



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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DAVID E. STAVENS
Deputy First Selectman

MELINDA M. FERRY
MICHAEL B. MADRU
JAMES M. PRICHARD
RONALD F. STOMBERG
JOHN W. TURNER

LORI L. SPIELMAN
First Selectman

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Monday, March 20, 2023

Nicholas J. DiCorleto, Jr. Meeting Hall

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Lori Spielman, David Stavens, James Prichard, John Turner, Melinda Ferry, Michael Madru

SELECTMAN ABSENT: Ronald Stomberg (Attended Design Review Board Meeting)

OTHERS PRESENT: *Tiffany Pignataro, Finance Officer/Treasurer; Walter Lee, Emergency & Risk Management Director; Douglas Harding, Board of Finance; LouAnn Cannella, Human Resources Coordinator; Cynthia Soto

*Attended via Zoom

I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting was called to order at 7:21 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **First Selectman Transition to Part-Time:** First Selectman Spielman reported that after an extensive search, she discovered that there was minimal information available regarding pay and benefit structures for like positions. She added that every town is different and has a different structure or population. She presented the information that she had. Ms. Ferry said that the Vernon Mayor has a salary of \$31,529 and Ms. Spielman added that the position includes full benefits.

Ms. Spielman recommended strongly that the position be set at 26 hours per week based on her experience with the responsibilities of the job, including being on call 24/7 and required attendance at various evening meetings. Mr. Turner added that part of the job of the First Selectman is fielding phone calls that come in at all hours.

Mr. Madru expressed concern about the 26-hour schedule, adding that the job would limit individuals who might be interested in running for the position while keeping their current job. Mr. Stavens expressed concern that a person having a full-time job along with this First Selectman job would find it difficult to maintain the level of commitment needed. Ms. Spielman noted that it is difficult to work this schedule if you have another job and a family, as this job is busy at all hours.

After extensive discussion, the consensus was to set a minimum of 20 hours per week, understanding that there will be fluctuations of the required hours during peak busy times. Mr. Turner noted that not knowing who will be in the position going forward, it's hard to determine how many hours per week the individual will work. The individual may not do the job the same way it's being done now.

Ms. Spielman noted that it's important to know going into it that the job requires a significant commitment of time including weekends, nights and holidays as needed. Mr. Lee added that it is like any other exempt position within the Town; exempt staff are scheduled to work 35 hours per week, but he can't remember the last time he worked only 35 hours. Mr. Lee said it comes with the job and candidates should have that understanding. Mr. Prichard asked Mr. Lee how many extra hours he works, and Mr. Lee said he puts in his day and then attends as many evening meetings as he can make in addition to working emergency drills, fire drills and other events on Fridays and weekends, as well as fielding phone calls. It adds up for all exempt staff.

Mr. Stavens noted that this is an elected position and anyone who wants the job should be committed to the hours; if they are not doing the job it will come out at the next election.

The Board of Selectmen members decided to set a fixed salary at \$35,000 for a minimum of a 20-hour work week.

- B. **Benefits:** Discussion was held regarding assigning benefits to the part-time position. It was decided to include medical, dental and vision health insurance, short-term and long-term disability, and life insurance plus two weeks of paid vacation time.

The eligibility of sick time was discussed. Ms. Cannella noted that sick time and vacation time are not currently tracked for the First Selectman position; Ms. Pignataro confirmed this. Ms. Cannella added that part-time employees 20+ hours per week are eligible for sick time. The Board of Selectmen chose to not include the deferred compensation retirement benefit.

Ms. Spielman noted that the current First Selectman vehicle will become a pool car for the First Selectman's office and there will not be a car assigned to the Town Administrator or the First Selectman.

MOVED (TURNER), SECONDED (STAVENS) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO SET THE ANNUAL SALARY FOR THE NEW POSITION OF PART-TIME (MINIMUM 20 HOURS PER WEEK, INCLUDING MEETING ATTENDANCE) FIRST SELECTMAN AT \$35,000 EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 4, 2023 TO INCLUDE ELIGIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN EMPLOYEE BENEFITS OFFERED BY THE TOWN TO INCLUDE MEDICAL, DENTAL AND VISION HEALTH INSURANCE, SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM DISABILITY AND LIFE INSURANCE, AND TWO WEEKS VACATION.

Mr. Madru said that the decisions that are made today can be up for further discussion later if it is determined that adjustments need to be made.

MOVED (TURNER), SECONDED (STAVENS) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADD THE WORD "MINIMUM" BEFORE THE WORD "TWENTY" IN THE MOTION ABOVE TO INDICATE THAT THE 20 HOUR WEEKLY REQUIREMENT IS THE MINIMUM.

Ms. Spielman thanked Ms. Pignataro for the comprehensive information she provided for the meeting.

III. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED (TURNER), SECONDED (PRICHARD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN AT 8:17 PM.

Submitted by: LouAnn Cannella

LouAnn Cannella
Recording Secretary

Approved by: Lori Spielman

Lori Spielman
First Selectman