

February 5, 2018
Executive Session #2
Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls
8:27 PM

Present: Selectpersons: Chris Boutwell, Michael Nelson, Chair, Rich Kuklewicz; Town Administrator Steven Ellis; KP Law Attorney Tim Zessin

RE: Executive session under G.L. c. 30A, s. 21(a)(2) to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel and to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel (Police Chief).

Documents and Exhibits: None

- Discussion regarding a potential settlement with Chief Dodge.
 - Concerns if we can settle for a reasonable amount that would be better for the community as it puts an end to what's going on.
 - If we don't come to a settlement, there are concerns about legal proceedings and looking for a new chief as you don't know what can happen and it will also leave more instability in the department.
 - Would still have to pay him 6 months as that is in his contract
 - Dodge has asked to get the years of service higher; to next birthday
 - He's asked to be on paid administrative leave and would have no authority as Chief; we could search for a full-time replacement
 - This would allow the Police Department to move forward.
- The Town's first offer was to pay him through the end of his contract in November 2018; Dodge countered with 2 years; which the Selectboard is against.
- There is the possibility Dodge may be getting a job elsewhere and they have asked the Board to delay their decision for another week before taking action.
- A clear message needs to be given tonight that if an agreement is not met, the Board will make a decision; we don't want this dragging on, we need closure.
- Atty. Zessin will go back with Atty. Joyce to come up with an Agreement
- Dodge can't disclose negative comments about the Town and the Town can't give negative feedback regarding Dodge.
- If we don't reach a deal on the contract by next week, we will make a decision regarding the allegations.

8:47 PM

Present: Charles "Chip" Dodge, Candace Dodge and Atty. Austin Joyce
Atty. Zessin informs the above parties that they are in Executive Session under G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(2).

- Here to discuss the settlement discussions that have been ongoing and everyone is up to speed where we are.

- The Board understands Chief Dodge has been in discussions with a neighboring town about a potential opening for a Chief's position and as a result of that discussion he is asking for the decision for the disciplinary hearing to be delayed a week.
- The process has been going on for a while, the investigation took time, 2 days of hearings, because the Board takes their job seriously and want to make sure this is done correctly not only for Chip but for the residents of Montague.
- The parties have engaged in good faith settlement discussions and have been moving in the right direction. The Board is willing to push of the decision for another week to allow 1) Chief Dodge to continue discussions with another Town and 2) for the Attorney's to continue to negotiate a potential resolution.
- The Board is willing to put off a decision for another week but at some point this needs to be put behind us even if that means we need to make a difficult decision and move forward so there is closure.
- This will be put on next week's agenda and the Attorneys will continue to negotiate and there will be a better sense as the days go forward.

Nelson makes the motion to adjourn the executive session at 8:54 PM. Seconded by Boutwell, approved. Boutwell – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Approved:

Boutwell Nelson Kuklewicz

Release to the Public:

Yes Not Yet 3/19/18 Date

Date Released to the Public:

3/19/18