

Amberley Village Council – Compensation and Benefits Committee
Minutes of Mar 5, 2015

In Attendance: R. Warren (Chair), W. Doering (Member), P. Conway (Member), T. Muething, E. Hattenbach, R. Bardach, Chief R. Wallace, Lt. B. Blum, K. Harcourt, L. Calloway, T. Chesney, S. Lefton, S. Pywen, R. Pywen, N. Raeisi, R. Kemp, J. Drake, R. Langdon, and M. Roeseler

The meeting was brought to order.

The minutes from the February 24, 2015 meeting were distributed. Ms. Conway requested several corrections be considered. These included:

- 1) In the third paragraph, the sentence that begins with "*Mr. Lahrmer noted that the use of . . .*" -- "effects" should be changed to, "*affects.*"
- 2) At the end of the 4th paragraph, where it says "*Ms. Conway noted that we would need to . . .*" should be changed to, "*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.*"
- 3) In the first paragraph on the second page, the sentence that begins "*Ms. Conway noted that some employees have resigned.*", should be changed to, "*Ms. Conway noted that the Village has experienced higher turnover of employees in recent years and expressed concern about the Village developing a reputation for not being a good place to work.*"
- 4) In the second paragraph on the second page, the sentence that begins "*Mr. Muething noted that Council had requested...*" should be changed to, "*Ms. Conway noted that Council had previously committed to completing the annual wage review in advance of the April 1 effective date.*"

Mr. Warren requested that point (4) should reflect both 'Ms. Conway and Mr. Muething'. Ms. Conway accepted this correction. Mr. Doering moved to approve the minutes, Ms. Conway seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

This meeting was a continuation of the previous meeting's discussion of employee wage adjustments. At that meeting, Mr. Doering had made a motion for a wage increase of 2% that was seconded by Ms. Conway. The Committee members also made requests to Mr. Lahrmer on the record of wage adjustments for several other communities including Milford, Springdale, Terrace Park, St. Bernard, and Mariemont. Mr. Lahrmer provided data from Milford, Springdale, St. Bernard, and Mariemont (see attached). Mr. Lahrmer also communicated that he recommended a 3% wage increase (see attached). Mr. Lahrmer was not present for this meeting.

Regarding the wage adjustment comparisons across municipalities and excluding 2009 and 2015, Mr. Warren commented that the Village stood near the middle of the pack. He also noted that the most recent CPI index of the last 12 months was near zero. Mr. Doering commented that about 20% of the Village residents are retired and over the past 3 years social security increases have ranged from 1.5-1.7%. Chief Wallace responded that Social Security adjustments were typically less than the University of Cincinnati wage

adjustments. Ms. Harcourt responded that the bulk of the residents receive income from sources other than Social Security. It would be unfortunate to tie wage adjustments to the CPI and the Village had experienced an increase in earnings tax revenue over the last 3 years.

Chief Wallace commented that the Village Manager had recommended a 3% increase. Mr. Warren noted that with Mr. Lahrmer's absence, one could not inquire his reasoning. He also commented that the earnings tax collections vary considerably from year to year. Ms. Harcourt responded that while there had been a large increase in the earnings tax revenue, prior to 2009 the earnings tax increase was typically 3%.

Ms. Racisi commented that in her employer survey the typical wage increase for 2013 was 2.7-3% (note: no data provided). She also shared that excellent police safety services were expected and paramount to the Village. Shortchanging vital services would cost the Village in the long run.

Mr. Muething commented that wage adjustments should be related to performance, and the job performed by the Village staff over the last years had been outstanding. Village residents had echoed this as well. Mr. Bardach commented that to keep good people (sic. staff), one needs to compensate well. He noted that there is a considerable retraining cost when staff leaves. Chief Wallace shared that the cost of training an inexperienced officer was about 260 days or 2000 hours or about \$68,000. Fire training had a cost of about \$8,000. Mr. Lahrmer's handout showed that each percent wage adjustment cost the Village \$26,000. Mr. Warren commented that officers had not been hired as novices, which Chief Wallace concurred. Chief Wallace shared that there was a cost for training experienced officers that typically required 4-6 weeks.

Mr. Hattenbach commented that the current wage discussion did not take into account real dollar wages and discussing wage adjustments in the context of percent change could be misleading. Mr. Warren concurred but noted that for the previous 2 years actual wages (police department) had been provided and compared across about 20 different police departments. At the last Comp and Benef meeting, the committee decided to skip this detail this year.

Chief Wallace commented that Village employees have a different work ethic than in previous years, taking on additional responsibilities and buying into a work efficiency ethic.

Mr. Drake commented that while the Maintenance crew had been down in number, the staff has picked up the slack and there has been no noticeable degradation of work.

Mr. Doering commented that any adjustment to base salary also recognize benefit adjustments (i.e., pension) that the Village absorbs. Additionally, over the years and despite reductions in earnings tax revenues and residents losing their jobs, the Village had never laid off any employee nor are there plans to. He also noted that with the latest County Auditor's property value assessment, the Village property tax revenues will be flat for the next 3 years. This represents the second largest source of Village revenue.

Ms. Conway recommended a 3% wage increase. It was not seconded. Ms. Conway withdrew her second to the motion that would increase wages by 2%. Mr. Doering made a

motion to increase employee wages (excluding the Village Manager) by 2.5%. Mr. Warren seconded. The motion carried 2 to 1 with Ms. Conway dissenting.

Mr. Warren requested that the discussion of the Manager salary review be deferred to a future meeting.

There be no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Chair: _____
Ray Warren