

Town Board Meeting held March 22, 2022 at 6:00 P.M. at the Town Hall in

Schroon Lake N.Y.

Present:

Town Supervisor: Meg Wood

Councilpersons: Richard Gero, Ethan Thompson, Lynn Donaldson, Leanna Welch

Highway Superintendent: Dana Shaughnessy

Deputy Town Clerk: Melissa Armstrong

Also Present: Anne Dunkee, Marion Weaver, Brian Ritchings, Patrick Shaughnessy, Christopher Fariss, Kevin Lashway, Dennis Christian Gordon Graves, Phil Armstrong, Paul McCann, John Senecal, Jane Bouchard, Jessica Botterbush, Joe Flores, Chris Stone

Supervisor Wood called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm, with a salute to the flag.

Discussion on Employee Wage and Salary Administration

Supervisor Wood states this is a workshop and discussion on the employee wage and salary. We have been working these past few months on this topic and have been facing a shortage of CDL drivers that are qualified for the job. This is happening all over, not just our town, but we know something needs to be done in order to get people to apply. We have our wage and salary administration program that has been updated only a few times. Last time we updated it was for water and sewer. We know that the whole program needs to be updated but today we are only here to address the issue of CDL drivers and will work on the others at a later date. We have had different discussions, we have had different viewpoints, and I would love if we could come to an agreement somehow. The wage and grade system work together but need to be addressed differently. The problem has arisen basically for the need of CDL drivers. There are different philosophies on what we do from what I gather and what I've heard is that when we do any type of raise, it goes across the board. It doesn't just go towards one job description. That's another thing we need to discuss.

Councilman Thompson asks if Supervisor Wood has contacted the Public Sector?

Supervisor Wood replies that she had sent his question word for word, twice and did not get a direct answer. I told her we were having a meeting and still have not heard back. I

want to come up with a list of questions that we have for her. We don't need to come up with a resolution today; we have a meeting next week, but would like her to answer our questions.

Councilman Thompson states right now we have a grade system for all of our wages, Grade 1-7. If you're in a grade, the theory is right now if we adjust the wage for one position in that grade, we have to adjust the wage for all positions. In theory that will push all the other grades up. What my question was; how do you adjust your grade system and salary structure with market conditions, in this case CDL drivers? Lack of qualified individuals, driving up the market rate. So, the grade system uses everything but market conditions; education, job site conditions, experience, supervisory role, etc. Each position gets a certain number of points, if you have a bachelor's degree, you get extra points, certifications, and extra points and if it doesn't, you get fewer points. They then add all these points up and put you into a grading system. I'll be blunt; my belief is that we should not be adjusting everyone's wage, just because we need to find CDL drivers. With that said, I think everyone is low and we need to adjust accordingly. Supervisor Wood agrees, and states we need to pick this thing apart, and put it back together. By budget time, we will know what we're doing. We need to review our benefit packages and compare those with other municipalities. We want everything to be fair. Come January 2023, we believe everyone will be up to \$15/hr anyways. If we adjust the wages before budget time, we can do that it's not usual, but we can do it. I'm suggesting when we adjust all these wages; we do so effective the second half of the year, which would begin the first pay period in July. So basically, people will be getting a raise half a year ahead of time and we would have time to see by budget time. The rate the economy is going, who knows?

Councilwoman Welch agrees with Councilman Thompson that everyone needs a raise. I also looked at this grade system and I believe that everyone needs to be adjusted. I believe that job descriptions need to be re-evaluated. Everyone agrees that we need to raise the hiring wages across the board. Come summer season we are going to run into a problem hiring lifeguards. We don't have enough people applying right now. What we're afraid of is if we increase the starting wage, and then increase everyone's wage in that grade, what

happens when we don't get anyone to apply? What if that \$1.80 an hour boosts isn't enough?

Dennis Christian suggested we do a percentage increase for all the workers. Supervisor Wood, along with others agreed that would be a great idea. That way it's fair for the people that have been with the town, fair for the people with the experience, a percentage will help across the board rather than a set number amount. So instead of giving everyone a \$5 raise, say your raise everyone's pay 25%. Supervisor Wood stated again, we don't know if that will get anyone to apply. We don't have the steps in place right now, but this will give us time (3 months) to get everything straight before budget time and we can adjust accordingly. We must come up with a percentage that works for everyone. Everyone agrees that the wages will be adjusted. Our job in the next week is to go over these numbers, talk to the Public Sector, and determine a percentage that will affect everyone come July 1st. By our meeting next week, we will have a resolution and then we can continue to work on our grading system and our employee wage handbook. Councilman Gero states he hopes these numbers will help us hire a CDL driver, but we have to be ready to address it if it doesn't. We must lay down parameters, we must be prepared. Any questions, please contact Supervisor Wood.

Councilman Thompson made a motion to adjourn, Councilwomen Welch seconded; carried. Supervisor Wood ended the meeting at 2:43pm.

I, Melissa Armstrong, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct transcript from the minutes now on file in my office and of the whole such original minutes.

Dated: April 7, 2022 _____ Deputy Town Clerk