept these changes this evening and make changes next month, six months down the road. It's no different than using the current classification plan and comp scales that we have right now and making changes to those.

Mr. Gennette: Any questions?

Mr. DeBarge: Without getting into a long diatribe as we've talked about this for a while and we've all been in an agreement that positions in this town need to be brought up at least to a better level than they're at now and we brought this part up with the non-union custodians, maintenance, the 5% I am in big favor for because we have to start somewhere. We don't have a blank check for all positions, but we have to be able to address those positions that need to be addressed and this 5% increase, albeit not substantial for some, we have to get moving with it. I am in favor of this 5% increase.

Mr. Gennette: Can I ask you just to clarify, that's for the non-management positions?

Mr. DeBarge: Correct, non-union.

Mr. Gennette: Non-union.

Mr. DeBarge: Yes.

Ms. Ribeiro: Non-management hourly. Correct.

Mr. Gennette: Non-management. Just to reiterate that that 5% is $17,521.

Ms. Ribeiro: Correct.

Mr. Gennette: Total?

Ms. Ribeiro: Total.

Mr. Gennette: Which I believe is about you'd say about a dollar an hour?

Ms. Ribeiro: Well, it fluctuates.

Mr. Gennette: Depends on the average?

Ms. Ribeiro: The average looking at this is about 1.3 an hour, $1.30 an hour on the high end and the low end, but there is one position on here that since the lead computer technician since our last meeting we are going to be reevaluating anyways. You could probably even take that out of there. It's about $3,000 you could take out of there, but it is getting a little bit of an increase so you might want to just leave it alone too.

Mr. Silva: I am leaning to what Derek has mentioned that unfortunately the way our economy is, the way things are going right now, it's expensive out there. We just have to help these people that we have and try to keep them on board. Certainly, it's unfortunate that we're in the situation we are, but we are there, and we just have to maintain the good personnel that we have.

Mr. Rosenblum: I would agree also. You're seeing it even at a federal level. Social security is going to go to an 8.7% increase. Even 5% doesn't even put a dent into inflation, into COLA, as it is right now with everything that's going on. You're only going to see expenses start, food, heating oil, everything's going to be going up again still. I have no problem with the hourly pay plan. I think it's fine. It's actually probably not enough, but it's a starting point.

Mr. Gennette: I agree. I cannot believe this went 10 to 12 years. We're always focusing on those union contracts and people are fighting for them, the people in the unions and nobody's really kind of been taking care of the rest of the staff. So, I'm for it as well. If everybody's for this, can I get a motion?

Mr. DeBarge: How do you want it worded Carrie?

Ms. Ribeiro: Well, for the non-union hourly, it would be to approve the classification plan compensation scales and then the 5% increase.

Mr. Gennette: So, the classification grades management as proposed in this blue?

Ms. Ribeiro: Not management, not for what we're talking about now.

Mr. Gennette: You're talking about the other one?

Ms. Ribeiro: Just the hourly. Just the non-union hourly.

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Mr. Gennette: The Ludlow classification grades, non-union hourly proposed, this is the suggestion and for this, and correct me if I'm wrong, we can make amendments to this classification down the road. We can talk about it, and it is kind of a growing document. Positions move around and we need the lateral movement to be able to handle this stuff. Kind of like the lead computer technician we know is going to change, but we're going to approve it in this classification with the understanding that it's going to get moved a little bit. Can I get started with that motion?

Moved by Mr. DeBarge to approve the proposed classification and grade for non-union hourly employees as given to us by HR, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 4-0.

Mr. Gennette: I have a motion and a second. Is there any further discussion? Hearing none.

Mr. Rosenblum yes, Mr. Silva yes, Mr. DeBarge yes, Mr. Gennette yes. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Mr. DeBarge: Do you want me to say every one of them or what we just did the non-union, I'm sorry, non-management, the 5%?

Ms. Ribeiro: Yes, you can just say what you did. You don't have to say every single one.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge to approve a 5% increase for the non-management hourly employees as given to us in our sheet, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 4-0.

Mr. Gennette: I have a motion and a second. Any further discussion? All in favor. Just to make everybody happy, 4-0. What's next, Carrie?

Ms. Ribeiro: The next is the proposed management scale, the new classification scale. Instead of the GL2, GL3, GL4, these are M1 through M8 is the new proposal. Again, we can approve this as is tonight. We can make changes tonight and then approve. Certainly, this is just taking over the classification plan that we're working off of now. That's one that we need to look at along with the scales, the new management scales that go with it, the new grades because I created new grades that go along with this. Then the harder part is looking at the increases, the proposed increases for those positions that were part of the classification and compensation study.

Mr. Gennette: Let's start small, let's go with this first. This is the new classification plan if everybody has seen it. I need a motion to approve the new classification plan.

Mr. DeBarge: I'd like a little discussion on it first because the classification plan has the positions in it. Are we going to talk about those?

Mr. Gennette: We will definitely discuss it still. We can actually make changes now if you want, before we make a motion, if you'd like.

Mr. Strange: You can make a motion, have a second, and then have discussion on it or you can talk about it.

Mr. Rosenblum: You said there's something we can vote on and approve as is and then make adjustments later on. Otherwise, are we going down individually on these?

Ms. Ribeiro: We can. My recommendation would be if there is a glaring position that you have a question on, or I think that's the whole point of tabling this for a month is to look at these. If there is something that is glaring and standing out, I would recommend that we make that change tonight, but again six months down the road we can make changes to this document. It is just a reclassification.

Mr. Gennette: So, let's go down the list. Does anybody have any discussions for the M1 classification? No. Does anyone have any changes they would like to make to the M2 classification? No. M3?

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Mr. Rosenblum: I do.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay so yes.

Mr. Rosenblum: I would go with the superintendent at the golf course because I believe it's classified as a 40 hour. I know that position's more than 40 hours. I know it's at least a 50-hour a week job. You are working year-round. I would be willing to go M4 on that one just knowing that salaries for head superintendents are probably even higher than what the step 6 is in the grades. I would be fine with going with an M4 on the superintendent.

Mr. Gennette: Does anybody else want to talk about the superintendent of the golf course?

Mr. DeBarge: I concur.

Mr. Gennette: I lean on somebody that's in the field. If you don't think that he's making what the going rate is for the position, I'm on board as well.

Mr. Rosenblum: Then that would be to where he is, where do you put him. If he goes to M4, which step and currently you have him at; annual is what it is now right in the green?

Ms. Ribeiro: Correct.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay.

Ms. Ribeiro: So that's in the middle.

Mr. Rosenblum: So, then you could move him probably into what, a step four?

Mr. Gennette: Well, we could talk about the steps after. What we want to do is we want to kind of itemize this list and make sure that this gets to a clean document.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay.

Mr. Gennette: Is there any other positions in the M3 we want to discuss? Hearing none. Any in M4?

Mr. DeBarge: Yes. I have spoken about this before too. First and foremost, our Council on Aging Director, an average of 140 to 170 lunches a day, sold out for Christmas and Thanksgiving quickly, seniors coming from other towns to the Ludlow Senior Center. 220, by the way, I think that was for Christmas, which sold out. Was it three vans, drivers, staff, all of that? That place is the busiest building in this town. I would like to see that position go to an M5 from 3 and the step increase that's your purview Carrie. I can see it at either a two or three. Again, I'll just say in Veterans Services as well, our Veterans director, I can go into all the time that I spend with him with the events and all that, but I think a lot of things that maybe some don't take into account is the fact that it's a lot of evenings, weekends. It's a lot of planning. It's a lot of dealing with a lot of people that come in, a lot of veterans that come in for services that stem from one end of the spectrum to the other. We don't need to go into how Eric does as a director in servicing our veterans. That position is a three. I would like to see that.

Mr. Silva: Four.

Mr. DeBarge: I'm sorry. No, no, this is in this one. He is a 3 now. In this one it is a 4. I don't have a problem with the 4 part, but I would like to see the salary increase too; well again Carrie.

Ms. Ribeiro: Do you want to get through the classification plan first and then talk about?

Mr. DeBarge: Sure.

Ms. Ribiero: Okay.

Mr. Gennette: Just to clarify that this list has already adjusted that position from an M3 to an M4?

Ms. Ribeiro: That was based on the recommendation from the study, HRS, correct? That is what they felt. Yes.

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Mr. Gennette: What about the Council on Aging Director?

Ms. Ribeiro: Same. Yes. That position was.

Mr. Gennette: She was also an M3?

Ms. Ribeiro: Yes.

Mr. Gennette: Is there any others in that that were M3?

Ms. Ribeiro: Well level 3s there was, yes, in the 4s?

Mr. Gennette: Yes.

Ms. Ribeiro: No. The building commissioner was already a 4. Health agent was a 4. Town planner is a 4.

Mr. Gennette: So essentially, we're approving to go from an M3 to an M5?

Mr. DeBarge: That's what I am. That's what I am requesting. That's my discussion.

Mr. Gennette: That's the discussion.

Mr. Silva: No. I mean I would like to have some discussion and be able to, but unfortunately I haven't been as delved into the situation as Derek and I applaud him for doing that. He's been down there. He's looking at what it is they're doing and if he feels that is what should happen, I don't have a problem with it.

Mr. DeBarge: Thanks Manny.

Mr. Rosenblum: Yes because right now it is proposed as a 4, right?

Mr. Gennette: Yes.

Mr. Rosenblum: I wouldn't have a problem with it, but I'd probably be more inclined to go into it, to go with the proposal first and then down the road maybe like you were saying we could change it later if we wanted to.

Mr. DeBarge: Why?

Mr. Rosenblum: May just go into this step.

Ms. Ribeiro: Before we move on, keep in mind that both of these positions that you're talking about right now their salary is the same at just under $80, so, $79,661. So, if you keep them at a 4, you can bump them to a step 4, or you can bump them to a step 5, $83 or $87 and they'll have one or two steps to go. If you bring them to a step 5, it's going to afford them three or four more steps throughout the next several years.

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Mr. Gennette: So, is that like an equivalent? If you did an M4, step four, is that roughly the same as an M5, step one or two?

Mr. Silva: Pay wise.

Ms. Ribeiro: Yes, similar. These scales overlap.

Mr. Gennette: So, the only thing we're looking to do is give us some head space to be able to grow into the position?

Ms. Ribeiro: Right. I don't think if we're going to take somebody at a salary of just under $80 and keep them at an M3 and bump them up one step that means they're at the end of the scale which is a step six. You're maxing them out. I don't know if it's something that you want to look at and change four or five months down the road. It might be something you want to look at tonight and do it now. There's not that much that's going to change between now and then.

Mr. DeBarge: That's a good point.

Mr. Rosenblum: Your point is if you go into the 5 it's adding a couple steps to work up towards.

Ms. Ribeiro: Right.

Mr. Rosenblum: Basically, at this point if the Council on Aging is at $79, you would be moving them into a 5 and putting them at either a one or probably a two or something like that.

Mr. DeBarge: I would say a three; 5, three.

Ms. Ribeiro: Yes, it would have to be a two or three.

Mr. DeBarge: Yes, it couldn't be.

Mr. Rosenblum: Yes, no, two. Yes.

Ms. Ribeiro: Right because the scales the way they are now, and again these are effective for 7/1/2023, we're not talking now and based on what their salary is now. So, if their salary stays at what it is now, they're going to get at least, I would imagine a 2% increase, 2.5%, whatever the COLA is to put them to step two in this instance where you're not talking a huge bump.

Mr. Rosenblum: I am fine with that.

Mr. Gennette: You're good with it?

Mr. Rosenblum: Yes.

Mr. Gennette: Okay, I think we're probably good with those. Any further discussion on the M4 classifications? In the M5s, obviously, we will now have the Council on Aging Director and the Veteran's Director. Is anybody in the M5 they would like to discuss? Hearing none. M6? Hearing none. M7 or M8? We're good.

Mr. Silva: I would like to see the M8 go down to M1.

Mr. Gennette: You know what.

Mr. Silva: What are you laughing at?

Mr. Strange: I think we make that motion.

Mr. Gennette: It's hourly non-union.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay, can I just clarify before we do anything because he said Veteran Services and Council on Aging to a 5. With the numbers, whatever the step is, yes, I agree with that.

Ms. Ribiero: That's fine.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay.

Mr. Gennette: Alright, so you have the changes for the proposed?

Ms. Ribeiro: I do.

Mr. Gennette: Alright.

Ms. Ribeiro: I do.

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Mr. Gennette: So, can I get a motion for the Ludlow classification grades management proposed to be accepted with the adjustments?

Moved by Mr. DeBarge to approve the proposed classification grades for management positions with the adjustments of classes and steps that we have made tonight, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 4-0.

Mr. Gennette: Now we can get into the steps.

Mr. DeBarge: We have three, right, or did we already say the golf course superintendent's position?

Mr. Gennette: What would you like to look at next?

Ms. Ribeiro: Well, you have to discuss those three that you just reclassified, but you also need to just look at the rest of the study that was done. So, we just took care of the reclassifications.

Mr. Gennette: Let's discuss those first because we were just on those.

Ms. Ribeiro: Sure.

Mr. Gennette: We might as well stay right with them.

Mr. Rosenblum: Yes.

Mr. Gennette: The first one is the superintendent of the golf course, now M5.

Mr. DeBarge: Now he is a 4.

Mr. Rosenblum: He's a four. He went from M3 to M4.

Mr. DeBarge: Yes.

Ms. Ribeiro: He's a four.

Mr. Gennette: Oh, I'm sorry. I apologize. Yes.

Mr. Rosenblum: I would say seeing, looking at the current annual wage, that I would probably start that one at a step four as we cannot go backwards.

Mr. Gennette: Where is he now?

Mr. Rosenblum: He's just a hair below step three.

Ms. Ribeiro: Step three. Yes.

Mr. Rosenblum: In order to fall, I mean, you cannot cut him. I would start him at the step four.

Mr. DeBarge: $83?

Mr. Rosenblum: $83,250.

Mr. DeBarge: I agree with that. Second.

Mr. Gennette: Good. Is that a motion, Mr. Rosenblum?

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum that we start with the newly classified golf course superintendent to an M4 starting at step four, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

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Mr. Gennette: Superintendent of the golf course moves. Next position.

Mr. DeBarge: Veteran services and the Council on Aging Director.

Ms. Ribeiro: Council on Aging.

Mr. Gennette: Where is she now under the new classification, M5?

Ms. Ribeiro: She falls under, right.

Mr. DeBarge: Step five.

Ms. Ribeiro: Yes, right now on the step for the five scale, she's just under step one.

Mr. Gennette: Just under step one.

Mr. Silva: What's that amount?

Ms. Ribeiro: $79,661 is her current salary.

Mr. Silva: Okay. She is at $79.

Mr. DeBarge: If everybody is comfortable at M5, step 2 which is what most of what we're saying; I wouldn't mind seeing step 3, but step 2 would be a conventional step or at least a good step in the right direction. I'd make a motion for step 2 for both.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge for both Veteran Services and the Senior Center Director be moved to M5, step two, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 4-0.

Mr. Silva: M5, step two.

Mr. DeBarge: M5, step two.

Mr. Silva: Just one more. Are they basically the same; their increases are the same?

Mr. Rosenblum: Both $79.

Ms. Ribeiro: Where they are right now, where they are going, same exact.

Mr. Gennette: I have a motion and a second. Any further discussion? All in favor. Vote 4-0.

Mr. DeBarge: All right. Where are the other ones?

Mr. Gennette: Before we go further on this, is there anybody else in this? I don't even want to get into it. Those were the ones we were concerned about. Okay what's your next?

Ms. Ribeiro: Okay, so on this sheet you had all of the titles that were part of the study, but I had also summarized it down to this sheet where you had the proposed regrades that were really kind of the positions that were mostly out of whack. Do you have that?

Mr. Gennette: I do.

Ms. Ribiero: That might be a good starting point and we've already taken care of three of the positions on this.

Mr. Gennette: Alright, so let's start right up at the top, the Town Clerk. Any discussion?

Mr. DeBarge: Can I just ask, so I see the total down here, $52 for all of the proposed ones that you have on this sheet.

Ms. Ribeiro: Right here in the sheet.

Mr. DeBarge: Excluding, I guess not excluding the three we just did. It is still the total still remains the same, right? But these were at the, oh, I am sorry. No, these were at, okay. So Veteran Services was at the M4, so they do have to be tweaked a little bit. So, for all of these, okay. I just wanted to make sure.

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Ms. Ribeiro: The increases that you just approved, the proposal on this sheet is a little bit higher than what you just proposed. So, I would imagine this number would be a little bit less at the end of the day.

Mr. Gennette: So, this $52 is the total if we did them all? It would even be even less with the ones that we just approved.

Ms. Ribeiro: Right, on this sheet though.

Mr. Gennette: Any conversation about the Town Clerk's position currently sitting at $76?

Mr. Rosenblum: Which is basically step four.

Mr. Gennette: Basically, step 4, $76,700.

Ms. Ribeiro: Now keep in mind if you keep that position where it is at a 3, based on this, she'll be eligible for step increase because she's not maxed out anymore.

Mr. Gennette: Right. She's currently, she was at a three.

Ms. Ribeiro: Correct. She is at three.

Mr. Gennette: But she was maxed at a five?

Ms. Ribeiro: No, she is not yet.

Mr. Gennette: Right so $79.

Ms. Ribeiro: She will be next year.

Mr. Gennette: She was at $79,800 and a four. Okay, I see.

Mr. Rosenblum: It's either. If you're keeping her M3, she's either getting a $600, $700 raise if your keep her at a 4.

Mr. Gennette: Well, she has to move into a step four, right?

Mr. Rosenblum: Are you saying we stay at the four or are we going to give her.

Mr. Gennette: Step five.

Ms. Ribeiro: Right.

Mr. Rosenblum: Yes, I would be inclined to stay at step four.

Mr. Gennette: I concur with that because obviously she cannot do a step three because she would, we'd be decreasing her.

Mr. Silva: She's getting $79,600 now. Did you say that she is getting 79 now?

Ms. Ribeiro: No $76.

Mr. Silva: She is getting $76.

Mr. Gennette: She would've actually been at a step, between a 2 and a 3.

Ms. Ribeiro: She would have maxed out next year. So, at 7/1/2023 based on the current scale that we have now, which we're no longer going to be working off of, she would've been maxed out in 7/1 of 2023, but based on these new scales, she stays where she is at an M3 she will be afforded two more steps.

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Mr. Gennette: So, what step are you recommending that she go to?

Mr. DeBarge: That she stay and gets her step increased.

Ms. Ribeiro: Right. We could put her at a step five.

Mr. Silva: Yes, yes step five would be $79, which is only $3000.

Mr. DeBarge: Then with the new steps she will be eligible for the sixth, right?

Ms. Ribeiro: Right.

Mr. DeBarge: That's what you are talking about now. Okay.

Mr. Gennette: I am okay with that.

Mr. Silva: Okay. Next?

Mr. Gennette: Does everybody agree with that? Is there any other discussion about the Town Clerk? No, we are good.

Mr. Silva: The Town Collector, Treasurer is kind of difficult. I do not know if we are going to be looking at that now or are we going to

Mr. Rosenblum: Leave it.

Mr. Silva: because the responsibilities are certainly going to be a lot more and might afford an increase to another M designation.

Ms. Ribeiro: I agree, and we have the position as an M5. We included it as part of the study knowing.

Mr. Silva: It might be more of an M6 if.

Mr. DeBarge: If the change goes, yes, I agree.

Mr. Silva: So, do we move forward with the way it is now and then wait?

Ms. Ribeiro: My recommendation would be to leave it and see what happens and wait and then make the change after.

Mr. Silva: Yes.

Mr. Gennette: Alright. Town Collector is going to stay as it is. Town treasurer?

Mr. Silva: Same.

Mr. Gennette: Mr. Strange, at any point if you have anything you would like to add. Inspectional Services, Building Commissioner. For me, I think the building commissioner is very new and I don't know if I would move this one. Any discussion?

Mr. Silva: Did we get into contract with the commissioner?

Ms. Ribeiro: No.

Mr. Silva: We did not do a contract like we had previously with the previous one, this was just straight out?

Ms. Ribeiro: We had a contract in the beginning.

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Mr. Silva: Yes, we had one and we never really, we were negotiating, but we never really went forward. Okay, just wanted to know. The position when she was hired was advertised at a certain amount.

Ms. Ribeiro: It was.

Mr. Silva: Do you have that at all?

Ms. Ribeiro: It was advertised as a 4 which the scale of the four is $65,181 to $86,907. That is what it was advertised as.

Mr. Silva: And we brought her in at?

Ms. Ribeiro: $83,286.

Mr. Silva: I think we are good for now quite honestly.

Mr. DeBarge: I agree.

Mr. Rosenblum: Well, if she is an M4, we'd have to move her up to $87,300 and you'd be dropping her back.

Ms. Ribeiro: Right, but she is going to get the step increase to that anyhow in July and then based on this she will be.

Mr. Silva: She just started, and she knew what she was.

Ms. Ribeiro: Right, she would be maxed out at the old comp scale. With the new one, she is going to get another step in 7/1/2024.

Mr. Silva: Okay, great.

Mr. Gennette: So, we're going to hold on that one as well.

Mr. Rosenblum: Yes.

Mr. Gennette: Moving onto the Planning Board, Town Planner. Any discussion? Currently $79,661.

Mr. Rosenblum: That would be the same; keep him the same because he'd be going up into a four on the next one. Yes?

Mr. Silva: Yes?

Ms. Ribeiro: Right. So, if we keep him at a 4, right now well he's maxed out at a 3. If you leave him at a 4, again he will be afforded three more steps whereas right now he's maxed out.

Mr. DeBarge: I'm okay with that.

Mr. Silva: Okay, next.

Mr. Gennette: Alright and last but not least, the public library, the library director who is currently at $86,902.

Mr. Rosenblum: I would probably do the same there because then he is going to step up into $88,290, right and then he's afforded four steps at that point.

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Mr. Silva: Okay, I'm good.

Mr. DeBarge: Yes, I'm good.

Mr. Gennette: Yes, I am good too.

Mr. Rosenblum: Do you want to make a motion with changes?

Moved by Mr. Silva to approve the proposed management compensation as adjusted by the Board and the Human Resource Director, seconded by Mr. DeBarge. Vote 4-0.

Mr. Gennette: I have a motion and a second. Is there any further discussion? Is that it Carrie?

Ms. Ribeiro: I think that's it.

Mr. DeBarge: Thanks, Carrie.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you for all your hard work. We appreciate it.

Board to close the warrant for the January 9, 2023 Special Town Meeting.

Mr. Rosenblum: In article one, I am just kind of looking at the wording. Shall the town vote to have its Selectmen act as the Board of Public Works?

Mr. Silva: Should we not have the wording in there to dissolve, to actually dissolve the Public Works and have the board act as because then if we're not doing that, then we're not dissolving the actual board are we?

Mr. Strange: This language is statutory. There's an actual state statute that says if you want to do this literally this is the language. I agree with you. It's a little awkward because if Town Meeting votes to move it onto the ballot and the voters vote to approve it, the question, then essentially you

still have a DPW that has no authority. So that's kind of the next step in the equation is what do we do then, but I didn't want to put the cart before the horse. I had the same thought.

Mr. Silva: There is still going to be a board, there is still going to be an election for those positions?

Mr. DeBarge: The way I see it is with what happened the first time and we're trying to be more clear and concise about everything this time, if we can get this thing passed, if they want to continue to meet without having authority over the daily operations of the DPW, then that's something we can address after, but for this point now it is about the authority of the DPW in my opinion.

Mr. Silva: Yes, I agree, but still having a board and a board does have bylaws per se, or what their directions are, are you actually taking every authority away from them just by doing this?

Mr. Strange: Yes because the Board of Public Works' authority is delineated in a state statute. So, in our bylaws it says a few things, but then it refers back to the state statute. So whatever authority is currently prescribed in the bylaws and the state statute through the bylaws would be with the Board of Selectmen. Some communities have kind of turned, as a practical matter, turned the Board of Public Works into like an advisory board to the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Silva: That I agree, but an elected board does have some power where they're elected by the voters so that is going to be all eliminated?

Mr. Strange: Yes, so we have not asked that question. I can certainly ask the attorneys that question. We've been asking, so let's say hypothetically that the town voters vote to approve this, when does the authority transfer from the Board of the DPW to the Board of Selectmen, and according to our attorneys it's immediate.

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Mr. Silva: Okay.

Mr. Gennette: Just for a little bit of clarity I am going to take a minute here. It's not a big article or anything, but just for anybody that's watching to know what's going on. We're talking about the articles that are going to Town Meeting and Article One says to see if the town will vote to place a question on the March 2023 annual town election ballot for the purpose of the Board of Selectmen to act as the Board of Public Works. The question to read as follows: Shall the town vote to have its Selectmen act as the Board of Public Works? I just wanted to give a little bit of clarity as I don't think we really read that, and we were talking about it. I don't think everybody knew what was happening. This is only to send the question to Town Meeting. So, this still has to get voted on there before it ever goes to the ballot.

Mr. Rosenblum: Let's say Town Meeting passes it to the ballot, they still have their authority until election day?

Mr. Strange: Yes.

Mr. Rosenblum: So, in the same sense, they're still going to have elections also for any expired seats at that point as well?

Mr. Strange: Yes.

Mr. DeBarge: It's what happened last time.

Mr. Strange: I don't want to get ahead of ourselves here, but kind of with the treasurer/collector. If somebody takes out nomination papers to run for collector and they get elected in March, but on that same ballot the voters vote to combine the positions the collector position no longer exists. So that person would get elected and then the position would be dissolved.

Mr. Silva: They'd be a collector for a day.

Mr. Strange: Right.

Mr. DeBarge: Collector for a day.

Mr. Rosenblum: I'm just thinking about the fact that if someone fundraises, buys signs and does things of that nature, I am looking at it from that side. I'm fine with the articles obviously that we have here. I just want to make sure that once we say yes or Town Meeting says yes it goes to the ballot and then at that point they still have the powers until March whatever, like around the 26th.

Mr. Gennette: Providing everybody votes to,

Mr. Rosenblum: Well correct.

Mr. Gennette: whatever the vote is.

Mr. Rosenblum: If it doesn't pass, then you still have the election; whoever wins their seat will get it.

Mr. Gennette: Right. So, there are only two articles on this. Any other discussion?

Mr. Silva: I certainly hope and want to reach out to the precinct members that this is really important and that we do get a quorum because many times you have something like this, some meetings, you just don't get the quorum that we need. So, anybody that's out there if they could just reach out, if you know precinct members reach out to them, speak to them, and get yourself informed before we go to the meeting and please attend so that we can get this moving forward.

Mr. Rosenblum: Also, even though saying how the wording of it is, shall the town vote to have its selectmen act as the Board of Public Works, in the same sense we're still looking to hire a director that would run the day to day because that's what their expertise is or if it's a management person or we haven't had a PE because we outsource pretty much everything is also to understand that director will be running the DPW. In a sense they report to us, they would report to us, give us a budget update, project updates and to that nature, but again we're not experts in that field but in the same sense its making sure that it's managed properly so the things that are happening that have come out in the last report, that we don't get to that point, because as we are right now I'm sure we've got some applications, but we've gone through a lot of directors, and we have a lot of holes over there right now with job openings. It's not that we want to have a power struggle here. It's the fact that we just want to have it run properly. That's something that I'm going to make clear at Town Meeting is the fact that we want to oversee someone that's going to do the job.

Mr. Strange: Structurally if this passes, it's the same relationship that you have with the police department, with the fire department, veterans.

Mr. Rosenblum: Yes, thank you.

Mr. Gennette: I just want to add that when we're elected officials to oversee a department, we oversee a paid professional to be able to do those things just like we said with the police chief and the fire chief and those kinds of things. Much to what Mr. Rosenblum was saying, you're not going to find us driving around in police cars. It is not going to happen. So, I agree with him, and I think this definitely needs to go to, well.

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Moved by Mr. Silva to close the Special Town Meeting for January 9th, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 4-0.

Board to approve and sign Selectmen Meetings Minutes of September 20, 2022.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign the Selectmen Meeting Minutes of September 20th, 2022 with all members present, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 4-0.

Board to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of October 11, 2022.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign the Selectmen Meeting Minutes of October 11th, 2022 with all members present, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 4-0.

Board to approve and sign Executive Session Meeting Minutes of November 15, 2022.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign the Executive Session Meeting minutes of November 15th, 2022, all members present, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 4-0.

Board to approve and sign the Common Victualler License for John's Corner, 204½ Sewall Street, Ludlow.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign the Common Vic License of John's Corner, 204½ Sewall Street, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 4-0.

Board to approve and sign the Common Victualler License for The Lighthouse, 108 Sewall Street, Ludlow.

Mr. Gennette: Is it supposed to be for The Lighthouse? Is it under the new ownership name?

Mr. Strange: What's on there?

Mr. Gennette: So, it still goes by The Lighthouse? Okay, that's fine.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign the Common Victualler license for The Lighthouse, 108 Sewall Street, Ludlow, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 4-0.

Board to approve and sign the Entertainment License for The Lighthouse, 108 Sewall Street, Ludlow.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign the Entertainment License for The Lighthouse at 108 Sewall Street, Ludlow, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 4-0.

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NEW BUSINESS:

Board to approve a request to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111 F for an injury sustained by a firefighter as a result of an incident that occurred on November 10, 2022.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum to approve a request to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111 F for an injury sustained by a firefighter as a result of an incident that occurred on November 10th , 2022, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 4-0.

Board to vote and accept MIIA grant for facilities maintenance planning.

Mr. Gennette: If I'm not correct, Mr. Strange, this is that million dollar grant?

Mr. Strange: This is. So, through MIIA they offer grants for certain things and for us facilities is kind of a high; we get a lot of claims for our facilities. I don't know how else to say it. They encourage towns to apply for grants that will help mitigate some of those costs. This one's a thousand dollars, but I am really excited about this. It's a software program that allows us to put in all of our buildings, track costs over time, schedule vendors, put in ticklers to remind us when we need to do things like winterize buildings and things of that nature. Now that we actually have a facilities director, I think this is a really good way to support him in his efforts.

Mr. Gennette: I love that it's a grant. Let's bring in the money.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge to accept the MIIA grant for facilities maintenance planning, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 4-0.

Board to approve a request to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111 F for an injury sustained by a firefighter as a result of an incident that occurred on November 22, 2022.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum to approve a request to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111 F for an injury sustained by a firefighter as a result of an incident that occurred on November 22nd, 2022, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 4-0.

Board to approve liquor hours for New Year's Eve.

Mr. Rosenblum: So generally, it would be liquor at 2:00 a.m. and close at 4:00 a.m.?

Mr. DeBarge: Correct.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum to approve the liquor hours for New Year's Eve as following to where all liquor consumption stops at 2:00 a.m. and establishments can close at 4:00 a.m., seconded by Mr. DeBarge. Vote 4-0.

Mr. Gennette: This is something that just happens every year.

Board to approve and chairman to sign change order for radio project OPM.

Moved by Mr. Silva to approve and the chairman to sign change order for the radio project OPM, seconded by Mr. DeBarge. Vote 4-0.

Mr. DeBarge: Do we have any update on the track and field, Marc?

Mr. Strange: The track and field project is currently in the permitting phase. They're in front of the Conservation Commission right now delineating the wetlands and that typically takes a meeting or two. So that is where we are with that.

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Mr. DeBarge: Thank you.

CLOSING COMMENTS:

Mr. Rosenblum: I would like to extend well wishes and recovery to Coach Kolodziey. An unfortunate incident right now and I believe he had surgery yesterday and is recovering. So just a shout out to the coach. He's a staple in Ludlow, probably beyond in the state and New England. We all hope that he fights a good battle and gets better and is back on the sidelines. Thank you.

Mr. Silva: I have nothing other than dittoing the comments by Mr. Rosenblum. Mr. Kolodziey is a gentleman. I coached him when he was 16 and sorry to hear that something like this happened. Hopefully, he'll get through it. Thank you.

Mr. DeBarge: My thoughts and prayers are with the Kolodziey family, Coach Kolodziey. I have not been around him in the soccer world, but I've been around him when he brings his team to get out and put the red ribbons out for the CARES Coalition and the countless things he does for our community. He's a strong guy and we're all pushing for him. I do want to mention also the Christmas tree lighting and Toys for Tots ceremony that we had on Sunday. I was hoping there was going to be a lot of people. There were quite a few people compared to years past. It took six weeks to plan when we finally formalized a little group to do it, and I appreciate everybody's hard work on it; the Rotary Club, 250th Committee, American Legion Post 52, Veteran Services, of course, Randall Boys and Girls Club, Ludlow CARES, police, fire, high school chorus, which sounded great by the way. We had Marines there. The tree that we have out front of Town Hall was donated with the help of Joe Lupa and Lupa Zoo through Paul Bunyon Tree Services and of course, we had Marines in their dress blues which there is no better site than that. Thank you for everybody that came out. Thanks to all the organizers, all the planners. It was a tough hoop to jump through in the short time that we had, but I think it went off very well. The last thing I'll say is for those of you that are keeping tabs or paying attention to what is going on with the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Public Works. As I've seen, or I know there's been a couple articles in the Register commenting on things said by this board and by their board, and all I want to say to the six of you watching is next week on the 13th we are going to the DPW to be at their meeting. It is about time for action to be taken when it comes to us meeting. They won't come here. They won't meet at a neutral site. We're going to go to them because we're about making the town better and moving forward. So, we will be there on the 13th to speak with them in their building and we'll be discussing I would assume many things, but also the Special Town Meeting coming on Monday, January 9th at 7:00 o'clock, where those two articles will be on. Please if you are a precinct member, go to the Special Town Meeting. If you have questions about any of the articles that we brought up tonight, my cell phone is posted. You can call the Board of Selectmen's office

and they'll give you my number or anybody else that is willing to take phone calls. I'm willing to take phone calls from all the precinct members if you want a rundown on any of this. We need to make some changes. We need to make some corrections. Thanks.

Mr. Gennette: Before we go any further, we have a visitor. Do you have any conversation about any of the stuff that was on the agenda tonight or no?

Mr. Wrona: No, I am here to see if I was going to get approved for the license. I am the new owner of John's Corner, and I was directed to come here so to speak in case there were any questions to be answered. I didn't want to interrupt you.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you for coming in. We appreciate it. And what was your name?

Mr. Wrona: Mr. Wrona.

Mr. Gennette: Mr. Wrona, thank you for coming in. We hope you do well over there.

Mr. Wrona: Thank you very much. Hope to see you there for coffee.

Mr. Gennette: You got it.

Mr. Wrona: Take care.

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Moved by Mr. Rosenblum to adjourn this meeting at 6:41 pm and enter into executive session for the following purpose and not to return 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. if the public body and the Chair so declares, seconded by Mr. DeBarge.

Mr. Rosenblum yes, Mr. Silva yes, Mr. DeBarge yes, Mr. Gennette yes. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Chairman

Ludlow Board of Selectmen