



**Canton Finance Committee
801 Washington Street
Canton, MA 02021**

Minutes Voted on: 1/18/23
Vote: 2-0-1

**Sub-Committee to Review Compensation of Elected Officials
Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2023**

Finance Committee Sub-Committee Members Present: Emilio Mauro and Cindy Thomas.

Finance Committee Sub-Committee Members Absent: Dave Clough.

Guests Present:

Ellen Jones, Finance Committee/Sub-Committee Recording Secretary

Call Meeting to Order: Ms. Thomas called the virtual Sub-Committee meeting to order at 7:41 p.m.

Ms. Thomas stated the purpose of the meeting was to reconvene as a Sub-Committee to review the issue of elected official's compensation for the Town of Canton.

Approval of Minutes – A motion made by Mr. Mauro to approve the minutes of the Sub-Committee to Review Elected Officials Compensation for November 21, 2022 as written was seconded by Ms. Thomas.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Mauro Aye

Ms. Thomas Aye

The November 21, 2022 minutes were approved 2-0-0.

Update on information gathered relative to Elected Officials Compensation

Ms. Thomas stated that she had two tasks: one was to reach out to Town Counsel and the other was to reach out to John Connelly to see if the Sub-Committee could obtain historical information with regard to elected official's compensation. Ms. Thomas stated that she had not yet been able to connect with Town Counsel and suggested that the subcommittee wait until the Sub-Committee was further along with its deliberations. Ms. Thomas did have a conversation with Select Board Chair, John Connolly, who indicated to her that the current structure/salaries for elected officials have been in place since he had been elected to the School Committee 39 years ago. He was not aware of any rationalization for the current structure of salaries other than what has been referred noted by others – that some of the boards and committees did not have staff, such as the Assessors Office. Long ago the Assessors were responsible for doing more field work than today when it is covered by the staff.

Ms. Thomas stated that she has more follow up information with Norfolk County Retirement System on what qualifies for vesting which can impact both retiree health insurance and pension. She also noted that she recently learned, although not elected, the Zoning Board of Appeals members have the option to receive some compensation and that it appears as it is a stipend for possibly a decision-writing fee. The Sub-Committee may want to look at other compensation that might be paid to other appointed officials that the Sub-Committee is unaware of. It was noted that these stipends are part of the budget and not subject to Town Meeting approval.

Ms. Thomas stated that she has two tasks for the Sub-Committee to follow up on: 1) to gain a better understanding any rules that the Sub-Committee needs to consider around what kind of compensation is pensionable and what makes someone eligible for retiree health insurance and 2) figure out whether we have any other issues in the town with regard to compensation to appointed officials.

Ms. Thomas suggested that the Sub-Committee draft a preliminary recommendation that would need further consideration by the Finance Committee and decide if the recommendation would be for a two-tiered system or three-tiered system that would allow for compensation of elected officials (not for appointed officials) and that it would include a payment structure that is not pensionable and does not create eligibility for retirement health insurance benefits. The Sub-Committee would also recommend to the Select Board that they discontinue with the current policy which allows compensated elected officials to be eligible for the Town's health insurance and other benefits such as dental and life insurance.

Mr. Mauro stated that the Sub-Committee may want to consider the level of commitment that some of the elected officials have for serving on many other committees when recommending a compensation structure. The tiered compensation system will help to standardize the compensation.

The Sub-Committee discussed some of the criteria that might be used for determining a tiered compensation plan such as: number of meetings, number of other boards and committees that members of an elected board are required to serve on, size of the budget the elected board is responsible for along with the nature and complexity of the work performed by the board (for example the Planning Board having a smaller budget but the complexity of the work is very complex and difficult.)

Mr. Mauro brought up the matter that the Chair of the Select Board receives a higher stipend than the other Board members for serving as the Chair. Mr. Mauro questions if a higher stipend for a Chair of a board is something that needs to be considered for other boards other than the Select Board or whether just the Select Board Chair should continue to receive this higher stipend. Ms. Thomas suggested that the Sub-Committee may want to discuss this with some of the other boards and get their feedback.

Having served on the School Committee Ms. Thomas sees the School Committee members on a similar to the Select Board members with regard to complexity of issues and policies. As School Committee Chair Ms. Thomas met as often as weekly with the Superintendent. She is in support of keeping the Select Board and School Committee on similar levels with regarding to the tiered compensation.

Ms. Thomas spoke about creating a grid for comparison of the various committees and have people respond to the Sub-Committee with comments about what their actual functions serving on the Boards if they were different then what the Sub-Committee preconceived them to be. Size of the board that the work of the board is distributed amongst the members is another important consideration. Mr. Mauro suggested adding staffing to the criteria.

Ms. Thomas stated that the Sub-Committee needs to figure out how they are going to receive input from town officials. She suggested first putting together a draft proposal that would be used as a working document with which to receive feedback and responses on.

Ms. Thomas had conferred with the Finance Director, Randy Scollins, who indicated to her that the Finance Committee has plenty of time with which to consider their motion that would be included in the Annual Town Meeting report to the voters. She suggested having one more meeting as a Sub-Committee with member Mr. Clough in attendance to review the draft proposal prior to submitting their final proposal to the full Finance Committee. A meeting would be required because the Sub-Committee would not be able to deliberate and comment on the draft proposal via email.

A suggestion was made to meet on either January 18th or January 23rd to review the draft. Ms. Thomas agreed to reach out to Mr. Clough on his availability and work on the draft for the Sub-Committee meeting and the Sub-Committee would then work towards having this ready for a Finance Committee meeting later in January. The Select Board would have to make a policy change should it agree with a potential recommendation from the Finance Committee to end benefit eligibility for elected officials. Discussion on grandfathering past and current elected officials will be needed. Mr. Mauro questioned if the stipends paid to appointed boards was considered as compensatory pay or as general pay. Recent payments that were paid out to Zoning Board members from a line item for professional fees/decision writing and appear to be stipends. Ms. Thomas does not think there is a conflict of interest for soliciting a Select Board's member to give their opinion on the policy the Finance Committee would be recommending. The conflict of interest would be to have the Select Board initially authorize a Sub-Committee to review elected official's compensation.

Next Meeting Date: The next virtual Sub-Committee meeting would take place on January 18th or January 23rd.

A motion made by Mr. Mauro to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 pm. was seconded by Ms. Thomas.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Mauro Aye

Ms. Thomas Aye

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Minutes reviewed by: Cindy Thomas

Respectfully submitted,

DocuSigned by:



Cindy Thomas

Chair, Canton Finance Committee

Sub-Committee to Review Compensation of Elected Officials

**Finance Committee
Sub-Committee to Review Compensation of Elected Officials
Meeting Documents
January 9, 2023**

Please note: Some meeting documents may be found on the Town's website under the Posted Minutes section (Laser Fiche).

Agenda for January 9, 2023.