

Amberley Village Council – Compensation and Benefits Committee  
Minutes of February 24, 2015

In Attendance: R. Warren (Chair), W. Doering (Member), P. Conway (Member), T. Muething, E. Hattenbach, Manager S. Lahrmer, K. Harcourt, M. Koenig, B. Blum, R. Monahan, and J. Caudill

The meeting was brought to order.

The minutes from the September 23, 2014 were distributed. Mr. Doering moved to approve the minutes, Ms. Conway seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was a discussion of employee compensation. Mr. Lahrmer shared a survey of pay adjustments from Amberley and 8 other municipalities since 2009 through 2015 (attached). He noted that several of the communities provide for automatic pay step increases that were related to specific departments (Mr. Doering noted this could be cities where police unions have contracts). The manager also shared a document of a history of the Village's earnings tax collections from 2009 thru 2015. This showed a range of -14% (2009) to + 8.5% (2013). The most recent year of 2014 shows an increase of 6.5%.

The employee committee met and requested two changes to their compensation including one additional personal day and a 4% pay increase (that would also apply to fire pay compensation). Employees currently receive 2 personal days. Additional personal days are derived from accumulated sick days. Ms. Harcourt noted that administration of this conversion is cumbersome. Mr. Doering noted that the trend in government and public administration is to consolidate all personal days (i.e., vacation, sick, and personal) into one 'bank'. Mr. Lahrmer noted that the use of personal days primarily affects police department scheduling and cost of replacement for that absence. Mr. Muething noted that the Compensation Committee went through a comprehensive review of sick and personal days over 2 years ago. While there was no formal representative of the employee committee, employees shared that there was no official preference of one request over another, i.e., wage adjustment vs. personal day increase. Mr. Warren suggested that the Committee defer discussion of personal days to a future meeting where we could review this with additional information. Ms. Conway asked that the issue of whether police are able to actually take the personal days for which they are eligible be included as part of this review.

With regard to compensation adjustment, Mr. Warren noted that most Village employees were in the police department and in past years the Police Chief provided a broader comprehensive review (approximately 20 departments) of wages and wage adjustments across these departments. In this way the Committee would have a better representative sampling of wages and wage adjustments and gauge the Village against this sampling. Mr. Muething noted that this does not have to be performed every year.

Ms. Conway made a motion for a wage increase of 3%. This was not seconded.

Mr. Doering made a motion for wage increase of 2% and was seconded by Ms. Conway.

Mr. Warren shared that the last annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 0.8% and the employee wage request was 5X the CPI. Most employees (not Village) were not receiving a wage adjustment close to this. Additionally over the last 2 years Village employees had received among the highest wage increases in the County. While Evendale (on the handout) provided a greater percent increase, the consequence was Evendale having to lay off employees. Ms. Harcourt noted that in 2011 and 2012 while employees received no wage increase, they were now obligated to contribute to their health care premium, having the equivalent of a wage decrease. Ms. Conway noted that the Village has experienced higher turnover of employees in recent years and expressed concern about the Village developing a reputation or not being a good place to work. Mr. Warren noted that resigning or retiring is not equivalent of being laid off and emphasized that the Village has not laid off any employees. Mr. Doering noted that most communities do not have a Police Levy to contend with in the next 2-3 years and was concerned that not acting in a prudent fiscal way could jeopardize the levy renewal. Mr. Doering also expressed disappointment that the survey of wage increases was biased to show the Village in the worst position. (Note added from Mr. Warren on the reference handout: The range of wage increases between 2009 and 2015 was 8.8% for Amberley to 15% for Evendale. The other 8 communities had already made their 2015 wage adjustments.). Mr. Doering noted that the year 2009 was one in which the Village adjustment was 1.5-3% less than the other communities and this difference may represent prior union contractual obligations. Subtracting the 2009 and 2015 wage adjustments placed the Village wage increase of 7.8% as 4<sup>th</sup> among the 9 communities. (Note added from Mr. Warren on the reference handout: The chart also shows 2015 wage increases of 2% for 7 of the 8 other communities.)

Mr. Warren requested that additional municipalities be included in the survey that was constructed to get a better sampling of what communities are doing and enable a better comparison of the Village before making a decision. Ms. Conway and Mr. Muething noted that Council had previously committed to completing the annual wage review in advance of the April 1 effective date. Mr. Doering requested information from Mariemont and Terrace Park. Ms. Conway noted that she had enough information. Mr. Warren noted that any additional requests be made to Mr. Lahrmer. The Committee moved to defer discussion of wage adjustments to the next meeting. This was scheduled for March 5 at 5pm.

Mr. Warren requested that the 2<sup>nd</sup> agenda item of the Manager salary review be deferred to a future meeting.

There be no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ray Warren