

➤ **Article 11 & 12: Civil Service – Police Chief**

8/24/16

Derek Brindisi, Assistant Town Manager, began presenting Articles 11 and 12. These articles ask Town Meeting to authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition the General Court for special legislation providing that the positions of Police Chief and Police Captain (Article 11) and the positions of Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief (Article 12) appointed after passage of the Act not be subject to the Civil Service statute.

These articles come at a time when it has been increasingly more difficult for the Town to recruit and encourage officers within the rank and file to seek career enhancing promotional opportunities. Rescinding Civil Service in these situations will provide the Town greater flexibility in recruiting, hiring and maintaining the best and brightest to service this community. 81% of Police Departments and 85% of Fire Departments have removed these positions from Civil Service already.

Michael Botieri, Police Chief, explained that these articles are necessary because the Civil Service process has faltered, it is underfunded and will be going away in time. Civil Service does not participate in promotions, all they do is send the 1st postcard out and mandate the rest of the paperwork. The Chief said he currently spends at least 20 hours a week on the Civil Service process as he is trying to hire 7 new officers.

Ed Bradley, Fire Chief, echoed what Chief Botieri said. The Civil Service system is archaic. He shared the process in trying to find enough candidates to take the tests for promotions to these positions. If enough do not sign up, the test is automatically postponed a year and opens to the next lower rank. This goes on for years. Civil Service hinders the process. When there are interested candidates, they spend hundreds of dollars on books, hundreds more on courses, countless hours studying, this adds to their stress levels, and then 80% of them fail the test. Those results have nothing to do with the quality of the candidates either. The entire process is flawed. By removing these positions from Civil Service it would allow us to come up with our own fair process, a process that is much better and much quicker. This is not a move to go outside to hire, our employees are qualified and ready.

Questions:

- Why do these articles involve only the top two in charge, why not include the next level or two as well? (H Helm) Doing so would have to involve discussions with unions. We can always look at that in the next round of negotiations.
- If Civil Service is removed, are the jobs still adequately protected? (H Salerno) Yes, there are still adequate protections through the Personnel Bylaw.
- Has this been discussed with the unions? (H Salerno) Yes, with the President of the Superior Officers group.
- Do the Selectmen support this article? (H Salerno) Yes, they voted 3-2 in support.
- Why did 2 Selectmen vote against this? (E Kusmin) One did not speak at all so we are not sure. The other is in one of the unions covered by Civil Service so he had a number of concerns.
- Do you see the 81% and 85% of other towns becoming 100%? Yes, we will see Civil Service go away completely in the coming years.

Patrick O'Brien made a motion to recommend Article 11 to Town Meeting. Harry Salerno, second. The motion carries unanimously (9-0-0).

Patrick O'Brien made a motion to recommend Article 12 to Town Meeting. Scott Stephenson, second. The motion carries unanimously (9-0-0).