

LETTER TO THE BOARD OF FINANCE:

I'D LIKE TO MAKE A FEW COMMENTS REGARDING THE CONTROVERSY OF SALARY ADMINISTRATION IN THE TOWN.

The BOS AND THE BOF REVIEWED, VETTED AND APPROVED THE CURRENT FY BUDGET INCLUDING A LINE ITEM FOR SALARIES.

HISTORICALLY THE BOF AND THE BOS HAS EMBRACED AND SUPPORTED THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMPENSATING EMPLOYEES TO REWARD THEM FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS AND AS A BASIS TO RETAIN KEY EMPLOYEES. AS YOU ARE AWARE WE RUN TOWN OPERATION VERY LEAN AND WE DON'T HAVE A LOT OF EMPLOYEES IN KEY POSITIONS WHERE THEIR EXPERIENCE, BACKGROUND IN BUSINESS AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNEMENT HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN OUR SUCCESS.

THESE KEY EMPLOYEES ARE ALWAYS IN DEMAND WITH OTHER TOWNS AND WE'VE IDENTIFIED THEM AND MOTIVATED THEM IN ORDER TO RETAIN THEM.

CONCURRENT WITH THIS PHILOSOPHY WE'VE USED THE CCM SALARY ANALYSIS BY JOB DESCRIPTION, JOB CONTENT, RESPONSIBILITY AND SIZE OF THE TOWN TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT WE ARE NOT OVER PAYING PEOPLE BUT ALSO ADDRESSING THOSE UNDER PAID KEY EMPLOYEES TO MAKE CERTAIN WE RETAIN THEM. I LOOK AT THIS APPROACH AS AN INVESTMENT BECAUSE LOSING A KEY EMPLOYEE WILL END UP COSTING THE TOWN MORE MONEY TO REPLACE THESE INDIVIDUALS AT CURENT MARKET RATES . IN ADDITION THE COSTS INCREASE WITH TRAINING AND THE LOSS OF OPPORTUNITIES UNTIL THE NEW REPLACEMENT EMPLOYEE COMES UP TO SPEED.

LIKEWISE A PARTICULAR JOB IS ONLY WORTH SO MUCH AND CERTAIN EMPLOYEES AT THE TOP OF THEIR SALARY RANGE WILL ONLY RECEIVE MINIMAL INCREASES OR WE WILL USE BONUSES AS A WAY OF COMPENSATION WITHOUT INCREASING THEIR BASE SALARIES WHICH WILL GO ON YEAR AFTER YEAR.

IN MY OPINION PERHAPS THE TOWN SHOULD LOOK AT BONUSES ONLY IN LIEU OF YEARLY INCREASES ESPECIALLY IN THOSE YEARS WHERE REVENUES DON'T MATCH EXPENSES. MY EXPERIENCE IN BUSINESS INDICATES THE VALUE OF THIS APPROACH BUT THIS IS A DISCUSSION FOR ANOTHER TIME.

BEFORE I TOOK THIS JOB AND AS A MEMBER OF THE BOS ,THE BOS ONLY APPROVED THE SALARY LINE IN THE BUDGET AND WE WERE NEVER ASKED FOR OUR OPINION ABOUT INDIVIDUAL SALARY INCREASES. I EMBRACED THIS APPROACH BECAUSE THE FIRST SELECTMAN AS THE C.E.O. IS THE ONE WHO HAS DAY TO DAY CONTACT/INTERACTION WITH ALL EMPLOYEES AND IS IN THE BEST POSITION TO EVALUATE TRUE PERFORMANCE AND INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

WHEN I BECAME FIRST SELECTMAN I INITIATED A DETAILED PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM TIED TO KEY OBJECTIVES TO SERVE AS A BASIS FOR A FAIR AND ACCURATE DETERMINATION OF TRUE PERFORMANCE. MOST EMPLOYEES EMBRACED THIS APPROACH ENTHUSIASTICALLY AND A FEW DISGRUNTLED EMPLOYEES DIDN'T FOR OVIOUS REASONS.

PAST FIRST SELECTMEN RAISED THEIR OWN SALARIES COMMENSURATE WITH THE INCREASE IN RESPONSIBILITIES, THE GROWTH OF THE TOWN AND OTHER TOWN'S COMPENSATION LEVELS FOR THEIR FIRST SELECTMEN.

LAST YEAR I ENGAGED KATHY DEVLIN AND TIM POTRIKUS TO TAKE PART IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF SALARY INCREASES AS APPROVED IN THE BUDGET. I DID THAT BECAUSE I WANTED INCLUSION DESPITE THE FACT THAT I WAS NOT REQUIRED TO DO SO GIVEN PAST PRACTICES OF PREVIOUS FIRST

SELECTMEN. GOING FORWARD I HAVE MADE A COMMITMENT TO THE BOS THAT THEY WILL PARTICIPATE IN FUTURE DISCUSSIONS OF SALARIES AS WELL AS ESTABLISHING A MORE FORMAL PROCEDURE COVERING SAME.

AS IT RELATES TO MY COMPENSATION. I TOOK THE ADVICE OF MY BOS COLLEAGUES LAST YEAR NOT TO TAKE A SALARY INCREASE WHICH INCLUDED ALL ELECTED OFFICIALS. I HAVE BEEN FIRST SELECTMAN AND ON THE BOS FOR TEN YEARS AND A REVIEW OF MY SALARY HISTORY INDICATES AN AVERAGE YEARLY INCREASE OF JUST 1.25 %... HARDLY A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE GIVEN THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND COUNTLESS HOURS REQUIRED FOR THE JOB.

I'LL LET MY TIME IN OFFICE AND THE RESULTS STAND ON THEIR OWN MERITS AND LET THE CITIZENS MAKE A JUDGEMENT ON THE VALUE THEY HAVE RECEIVED FROM ME AND THE SALARY I AM PAID.

THE IRONY OF THIS CURRENT CONTROVERSY IS THAT THE CITIZENS OF SOMERS VOTED TO GO TO A TOWN MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE CONSISTENCY, PREDICTABILITY AND THE EXPERIENCE NECESSARY TO MANAGE A MULTI-MILLION TOWN BUDGET. THE VOTERS CHOICE WAS NULLIFIED BY AN INEXPLICABLE FAILURE OF THE TOWN CLERK TO PROPERLY FOLLOW STATE LAW EXACTLY FOR THE CHARTER REVIEW TO BE VALID. THE JOURNAL INQUIRER IN THEIR ARTICLE EXPRESSED DISBELIEF IN THE FAILURE OF THE TOWN CLERK IN ONE OF HER KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND INQUIRED IF SHE WAS DISCIPLINED FOR THIS SIGNIFICANT LAPSE OF HER DUTIES.

I ONLY MENTION THIS UNFORTUNATE EPISODE BECAUSE THE CHARTER REVISION COMMITTEE ESTIMATED THAT A COMPETENT AND EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONAL TOWN MANAGER WOULD REQUIRE AN APPROXIMATE SALARY OF BETWEEN \$ 125-150,000/YEAR. MY CURRENT SALARY IS SIGNIFICANTLY LESS THAN A PROPOSED TOWN MANAGER'S SALARY WOULD BE AND A REAL BARGAIN GIVEN MY 50 PLUS YEARS OF EXECUTIVE EXPERIENCE AND THE YEARS OF DEDICATED AND TIRELESS SERVICE TO SOMERS.

IN SUMMARY....I'M SENSITIVE TO THE CRITICISM THIS KERFUFLER HAS CAUSED AND AS SUCH.....

I'VE INSTRUCTED THE CFO TO IMMEDIATELY RECALL MY RECENT SALARY INCREASE AND I'VE SENT A CHECK TO THE TOWN FOR THE \$ 3000 BONUS THAT I WAS PAID .

I'LL CONTINUE TO PUT FORTH MY HISTORICAL WORK ETHIC FOR SOMERS AND WORK WITH THE BOS TO ESTABLISH A FORMALIZED SALARY APPROVAL PROCEDURE FOR ALL EMPLOYEES.

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