

IN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
FRIDAY, MAY 26, 2006
SPECIAL MEETING

Present: Chairman William J. Keller Jr., Lawrence W. O'Brien, and John C. Drobinski, Selectmen.

The statutory requirement for notice having been met, the meeting was convened at 8:00 a.m. in the Goodnow Library conference room, 21 Concord Road, by Chairman Keller.

Town Manager FY06 Performance Evaluation

The first order of business discussed was the performance of the Town Manager for the prior year. The Board reviewed the memo from the Town Manager summarizing the accomplishments of the past year, agreeing that the report is an accurate, complete and objective summary of the Town Manager's accomplishments during FY06.

The Board then discussed the following areas of performance of the Town Manager in the past year, as follows:

Relationship with the Board: It was noted that this one of the two strongest areas for Ms. Valente, citing in particular her communication abilities and style. She works to insure the Board is kept apprised of all important information so that they are never taken by surprise by any news. Further, the Board feels they are kept fully informed during budget preparation and contract negotiations.

Vision and Community Leadership: The Board was pleased to see the Town Manager more active in meeting with and communicating with residents of the Town during the past year, and felt she was successful in keeping her focus on the big picture even when there are many day to day issues that could be distractions.

Financial Management: Board felt her performance was very strong in FY06, stating that the budget document and presentations were the best they had seen yet from the Town Manager. Of particular note was the excellent analysis, the involvement of department heads in presentations, and that explanatory information, both written and verbal, was designed to help even "novices" to the budget understand the material and message.

Personnel Management: Board noted that this area is not as clear to them, since personnel matters are generally dealt with directly by the Town Manager. But, the Board reported the following observations: employee morale is good and they have heard that employees know the Town Manager and Board are trying to deal with Town v. School equity issues. The Board further notes that areas of complaints to them about the performance of individual employees has dropped in recent years and credit the Town Manager with providing the guidance that resulted in that improvement.

Personal Qualities and Characteristics: Board noted that the Town Manager seemed less stressed in recent years, despite the difficulties of the job, and that availing herself of allotted vacation time is probably the key to keeping her focus and patience levels high.

The Board offered the following suggestions to the Town Manager that they felt might contribute to her performance in FY07:

- Continue working to improve the communication between herself and members of the Historical Commission
- Try to find ways to work with the two school committees/superintendent to make more clear the statutory role of the Town's executive management in collective bargaining with school employees

- See if the Building Inspector can begin to attend the Zoning Board of Appeals meetings, much as other staff is at the meetings of other various Board and Commissions. The intent would be for the Building Inspector to serve as a resource and to hear the discussion that precedes the votes of the ZBA.
- Examine ways to help the unionized employees of the Fire Department develop a more positive attitude as part of the Town government
- Insure that she take steps to keep the stress of the job from being too much a part of her life, including taking regular vacation time away from the office

The Board summarized the Town Manager's evaluation by assigning an overall job performance rating of 93.18 out of a possible 100, which is similar to previous years' rating. Overall, the Board expressed a high level of satisfaction with the Town Manager's performance, and a desire to continue to work together with the Town Manager for the future. They also expressed the hope that she will be able to maintain the current positive trends they have observed.

VOTED: To have the Chairman of the Board verbally convey to the Town Manager all the above points, so that the minutes of this meeting become her written performance evaluation document, and to attach to these minutes her April 28, 2006 evaluation report.

The Board then discussed and decided that, based on its satisfaction with the job performance for FY06, a bonus was warranted for Ms. Valente.

VOTED: To award to the Town Manager a \$5,823.75 bonus, which is 93.18% of the total \$6,250 bonus pool available in FY07. In keeping with the contract with Ms. Valente, this bonus can be used as a one time cash payment, or to augment the benefits received by the Town Manager, such as deferred compensation, or life or disability insurance reimbursement, but will not be added to the base salary. The Town Manager shall notify the Board and the Town Accountant of her decision as to form of payment of the bonus.

Finally, the Board discussed the current employment agreement between the Town Manager and the Board. This agreement calls for a review at the end of FY06 of the Town Manager compensation of comparable communities to see if any market adjustments are required. Selectman O'Brien conducted this analysis based on data provided by Assistant Town Manager Walker, supplemented by information he sought on his own. Based on his findings, he recommended that a new compensation plan be offered to the Town Manager and he provided to the other Board members a draft, updated compensation plan for the period FY08-FY12 that he had developed. This proposed plan would move the Town Manager from the lower middle of the range of compensation for Town Managers of comparable Towns, to being on the higher middle range.

The Board also briefly discussed the non-compensation terms of the current agreement with the Town Manager and agreed that the document did not need any adjustments at this time, with the possible exception of the area of paid time off (vacation leave). The Board agreed the Chairman would discuss this item with the Town Manager, as it is the Board's belief that to be effective, the Town Manager needs to have available and use adequate vacation time.

VOTED: To present the proposed draft compensation plan to the Town Manager for her review and consideration, and ask for her thoughts on vacation/sabbatical time.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Attest: _____
 William J. Keller, Jr.
 Chairman, Board of Selectmen