

COMMITTEE ON ORDINANCES, CHARTER AND RULES
APRIL 22, 2019 AT 6:13 p.m.
COMMITTEE ROOM
WOBURN CITY HALL

Voting Members:

Present: Chairman Lindsay Higgins, Alderman Michael Concannon, Alderman Edward Tedesco.
Late: Alderman Mark Gaffney. Absent: Alderman Mercer-Bruen

Non-Voting Members:

Present: President Michael Anderson, and Alderman Robert Ferullo. Absent: Alderman Mercer-Bruen. Recused: Alderman Joanne Campbell

* * * * *

Order to review salaries of non-union department heads: Alderman Campbell recused herself and left the Committee Room. Chairman Higgins said the city is still waiting for one of the unions to settle. She said she compiled a spreadsheet with current salary figures for non-union department heads and raises in 0.25-percent increments from 1 percent to 3 percent. Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Concannon to accept and make part of the permanent record a document from Chairman Higgins entitled “Non-Union Department Heads Salary Worksheet – April 22, 2019;” approved, 3-0. Chairman Higgins said there are two options for the committee – to change the salary figures in the ordinance or adopt an ordinance that links the raises for non-union department heads to raises negotiated by the department heads in Teamsters Union Local 25. Alderman Concannon said the latter option would be in effect each time there is a settlement. Alderman Gaffney arrived at 6:17 p.m. Chairman Higgins said if the city ties the non-union raises to the raises for union department heads, they would receive the same 2 percent pay increase each year. Alderman Tedesco said if the council adopts the version tying the non-union raises to the union raises, it would only have to approve the ordinance once. Alderman Concannon said he is concerned the council can only go back to the beginning of the fiscal year to make salary adjustments. He said he thought there was going to be some language to address retroactive settlements, like the City Council reserves the right to go further to adjust the salaries. Chairman Higgins said that will have to be worked out. President Anderson said if the council adopts the ordinance change, it can’t adjust a salary lower or higher for a new hire based on experience and qualifications. He asked what the terms of the current settlement are. Chairman Higgins said the union department heads are slated to received 2 percent raises over each of the next three years. She said the council is not bound to those terms, however. President Anderson said he likes the idea of changing the salary figures in the ordinance rather than adopting the ordinance linking the non-union raises to the union raises. Alderman Gaffney noted the salary figures in the revised ordinance read 1.75 percent. Alderman Tedesco said the council can amend the 1.75-percent figure to 2-percent. Alderman Concannon asked how many department heads are in the union. Alderman Tedesco said the union department heads include the Chief Assessor, the Treasurer/Collector, the Conservation Administrator, the Board of Health agent, the Planning Director, the Purchasing Agent and the City Engineer, among others. Alderman Concannon estimated there are 10 union department heads, and he thinks it’s fair to link the salary increases to the non-union department heads. He asked if the council is hiring a non-union department head, would the ordinance restrict the council from setting a salary. He

said he is not in favor of adopting the ordinance that links the union and non-union salaries if the council cannot set the salary for a new hire. President Anderson said revising the ordinance each year to reflect the new salaries is more cumbersome, but he likes it. Chairman Higgins said the council can set the raises for more than one fiscal year. Alderman Concannon said he can't imagine why the council would go too far out, but he does want to get away from people coming in to beg for a raise every time their peers get one. President Anderson said that would be a good opportunity for the council to confer with department heads. Alderman Concannon said it is very difficult for the council to decide what type of raise the City Solicitor, for example, should get when she is a direct report to the mayor. Chairman Higgins said the council has checks and balances. She said increasing the salaries in the ordinance gives the council an idea of what's going on in the city. She said the council has only increased the salaries of non-union department heads once since became an alderman. Alderman Concannon asked which non-union department heads positions are hired by the council. Alderman Tedesco responded the Auditor, the City Clerk and the Human Resources Director are hired by the council. Alderman Concannon said he is not ready to act just yet. Chairman Higgins said once the fiscal year ends, the council cannot adjust the pay rates retroactively. She said adjusting the salaries annually is the way the council has done it in the past. She said the spreadsheet indicates the current salaries and the potential pay increases. Alderman Gaffney asked if the council needs to account for a new employee's salary. Chairman Higgins said the starting salaries can be different. Alderman Tedesco said the council can put in a new base salary for a new hire. Alderman Tedesco said he is fine with increasing the ordinance by 2 percent every year. Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Concannon to ask the chairman to prepare an ordinance that increases the salaries of non-union department heads by 2 percent annually from July 1, 2018 to July 1, 2020. Alderman Concannon said he is fine with that but it feels like the committee is kicking the can down the road. He said adopting the ordinance tying the non-union raises to the union raises might be a better approach. Motion made by Alderman Tedesco to amend his motion to extend the term through June 30, 2021, the end of the third fiscal year. President Anderson said the committee ought to make sure the mayor is ok with 2 percent raises over three years. He said that seems like the terms everyone else is getting. Alderman Ferullo suggested the council make the raises go into effect on July 1 of each year. Alderman Anderson suggested going out two years, though FY '19 and FY' 20. Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Concannon that the City Council amend Section 2-180 of the Woburn Municipal Code, as amended, to increase the salaries of non-union department heads by 2 percent in fiscal year 2019 and fiscal year 2020; approved, 4-0.

Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Concannon to adjourn; approved, 4-0. Chairman Higgins adjourned the meeting at 6:43 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST

Gordon Vincent
Clerk of Committees