



TOWN OF NEEDHAM

TOWN HALL
Needham, MA 02492-2669

Office of the
SELECT BOARD

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TO: Town Meeting Members
FROM: Select Board
DATE: April 22, 2021
RE: Collective Bargaining Articles

The May 1, 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant includes articles requesting approval of settled collective bargaining agreements. Town Meeting action would complete ratification of these union contracts and allow for the funding of the agreements.

Town contracts are to some extent affected by School Committee settlements for the Needham Education Association/Unit A (the Town's largest collective bargaining unit, for teachers), other School Department units, and the competitive landscape for particular positions. The most recent teachers' contract settled in 2019 for an average cost (including cost of living, steps and lanes) of 4.27% over the three-year agreement (2019-2022). The contracts proposed for action at Town Meeting are consistent with the teachers' settlement, with average increases ranging from 1.7% to 4.59% (see attached).

Article 1: Independent Town Workers Association

The Independent Town Workers Association (ITWA) includes Town Hall employees as well as other administrative and professional/technical positions within the Town government. ITWA has voted to ratify a three-year agreement that will be presented to the Select Board for approval at its April 27, 2021 meeting. Information on the final agreement will be posted on the Town Meeting Webpage at www.Needhamma.gov/townmeeting.

Article 2: Needham Independent Public Employee Association/DPW

The Town and the Association have reached agreement on a one-year contract for fiscal year 2022. This Agreement implements the Town's new classification and compensation plan that has been in development for the past several years. The plan creates a new pay structure and is intended to ensure pay equity across departments. While there is a 0% cost of living increase, the contract includes costs associated with classifying positions within the new plan.

Article 3: Fire Union

The parties continue to negotiate over a successor agreement. A settlement has not been reached, and the Select Board has voted to withdraw this article.

Article 4: Police Union & Article 5: Police Superior Officers

The Town and the Needham police unions have reached agreement on a one-year contract for fiscal year 2021, the current year. The agreements provide the same cost of living adjustment for the members as has been provided to other employees of the Town for fiscal year 2021. The Unions have affirmatively agreed to bargain in good faith with the Town

over terms and conditions under which the Town can leave the Civil Service system. This is a high priority for the Town.

The Civil Service system is outdated and problematic. It was adopted many decades ago with primary goals of protecting hiring and discipline from patronage. Those goals are better addressed now by other laws and regulations, and by public employee collective bargaining rights. Removing the Town from Civil Service will strengthen necessary management rights and accountability, and allow greater flexibility in hiring and promotions, including steps to improve the diversity of the force.

The Select Board recommends approval of Articles 2, 4, and 5. The Select Board's recommendation on Article 1 will be posted to the website after its April 27, 2021 meeting.