



## MINUTES OF WORK SESSION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF YOUNGTOWN, AZ

THURSDAY, April 5, 2012, TOWN CLUBHOUSE, 12033 CLUBHOUSE SQUARE

1. **Call to Order** Mayor Michael LeVault called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. **Roll Call**

Council present: Mayor Michael LeVault, Vice Mayor Jacob Duran, Councilmembers Margaret Chittenden, Dorena Miller, Shirley Oglesby-Gustafson, Susan MacKay and Judy Johnson.

Staff present: Town Manager Lloyce Robinson, Town Attorney Michelle Swann, Finance Officer Jackie Hoffman, Public Safety Manager Michael Kessler, Public Works Manager Jim Fox, Programs Projects Grants Manager Mark Hannah, Library/Museum Manager Heidi Speed, Court Administrator Virginia Bermudez, Administrative Assistant Cecilia Casillas, Deputy Town Clerk Diane Cordova, and Town Clerk/Treasurer Letty Goldberg.
5. **Public Comments**

Jesse Ramirez, Executive Director, Valley View Community Food Bank

  - Youngtown has been very supportive of the Valley View Community Food Bank which started here in Youngtown. We have become so successful at what we do that we have outgrown our facility here. We will be relocating in Sun City at 107<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Peoria Avenue in the old Safeway building. We plan to have a satellite facility in Youngtown. So many people need assistance with food. We also have a mobile food bank to assist those in communities such as Wittman that have limited access to services. In addition to the Food Bank, we have started a program called Feeding Arizona where we are able to obtain donated foods from other states and give to small community food banks throughout Arizona. Again, we thank you for allowing Valley View Community Food Bank to grow here.

Councilmember Chittenden

  - Jesse, thank you for your service to our community.

Mayor LeVault

  - Jesse, we appreciate what you've done here.
4. **Call for Executive Session**

Motion to adjourn to Executive Session – Councilmember MacKay  
Second – Councilmember Mello  
Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Work Session resumed at 7:10 p.m.
3. **Business**

A. Discussion Re: Potential salary adjustments for all Town employees in Fiscal Year 2012-2013. (Robinson)  
Town Manager Robinson

  - It is important to have adequate compensation to attract, retain and motivate qualified employees. We make these recommendations based on surveys and other research. Town Code (Section 2.12.130 F4) says it is the Town Manager's responsibility to advise Council on the financial condition and future needs of the Town and make such recommendations as he/she may deem desirable.
  - In 2003 a previous Council gave a 25% across the board raise, even to a contract employee. Then raises continued at 3 and 4 % over the next few years. In 2008 this Council granted employees a COLA and merit of 3% for outstanding and 2% successful. There have been no COLA or merit raises for the past three years. In 2012 I would like to try to bring pay to a marketable wage. We talk about being fiscally conservative and taking care of our

assets/infrastructure. Along with streets and building, our employees are infrastructure. The three top financial positions in the Town will be vacant in the next year. The Town will need a marketable wage scale for succession. Our employees wear multiple hats. For example, the Public Works Manager serves as the Building Safety Officer and Plan Reviewer. \$17,000 was saved on plan reviews last year that the Town did not have to pay to consultants such as Stantech or Willdan. The infrastructure has atrophied. We were able to come up with \$200,000 for a three-city coalition to look at consolidating/regionalizing some police services. We should be able to come up with \$45,000 for salary adjustments to run this town with their expertise. I believe we can afford and need to do this.

Mayor LeVault

- I am watching other municipalities and how they do things and keeping in mind the separation of powers, the Manager works for us and has a spending limit. Council has to be careful not to micromanage. Council adopts the budget bottom line. Technically, the Town Manager doesn't have to come to us.
- This administration has done an excellent job of management the Town budget and rebuilding the rainy day fund which is now at about 70% of the operating expenses of the Town. In 2006-2007 the Town was almost out of cash. I want to compliment Council and staff for the sacrifices made across the board. We are discussing this tonight. It is not an action item. We hire the Town Manager to the daily administrative responsibilities.

Councilmember Mello

- As a business owner I know tough times. My employees and my partner have had no raises for four years. In fact, last year we asked everyone to take a 10% pay cut. There are other communities that have hiring and pay freezes.

Councilmember Chittenden

- We do need to look at some raises for employees. I do have objections. The 25% raise got the Town into trouble. I question raises for certain positions and some of them have only been here less than a year.

Councilmember Johnson

- I see that we need to adjust position salaries, but is this the right time?

Town Manager Robinson

- We need to be more competitive in the hiring market to attract and keep qualified employees. Some of these positions are exempt; not every position is exempt. Positions are in pay ranges. COLAs would move the employee along the pay range.

Councilmember Johnson

- I'm looking at the proposed structure. Does it mean that a new employee would be hired at the bottom of the pay range or somewhere a long it?

Councilmember MacKay

- A new hire that met the minimum qualifications would start at the bottom where a new hire with everything that you could want - lots of experience, education and certification - might start toward the top of the range.

Vice Mayor Duran

- I intend to prosper in my struggle and to make a lot of money for people and experience some beauty along the way. I want other people to move forward in faith and to prosper. We can't let things paralyze us. We have mountains to climb and valleys to walk.

Councilmember MacKay

- I want to thank Town Manager Robinson. I'm glad she did this. I support giving employees more money. This is the first year that employees where I work are getting raises. One hundred dollars to the employees means more than \$100 to the employers. I'd rather see a COLA and merit. \$45,000 is not much but one employee gets \$10,000 while another gets \$1,000.

Councilmember Johnson

- Our employees are great and need an increase.

Town Manager Robinson

- Last year Litchfield Park gave their employees a 2.8% across the board totaling approximately \$56,000. I have done a comparison of salaries for key positions using the Small Cities and Towns Coalition. Youngtown salaries are well below the average in this comparison for every category. We are investing in economic development. We also need to invest in our employees.

Councilmember MacKay

- Some employees are recent hires at that salary. Why did they accept it?

Councilmember Mello

- Members of the Citizens Tax Advisory Committee are here. No one is questioning the ability or loyalty of our employees. We know the struggles we've had to go through. We need to get stable and then support employee raises.

Councilmember Johnson

- It's perception and we have to answer to the residents

Councilmember MacKay

- As Vice Mayor Duran says, "Let's agree to disagree agreeably." If my employer was not giving raises this year, I would be looking for another job that pays more. We need to increase pay. Our employees like everyone else have to pay more for gas, insurance, groceries.

Councilmember Chittenden

- The dog park committee had 23 members but is now down to 9 or 10. They ask why the Town can hire an economic development consultant but not build a dog park or community garden. We made a tough decision in December when we voted 7-0 to contract with the Sheriff's Office for policing services. People trusted our judgment.

Councilmember Gustafson

- Town Manager Robinson, you didn't have to bring this to us. Why did you? Staff needs a raise.

Town Manager Robinson

- I don't want to hide the ball. I wanted to show you the research and be as transparent as possible. The Town Clerk/Treasurer is planning to retire the end of the Fiscal Year, the Finance Officer is leaving next year, and the Town Manager's contract is up for renewal in August. You mentioned the December 1 decision. What information did you have to make that decision?

Councilmember Chittenden

- Lots of information and the numbers were there and not just what you provide to us.

Town Manager Robinson

- We've given you lots of information. You trusted us in December.

June Miller, Youngtown resident, member of Youngtown Citizens Tax Advisory Committee (CTAC)

- I'm thinking timing is bad. Dorena Mello has said what is on my mind. It is difficult to compare with other Towns. Our employees need to be grateful they have a job. I agree, you probably need a raise. How will we market a property tax? Consider if you've all had raises.

Mayor LeVault

- Council needs to come to a consensus with you. We still have time. Considering Council came 7-0 on one of the most difficult decisions we've had to make. Good government is not an event, but a process. We need to move forward and grow. I don't believe we're through this yet. Need to make decisions that are likely to sustain the Town. If we stop now then we aren't sustainable. As for perception, sometimes people rely on us to make sound decisions – cut here, add there. Three financial administrators leave and other employees could leave as well because pay is not enough. This could be critical for the Town. Our Town Manager is open and honest and comes to us. We are a team.

Councilmember Johnson

- When I think about it, it's not that much money and it would keep our employees happy. It was in the first draft of the budget. I will think hard about it. Thanks for bringing this to us.

Mayor LeVault

- I know several business owners in the private section. If there is no raise or a salary cut, they have all of the responsibilities. They are close to average in the industry, but we are not. Look, even with the proposed adjustments, Youngtown salaries are not average. We need to be competitive.

Deputy Town Clerk Cordova

- I came here as a youngster to play in the Duck Pond, now known as Maricopa Lake. We had a charter school and a day care, but we've suffered traumas. We need to move forward. My source takes care of me, which is not to say that money doesn't motivate me. Let's think

outside the box. There needs to be a stop to miscommunication, misinformation, and criticism. What are the facts?

**Public Works Manager Fox**

- Some hiring history. Two years ago we had a Public Works employee quit/retire and we advertised with certain requirements – a CDL license, experience driving heavy equipment, and some parks experience. We received 28 applications and only three met the minimum qualifications. In checking references we found that one candidate was let go from another job. The candidate we hired left two months later to be a chef at more money. We hired our second choice and are teaching him everything about parks maintenance. If the salaries are too low we can't attract qualified applicants.

**Mayor LeVault**

- Council is not in for an increase.

**Finance Officer Hoffman**

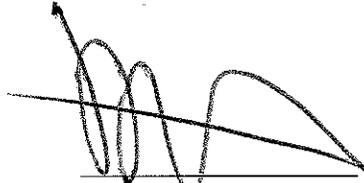
- I don't want to tell you how to do your jobs. So far the draft budget includes \$160,000 for streets infrastructure and \$100,000 for economic development infrastructure. It takes staff to make these things happen. Staff is as important as streets and parks. Using the comparison chart presented to you, I took out the high and low for each position and then averaged and there are still substantial differences between Youngtown salaries and the average. Town Manager \$17,508, Town Clerk \$25,565, Finance Officer \$13,638, Court Administrator \$3,885, Library Manager \$9,501, Code Enforcement Inspector \$8,934, and Public Works Manager \$7,481.
- I have worked here 11 years and have deep feelings for the Town. Money doesn't motivate me, that's not the reason I do this job. We are proposing things the Town can handle, can afford. The future depends on the decisions you make and employees are part of the future.

- B. Discussion Re: Adjustments to Council adopted employee salary ranges currently in effect to reflect possible salary adjustments for Fiscal Year 2012-2013 and beyond. (Robinson)  
Discussion included in 3A.

**Regular Council Meeting:** Thursday, April 5, 2012 immediately following Work Session.

**Adjournment.**

Motion to adjourn – Vice Mayor Duran  
Second – Councilmember Gustafson  
Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.



Michael LeVault, Mayor

**Attest:**



Lefty Goldberg, Town Clerk/Treasurer

Minutes approved at the April 19, 2012 Regular Meeting.