

Employee Salaries?

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I have read the several articles relating to the issue of Town Hall employee salaries, and I have some concerns. First, this is not a new issue. Employee compensation has been an issue many times over the years. What concerns me now with what I am reading is that there is not a clear understanding of the compensation issue of which salary is only one part. A comparison solely of salaries misses the broader issue which should include total compensation. This should include such things as pension and insurance and any other additional benefits that an employee is entitled to. These benefits vary greatly among municipalities and to ignore them will lead to making inappropriate hiring decisions. Since this is a more complex analysis it clearly requires the town to engage a professional to provide a report that would compare total compensation of employees in similar positions in our surrounding communities. Having this information would also certainly aid in any future contract negotiations.

I also have a concern that, according to the Newstimes article, funds that have been designated in the approved budget to conduct such a study are being withheld. The budget that taxpayers voted on is an authorized appropriation. The taxpayers have a right to expect that the officials would follow through on the commitments they make with respect to the budget. While I understand the concern that unanticipated expenses may arise, that is what the fund balance is for. I also note that the budget included over \$390,000 in contingency! Would that not be sufficient to cover any unanticipated costs? It is certainly much greater than the \$20,000 for the proposed study. To withhold funds that have been authorized for a specific purpose, with the intent to use the funds for something else is essentially designating it as a slush fund.

I urge the board to pursue such a study so that we can be sure Brookfield is properly compensating its town employees.

Sincerely,

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"The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page."