

Special Council Meeting

July 11, 2022

6:00

A special council meeting was held on Monday, July 11th to discuss the police contract. Those present were Mayor Smith and Council members Carrow, DeBenedictis and Paisley. Chief Hutson, Lt. Rau, Robert Cote, David Ross, JJ Burnett, Alex Dias and Christine Letterman were also in attendance. Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 6:00 and stated if you would like any changes to the contract to write them down and submit it to the committee and the Chief. Chief Hutson started with saying the officers would like their longevity included with their salary instead of being paid on the anniversary date. The reason is pension is calculated on base pay and not overtime or anything else from the last three years. It would not cost anything additional.

Chief Hutson has been here for 22 years and this is the 5th contract he has helped negotiate in 15 years. The Chiefs' of this department have negotiated on the behalf of the department in the past. Other departments use Unions. Clayton Police Department decided not to go Union since Town Council has always worked with us in the past. Our Town Solicitor Scott Chambers confirmed that Clayton Police Department could be a bargaining agent. However, we would like to use a spokesperson to represent the department and Sgt. Robert Bishop has been delegated.

Mayor Smith would like the contract to be updated by making sure FMLA is current. He also wanted it to include Juneteenth as a holiday since it was added after the previous contract was agreed upon. His concern is the cost of living increase since we don't know what the next three years will bring. The police department gets the same cost of living raise as the town gets. However, we negotiate the cost of living for three years. If the town employees don't get a cost of living raise the police department gets what's in the contract. The last contract was 2% the first year, 3% the second year and 2% the third year. The amount of pay is reflected in the schedule of pay that says, "Proposed base salary reflects a 2% increase in 2020; 3% increase in 2021; and 2% increase in 2022." Mayor Smith has an issue with committing to 3 years from where we're standing. Chief Hutson said right now we're behind the curve. For example, Ocean View is a department our size and their starting salary is \$56,000 as a recruit and we're at \$51,000. We're getting ready to hire. If money were to be an issue, the police department has given back in the past. We cut back the percentage but gave personal time in lieu of pay. As long as both parties agree. Council wants to check with Scott Chambers on this. The police department has checked with him numerous times in the past.

Councilman Carrow asked if we have sick time, which we do. He stated other departments include it as vacation as a benefit. Because sometimes sick time can only be used when you're sick. This way you can use it for either.

Mayor Smith feels that the AFLAC policies are an issue since some employees on both sides have 7 or 8 policies. It is cumbersome to the town costing \$5300.00 per month. We need to revisit short and long term insurance. Some people have the vision plan through AFLAC even though the town offers vision insurance. Chief Hutson stated that his officers would not need long-term health insurance through the town after they retire since they will get it through the state for the rest of their lives. The town needs to take that into consideration. The officers can use AFLAC in the future to cover their spouses. The

Town of Clayton and AFLAC negotiated policies and amounts not the police department. The likelihood of someone getting hurt while working for this profession is greater than someone working in the office. Same as life insurance it is more likely that an officer would be killed in the line of duty. In the future, there should be limits on AFLAC.

Another thing to consider is these officers are working 12-hour rotating shifts working nights, weekends, holidays and are getting called in. Not saying that the town jobs are not important, they are. We fight for a contract and everyone benefits. There is a piggybacking case law when there is no contract. There are certain things you can't compare. The other town employees are home every night with their families but the officers aren't. Obviously, they chose this profession, but they should be compensated as well. This is why we need a contract.

Mayor Smith said to send concerns to Chief Hutson in reference to the contract. If there is no further discussion at this time a motion is requested for adjournment. Councilman Paisley made a motion to stand in the state of adjournment. Councilman Carrow seconded the motion. The vote for adjournment at 6:25 was unanimous.

Recording Secretary,

Christine Letterman, CMC