

**Board of Selectmen
September 19, 2012**

Present: Kenneth S. Paul, Chairperson; Peter M. Kasprzyk; Richard C. Edwards; Teresa A. Williams, Town Administrator; and Toni Bodah, Secretary.

Also present were: Tom Beeler, *The Granite State News*; John Blackwood; Rusty Loring; Dan Davis; and Lisa Kimball. Dave Mankus joined the session in progress.

Mr. Paul called the posted meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Paul advised that although the Board had expected to review plow routes with the Road Agent, this is being postponed to the September 26 meeting, as the Road Agent is at a meeting in Concord today. He would, however, be happy to entertain conversation about snow plowing procedures if that is why some individuals are present. Mr. Blackwood asked whether the Board has received the report from MRI yet. Mr. Paul advised the Board has had only verbal discussions with MRI to date; however, MRI generally supports outsourcing as much as possible. He cited the actual cost of a full-time employee (including benefits) and a vehicle for that employee to operate likely being in the area of \$200,000 a year. It seems to Mr. Paul that those funds would go further via outsourcing.

Mr. Kasprzyk referred to the formation of the Vehicle Maintenance Committee. This committee is considering whether it makes financial sense to hire a mechanic, with the School District possibly paying a portion of that individual's salary. We would start with light duty maintenance, to include the school buses. This individual could also plow snow. Mr. Blackwood questioned the Town's liability in the event a school bus on which a Town employee worked was involved in an accident. Mr. Kasprzyk agreed this scenario would need to be taken into consideration. He noted that it may be determined such a joint endeavor would not result in a cost savings; however, it is worth consideration. Mr. Kasprzyk also noted that MRI is not in favor of this option. Mr. Loring stated that if that employee were plowing snow, he should not be called in to address an issue with a bus. Mr. Kasprzyk stated that if school had not been called off, servicing the bus would need to be outsourced. He added that the Vehicle Maintenance Committee will meet with the Selectmen next week, and he encouraged Mr. Loring (and others) to attend in order to be part of that discussion.

Mr. Blackwood stated that he believes it would be a step backwards to subcontract the winter plowing. He noted that you cannot plow efficiently with a pick-up. Mr. Blackwood also stated that a 3-man crew is not sufficient for this time of year; rather a 5- or 6-man crew is required. According to Mr. Blackwood, the most important thing in Town is our roads, followed by fire and police services. If the roads are not maintained, everything will fall apart. Mr. Blackwood referred to the cost for individual contractors to maintain their vehicles. Mr. Loring does not believe it makes sense to let a truck sit unutilized at the Highway Garage.

Mr. Blackwood questioned how the Town will track the sand used on roads that border other towns. He also stated that it is time to plan for the future by hiring and training new employees. Mr. Davis (former Road Agent) spoke to the strengths of the current Highway Department staff.

Discussion followed regarding the loading process of sand for private contractors, as well as the new policy for use of sand by private road associations.

Also discussed the various types of sanders used on various trucks. Mr. Blackwood stated that the Town trucks need to be cleaned every week, regardless of the weather conditions. Mr. Kasprzyk advised that we are working on a source of water to be shared with the new Food Pantry, which will be able to be used to clean the trucks.

Mr. Blackwood believes that the Town should hire 2 full-time, permanent employees for the Highway Department and hire a part-time seasonal employee for winter. Mr. Paul stated that the Board is waiting for the MRI report; however, time is getting short. He anticipates the Board would be able to hire employees fairly quickly if it is determined that is the best route. Mr. Kasprzyk invited Mr. Loring to participate on the Vehicle Maintenance Committee.

Mr. Blackwood is not in favor of the school buses being parked at the Highway Garage. Mr. Davis stressed the importance for the loader operator to keep that area clear now that the buses are parked there. A brief discussion followed regarding making the plow routes more efficient. Mr. Blackwood again stated his belief that it would be better to keep this work in-house. Mr. Kasprzyk stated that if the Town has a 5-man crew, perhaps those employees could do other work, such as mow fields, when they are not otherwise busy. Mr. Paul stated that the Town can accomplish a lot of road construction work for \$200,000. Discussion followed regarding the anticipated cost to hire a qualified mechanic. Mr. Blackwood noted that it is difficult for the current Board to hire a competent individual for the Highway Department when none of the Board members are familiar with heavy equipment. Mr. Paul advised that this issue will be discussed in more detail at the September 26 meeting, which will begin at 7 p.m.

A little more discussion followed regarding the Town's new sand policy for private roads.

Lisa Kimball addressed the Board, having requested an opportunity to discuss her annual review. Ms. Kimball confirmed to Mr. Kasprzyk that she requested this to be discussed in public session. Mr. Paul stated that he had abstained from the Board's vote to hire Ms. Kimball, however, he did vote on her 1-year evaluation. Ms. Kimball did not express any issue with Mr. Paul participating in this discussion.

Ms. Kimball advised that she was not happy with some areas of her recent evaluation. She reviewed those concerns with the Town Administrator, following which some items were changed. She would like to address some other issues. Ms. Kimball asked how the evaluation form is compiled and whether there is a certain percentage attached to earning 4's vs. 5's. Mr. Paul stated that it often depends upon the individual supervisor, as some may grade more easily than others. Mr. Kasprzyk noted that it is up to the Department Head to evaluate the employee. Ms. Kimball then noted that the evaluation might not be an actual reflection of her work, but rather it might be a reflection of how the supervisor sees her. She asked whether there are any directions for the supervisor for use of this assessment, or does the supervisory rely on memory. Mr. Paul would expect the supervisor to rely on day-to-day experiences. A supervisor may need to keep a log in order to identify issues as they occur.

Mr. Paul stated that the evaluation is a benchmark based upon the expectations of the job. If an employee does his job and shows up for work, a likely score would be a 3. Mr. Edwards has not had to actually perform an evaluation; however, he has reviewed many. He noted that if an employee has many 4's and 5's, then perhaps that employee is outgrowing their job, as it would not allow much room for improvement. Mr. Edwards believes that an employee receiving 3's is doing a good job.

Ms. Kimball wants to better understand the process. She does not care if she receives a 5 or a 3, but she wonders whether being 10 minutes early for work would earn her a 3 or a 5. Mr. Kasprzyk stated that we now have a solid baseline of numbers with which to work. He added his belief that it was great to see the Town Administrator's willingness to work with Ms. Kimball to adjust several of the numbers. According to Mr. Kasprzyk, Ms. Kimball should now use those numbers to look forward to the coming year. Ms. Kimball referred to an original grade of 3 on section 1 Accuracy. Mr. Kasprzyk believes a 3 indicates the employee is doing what is expected, with only an average number of mistakes. Ms. Kimball stated that Town Administrator should review the work of the Finance Clerk as part of the Administrator's due diligence. Ms. Kimball personally believes she is very precise and should get a 5.

Mr. Edwards is not in favor of numbers on an evaluation; however, a 5 to him indicates there is no room for improvement, while a 3 indicates only an average number of mistakes are made. Mr. Kasprzyk read from the job description for the position of Finance Clerk. Ms. Kimball stated that she has completely streamlined that position and added that she should not get a 3 when her work is reviewed in the normal course of business. Mr. Kasprzyk disagrees. Ms. Kimball stressed that she requires a minimum of review because she is exact and precise. It was noted that the Town Administrator changed that score to a 5.

Ms. Kimball referred to section 4 Punctuality and asked how she could be graded on this section when there is no one else in the building (on her floor) when she arrives. Perhaps a section should be removed when it does not look to the individual being evaluated. Mr. Edwards cannot advise how the numbers were determined. He relies on the chain of command, and in this case he sees good numbers. Ms. Kimball stated that she has been tardy 3 times in 2 years. Mr. Paul stated that if you are on time every day, he would give you a 3. A brief discussion followed as to whether a time clock is warranted.

Review of several scores on the evaluation followed. Mr. Paul stated that if an employee is looking at all 5's, then the Board of Selectmen would need to raise its standards. Mr. Edwards noted that a 5 is not the normal, rather it should be special.

Ms. Kimball referred to Part II Summary. She earned a total of 63 out of 85 total points, which calculates as 74%, which she believes is a C-. Mr. Kasprzyk stated in this scenario, an average employee would receive a total of 51 points. Mr. Edwards stressed the Board is not considering a letter grade. Ms. Kimball does not believe this evaluation reflects a good employee. Mr. Paul stated that the evaluation is based on 51 representing an average employee. Mr. Kasprzyk estimated that this evaluation is a B. The supervisor has noted several areas that could use improvement, as well as other areas in which the employee excels. He personally does not believe in 5's. Ms. Kimball believes that a 5 indicates that she has reached the goal set by the Selectmen, and she added that the Board should expect a 5. Mr. Kasprzyk noted that at the level of 5, a supervisory should be considering expansion of the employee's role.

Ms. Kimball referred to section 8 Neatness. If she keeps her work area neat she should receive a 5. 3 is middle of the road, 5 meets expectations and 1 indicates you should not be working here. Mr. Kasprzyk stated this is up to the Town Administrator, as the Board is not in the building every day. Ms. Kimball noted that neatness is in the eyes of the beholder and is arbitrary. Mr. Kasprzyk stated that it is based upon the environment in which you work. Discussion followed as to how a 1 would become a 5.

Again, Mr. Edwards noted that he doesn't see anything wrong with this evaluation. However, perhaps we should look at establishing a benchmark. He agrees that 5's indicate an employee should move on to something else. He added that he does not think anyone is a 5.

Ms. Kimball believes she should get better than a 74%. Mr. Kasprzyk stated that in this case a 50% is average, and he sees this as a decent review. Ms. Kimball referred to section 14 Stability, on which she received a 2. She does not believe she has experienced a crisis here. Mr. Paul noted that the perception of crisis relates to each job/department. Mr. Kasprzyk agreed that a crisis is perception-oriented. He went on to state that the Board must assign a certain amount of respect and confidence in each employee because they are not here every day. Certain tasks are assigned. In the case of the Town Administrator, this includes evaluating employees and making sure the Town Hall runs smoothly. He expects that when an audit comes, the Finance Clerk will have numbers balanced. The Town Administrator is reviewed by the Board, including what the Board perceives must be improved upon. Perception is in the eyes of the beholder. Mr. Kasprzyk personally expects everyone in the building to give him good information so that he can make good decisions. He has every confidence that the Town Administrator is competent to make a thorough evaluation based upon the needs of this community. He is also proud that the Town Administrator was willing to admit that she may have been wrong with some of the numbers assigned. This shows a willingness to work with employees.

Mr. Edwards asked whether Ms. Kimball believed any of the scores were too high. Ms. Kimball does not believe that to be the case. The comments of the auditors are concrete. This evaluation is arbitrary and is based on opinion. Her work is completely tied to the audit and is measured and graded. Every piece of her work is audited and received an A+. Mr. Paul stated that not every piece of work is reviewed, rather samples are reviewed. Mr. Kasprzyk stated that the audit is partially based upon work of the Finance Clerk, but it also includes all other departments. Ms. Kimball stated that the auditors audit the Finance Department. Mr. Paul stated the auditors also look for in appropriate expenditures of other departments. If the audit is good, the Finance Clerk is doing her job. We have been told for years that Wakefield has been doing a good job with the audit. Ms. Kimball stated that the audit is the biggest tool for policing herself. She questioned why her audit grade is so different than her evaluation.

Mr. Edwards sees 2 under-average grades and 14 over-average grades on Ms. Kimball's evaluation. He believes that makes for an outstanding employee. Discussion followed regarding the need for evaluations and for paper trails in personnel files.

Mr. Paul noted that the raise is really what the employee is looking at. Ms. Kimball shared position descriptions she obtained through LGC for Account Clerk, Accountant, Bookkeeper and Finance Director, noting her current duties are more related to that of Finance Director. There was discussion of the source of Ms. Kimball's information compared to that which the Board uses to determine appropriate ranges of pay for specific positions.

Mr. Paul stated the figures listed in the Pay & Classification study compare information from 10 similar towns and is updated each year and used by this Board to make sure the employees are not underpaid as compared to other towns. In this area, LGC lists Ms. Kimball as a Finance Clerk. Ms. Kimball referred to the definition of Finance Clerk, which does not include all that she does. Mr. Kasprzyk questioned whether that definition fits with the job description at the time Ms. Kimball was hired.

Ms. Kimball stated that her duties more closely follow the job description of Finance Director. Mr. Edwards is not interested in assigning labels; one needs to do what it takes to do the job. Ms. Kimball would like to be recognized for all that she does. She noted that she has trained the new Treasurer. The job of Finance Clerk is only a tiny piece of what happens.

Mr. Paul asked whether Ms. Kimball does more than the prior finance clerk. Ms. Kimball stressed that she has streamlined a lot of the processes. Mr. Paul asked about any new tasks. Ms. Kimball again stated that she trained the new Treasurer. Mr. Kasprzyk read from the Town's job description for Finance Clerk, which includes (in part), "...may be asked to train new employees..." Ms. Kimball stated that she was key in advising the Board of issues with the 2011 accounts, in addition to training the new Treasurer. Mr. Edwards thanked Ms. Kimball. Then he asked what Ms. Kimball is specifically seeking at this meeting. Ms. Kimball indicated that she does not believe the Board knows all that she does. She is seeking a change in title as recognition that she is above what the Board thought they were getting.

Mr. Paul does not see that specific new tasks have been taken on by Ms. Kimball and believes the current title works with this position. Ms. Kimball stressed that she has the ability/skill to do more for the Town, especially with new software. She could be doing all the accrual and year-end adjustments, as she has the same degree as the auditors. Mr. Edwards noted that Ms. Kimball may be over-qualified for this position and, perhaps, could better utilize her skills elsewhere. Ms. Kimball would like to grow in this position and do more year-end work, but not as a finance clerk. According to Ms. Kimball, the auditors have asked her why she is not doing accruals and year-end entries. Mr. Kasprzyk suggested putting into a report how such a title change would make a difference and how much could be saved by making that change. The Board needs solid information to convince the voters that this would be a valuable change.

Discussion followed regarding the cost of new software, including maintenance agreements. Ms. Kimball noted that she could accomplish much without new software; however, she would recommend new software as the current software is DOS-based and has security issues. Many departments would benefit from new software. Mr. Kasprzyk stated that Ms. Kimball would be building toward the next level by pursuing, purchasing and training on this new software.

If the title were changed to Finance Director, Ms. Williams would need to provide LGC with a list of all Ms. Kimball's duties in order for LGC to include the position on the wage scale and to determine a range of compensation. Ms. Kimball stated that similar sized towns in NH pay up to \$37 per hour to Finance Directors. She is not asking for that; however, she would like to be recognized and compensated for what she does. Ms. Kimball noted that she is being paid \$17.85 to do the work that some people get paid \$37 per hour. She added that a Finance Director does nothing more than she already does. Mr. Kasprzyk noted he has only heard of one new duty—training the Treasurer—which was a listed expectation on the job description at the time of hire.

Ms. Kimball stressed that she went over and above letting the Board know that the former Treasurer's numbers were not balancing and added that it is way out of her job description to train the new Treasurer.

Mr. Edwards stated that the Board needs to complete the review at hand. Mr. Paul noted that any change in title would be considered as part of the budget process. Mr. Edwards indicated that all other employees are evaluated according to the pay scale, and the Board should do so today. Mr. Paul advised that the mid-range for this position is \$18.97, which the Board would estimate to relate to a 5-year employee. The current pay rate is \$17.85. Ms. Kimball indicated that the former Finance Clerk was earning \$21.83 per hour after 7 years. She asked whether the rate is based on the wage scale rather than the quality of work. Mr. Kasprzyk stressed that in this economy most taxpayers are not getting raises, so he personally has been looking at 1.5% increases for Town employees. If such an increase were to leave an employee's rate drastically below the appropriate level on the wage scale, the Board has awarded a higher increase. Mr. Kasprzyk stated that the Board is trying to be competitive with other communities, while being considerate of taxpayers. Ms. Kimball still believes she is doing the job of a Finance Director.

The Board considered several percentages of increase. **Mr. Edwards moved to authorize an increase of \$0.37 per hour (approximately 2%) for Lisa Kimball, effective as of September 17, 2012. Mr. Kasprzyk seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.** Ms. Kimball thanked the Board members for their time and left the session.

Mr. Paul moved to approve the Payroll Warrant in the amount of \$60,370.63. Mr. Kasprzyk seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

Ms. Williams advised the Board that the federal government has reduced the maximum flexible benefit account balance from \$5000 to \$2500. **Mr. Kasprzyk moved to adopt the Flexible Spending Agreement Plan, as presented, reducing the maximum account balance to \$2500. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Toni Bodah, Secretary

Approval of Minutes:

Kenneth S. Paul, Chairperson

Peter M. Kasprzyk

Richard C. Edwards