

Finance Committee Review of Stipends and Recommendations for FY25

During FY2018 the Finance Committee did a thorough evaluation of all stipends for effect in Fiscal Year 2019, with the intention of reviewing the stipend values for FY2025 in FY2023. The focus would be to account for changes in the position requirements and to adjust for inflation. After this review we also decided that five years was too long to wait before the next review, and that the new stipends should be reviewed after three years.

All 25 stipend recipients were asked via email to explain any changes in their duties since 2019. Three weeks after sending the email, only 7 responses have been received (from a total of 5 individuals), and of the responses received, the most apparent change was inflation/cost of gas for inspections.

APPROACH TO STIPEND REVIEW

Some of the considerations include:

- It can reasonably be accepted that stipends for board positions and additional duties are token amounts that should still be reasonably adjusted for inflation
- It can reasonably be accepted that stipends for work such as inspections should adequately compensate the employee for the time and gas spent on such work
- It is in the Town's best interest to provide adequate compensation for both inspection work and additional duties outside of the main job description to attract qualified applicants
- It is also in the Town's best interest to provide sufficient token payments for board members to both attract residents to those roles and to reimburse residents at least partially for additional costs incurred in filling those roles, without which they would not be able to participate in governing
- All stipends should be round dollar amounts and stipends paid monthly should be evenly divisible by 12
- Those stipends already increased at the 2023 ATM and new positions would not require an adjustment at this time. (Moderator, Board of Registrars, Farmers Market Manager, Hearing Officer)

The remaining stipends were categorized as either direct pay for work (inspector stipends, tree warden, IT positions) or tokens (board stipends).

The increase in inspector stipends was somewhat arbitrary but was intended to provide more professional compensation for professional work and to recognize transportation costs.

After considering several perspectives on how to determine an overall increase to account for inflation we selected 12% as the standard increase.

TREATMENT OF SPECIFIC POSITIONS

The Forest Warden position and workload was somewhat unclear, but it seemed high in comparison to what were thought to be comparable positions, so it was first slightly reduced and then increased by 12% so that there would still be an increase in the stipend, but it would be less out of line.

The Tree Warden, Emergency Management Director and Town IT Coordinator stipends were increased 12 % and then adjusted to an even dollar amount that would be evenly divisible for 12 monthly payments.

The Police IT Administrator stipend was increased to the \$6,000 requested by the Selectboard after discussion of and agreement with their rationale.

The Animal and Barn Inspector positions had the most research and discussion. Job descriptions and annual estimates of time spent were reviewed. The Barn Inspector's estimated workload was valued at 62 hours @\$20 (higher than current minimum wage and allowing for mileage costs). This would be \$1,240 which was then increased by 12 and rounded to \$1,400. For the Animal Inspector, the current compensation was deemed adequate for the average annual hours, so it was just increased by 12% to \$1,764.

BOARD STIPENDS

For board stipends, the Finance Committee reviewed the original structure:

1. Start with the Selectboard member stipend
2. Provide 75% of that amount to members of the Board of Assessors and Board of Health, and then
3. Provide a 10% differential for committee chairs.

There was no interest in adjusting those proportions, so the Selectboard member stipend was increased by 12% and the other calculations followed and were adjusted to be even dollar amount evenly divisible for 12 monthly payments.

Finally, the hourly ranges of Schedule II were considered, even though they are not technically stipends. It was decided to increase the top of each range by \$2 to account for inflation and to provide more flexibility to departments.