

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN - SPECIAL MEETING
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION SUBCOMMITTEE
MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 2024, 8:30 A.M.
TOWN HALL & ZOOM
MINUTES**

In Person: First Selectman Rodney Fournier, Selectmen: Gwan Marrion, Mather Clarke, Town Administrator Jim Rupert, Intern Tim White, and Kathy McCavanagh (arrived 8:40 am)

Via Zoom: Selectman Tim Saddler, resident Jim Aldrich

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 am.

Meeting Summary for BOS Finance and Administration Subcommittee

Quick recap

The Town of Bolton's Board of Selectmen held a special finance and administration subcommittee meeting to discuss matters, focusing on the need for structured transitions in leadership roles and fair compensation for the 1st selectman position. Discussions centered around gathering data on work hours, comparing salaries with other towns, and considering the broader impact of the job on personal life. The board also addressed concerns about future pension and healthcare costs, explored potential benefits for the position, and agreed to schedule a follow-up meeting to further analyze the situation and review additional data.

Next steps

Rodney to track and log hours spent on First Selectman duties for approximately two weeks.

Tim White to research Ellington's situation regarding First Selectman compensation.

Tim White to look into smaller towns like Roxbury, Bridgewater, Washington, and Woodbury for First Selectman salary information.

Gwen to contact Sandy and Pam (former First Selectmen) for their opinions on hours worked per week.

Committee members to give more thought to the ideas of healthcare and pension for the First Selectman position.

Town to determine a private location for the next meeting on January 27th at 8:30 AM, which will include Jim's review package.

Summary

Town of Bolton Board Meeting

The meeting was a special session of the Town of Bolton's Board of Selectmen, focusing on finance and administrative matters. Jim Aldrich, a member of the public, discussed the need for a structured system for transitions in the roles of the 1st selectman and the administrative officer. He emphasized the importance of continuity and the need to respect the office administrator's potential desire to take a different job. Jim also mentioned that he would send an updated review of Tim White's email and his own report to all members. The conversation ended with a discussion about the methodology in the event of an unexpected departure, with the 1st selectman likely taking over the CEO's position and the finance director being the next in charge.

Fair Compensation for 1st Selectman

Town discussed the need for a fair compensation package for the 1st selectman, considering the time he spends on the job. He suggested that the missing piece of information is the actual amount of time spent by the 1st selectman. Town proposed gathering this information by observing Rodney's schedule and possibly consulting other 1st selectmen to compare their work hours. He emphasized the importance of a salary that reflects the time put into the job. Tim and Mathers were asked for their opinions on this matter.

Evaluating Time Spent on Meetings

T. Sadler expressed difficulty in obtaining consistent data for comparison and suggested that the evaluation process is more qualitative than quantitative. He also questioned the fairness of compensation for business owners or employees on commission, considering the current economic climate. Town suggested that a business owner or employee might spend around 3 to 4 hours per week on meetings and additional time at home researching. T. Sadler then asked Rodney about the time he spends on his job, considering the calls he receives at night and on weekends.

Town's Role and Healthcare Benefits

Town and T. Sadler discussed the complexities of Town's role as a small business owner and elected representative. Town shared that they are now involved in various social events and writing speeches for different organizations. The conversation then shifted to healthcare benefits for Town's role. Town clarified that most people already have health insurance, and the town's health plan is already in place. The discussion concluded with the suggestion that Town could have access to the town's healthcare plan and pay for it themselves, which wouldn't cost the town anything.

Pension and Healthcare Cost Concerns

The discussion revolved around the concerns of Town and T. Sadler regarding the future costs of pensions and healthcare for staff members. Town mentioned that a few staff members receive a payout for 50% of their accrued sick time upon retirement, which is at 50% of the cost. T. Sadler expressed concerns about the increasing cost burden on future boards and the difficulty of removing such benefits. Town suggested that a higher salary might be easier to manage and understand, and that the cost of healthcare has been relatively stable in recent years. The conversation ended with the understanding that the future costs of pensions and healthcare are uncertain and need further consideration.

Expanding Research on 1st Selectmen

Town suggested broadening the scope of research to include more towns and positions, rather than focusing solely on the term '1st selectmen'. He emphasized the importance of considering the actual salary in relation to the hours worked, as a way to determine the value of the position to the organization. Town also proposed reaching out to former 1st selectmen for additional data. T. Sadler agreed with Town's points, highlighting the need to avoid short-sightedness when considering the budget for the position. Both agreed that the position's value could be significant, potentially leading to substantial benefits for the town.

Government Structure Data Analysis Discussion

Town and T. Sadler discussed the data analysis of government structures in various towns. They agreed that the data was similar in type and size, but noted that some towns had a 1st

selectmen or mayor as the sole operator, which could skew the data. They also discussed the idea of aiming for above-average performance, but acknowledged that being average could still be acceptable. Town suggested looking at the data holistically rather than focusing on whether they were average or not.

Evaluating Compensation for Time Spent

The discussion revolved around the evaluation of compensation for time spent on tasks. The speaker emphasized the importance of considering the qualitative aspects, such as the impact on personal life and job, rather than just the quantitative data. The speaker also suggested tracking hours spent on tasks to better understand the reality of the situation. The idea of seeking input from others, like Pam and Sandy, was also discussed. The speaker concluded by emphasizing the need to consider the broader impact of the tasks on the individual's life, beyond just the monetary value.

Compensation and Responsibilities of Town Administrator

The discussion revolved around the compensation and responsibilities of a town administrator. The participants agreed that the job requires a significant amount of time and attention, even outside of work hours, and that the current volunteer status needs to be compensated for valuable hours. They also acknowledged the potential for stress and the need for candidates who can compartmentalize their work life. The idea of setting up another meeting in two weeks was proposed to discuss the situation further, particularly regarding the town of Ellington.

Town Administrator Role and Benefits

Town and T. Sadler discussed the potential for Town to take on a role as a town administrator or selectman in smaller towns, with Town suggesting that these roles might offer higher salaries. They also discussed the possibility of the 1st selectman logging his hours to better understand his workload and the potential for a pension plan or healthcare benefits for Town's role. Town expressed some reservations about the idea of a pension or healthcare benefits for Town's role, suggesting that a higher salary might be more appropriate. Both agreed to give more thought to these ideas.

Scheduling Meeting and Review Package

Town and T. Sadler agreed to schedule another meeting for January 27th at 8:30 AM to discuss Rodney's numbers. They also decided to include Jim's review package in the meeting, which is handled by the finance and administration subcommittee. The location for the meeting was left undetermined, with options including a private room or the library.

G. Marrion made a motion to adjourn at 9:14 am. M. Clarke seconded.

Meeting minutes composed by Zoom AI.