

Minutes of Northampton, MA, Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board
[EOCAB], May 21, 2014

Meeting was called to order at 6:41 p.m.

Present: V. Baum-Hommes, T. Fortier, J. Higgins, D. Loux, L. Matson, T. Thompson

Absent: D. Helmus

Public comment period: No members of the public present.

T. Thompson accepted nomination and election for Chair from previous meeting.

Review of minutes of previous meeting.

1. We have received no information from Northampton HR Glenda Stoddard.

2. Executive summary of Charter Commission proceedings provided by T.

Thompson previously. There is no official report.

Questions about summary of the charter commission.

Charter committee did consider doubling salaries and removing benefits.

Average hours of council person's worktime arrived at by interview.

School committee members worktime not even throughout the year.

Most at budget prep time.

3. Discussion of the EOCAB holding a meeting for public comment

How do we provide access for city officials who have strong feelings?

Need for transparency discussed.

Motion by L. Matson to approve previous meeting minutes as written, seconded by T. Fortier. Unanimously approved.

General discussion of EOCAB objective

EOCAB is to review and make recommendations on salary and benefits

Discussion of how to post meetings dates/times for public

How do meeting sites/dates get into the Daily Hamp. Gazette? Does the paper just check the website? We have not received information on how to post on the website that we requested.

Review of L. Matson's suggestions for cities to use in benchmarking. See attached spreadsheet.

Discussion of criteria for benchmarking. EOCAB members decided to add data for:

Population

Cost of living factor(s)

Number of council persons

EOCAB members decided to disregard out of state cities.

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2:30pm

Members decided to add the following cities to the matrix of benchmarking data:

Westfield
Holyoke
Pittsfield
Greenfield
Northampton

Tasks for the next month:

L. Matson will set up the spreadsheet in Google Docs with the changes discussed, add data collected to date and distribute access info.

V. Baum-Hommes will investigate a cost of living factors website she has used in the past to look at factors for benchmark cities.

T. Thompson will look into requirements for posting notices of meetings, minutes, and whether using Google Docs for working documents is acceptable.

Once the spreadsheet is available J. Higgins will call city clerks. All members will fill in data as they are able with the goal of populating the spreadsheet fully by next meeting.

There was a short discussion of adding communities to the matrix which are subjectively like Northampton regarding college atmosphere, values, etc. e.g. Burlington, Vt.

It was agreed that in general meetings will be planned for the third Thursday of each month, beginning in July. The next (June) meeting is scheduled for June 26th at 6:30 p.m. V. Baum-Hommes will be minute-taker.

We will seek to find a more public venue for meetings.

Another discussion of how we would conduct a public forum and factors to consider.

Public forum as preliminary to our report or give them data in advance before meeting?

Consideration of bringing in public officials

This topic will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Matson