Stipend Review Committee

October 2007
Report

Mission Statement

Review Chelmsford's current practice of granting certain elected Town Officials annual compensatory stipends. Based on your findings, we would like you to recommend policies that will fairly address the issue of appropriate compensation and/or expense reimbursement for elected officials going forward. We expect that you will also consider the matter of providing certain elected officials with health insurance benefits, and that your conclusions and recommendations will be presented to the Board.

Your efforts should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- A review of the previous Report, same subject, to gain historical perspective
- A review and accounting of current and past Officials who receive(d) both stipends and health insurance benefits
- A review of the applicable statutes regarding the payment of stipends to elected/appointed officials
- A review of current practices in area municipalities
- The hosting of a public input session(s) where elected officials and citizens may offer opinions on this subject

Stipend Review Committee

Eric Dahlberg
Kenley Freeman
Christopher Garrahan
Fred Marcks
Bill Martin
Tom Moran
Sheila Pichette
Dennis Ready
Colleen Stansfield

Actions Taken To Date

- The Committee began meeting in August 2007. Public input sessions were on every agenda from the first meeting.
- Determined Towns to be surveyed
- Developed Questionnaire
- Conducted Surveys
- Studied Chapter 32B
- Established WEB Site
- Met with 1991 committee
- Met with most town committees:

  Board of Selectmen, Town Moderator, Cemetery Comm., School Committee, Water Districts, Planning Board, Sewer Commission, Board of Health, Finance Committee, Nashoba School Committee, Community Preservation, Historic District
- Met with Town Management
- Met with Town Counsel
- Met with Town Meeting Reps

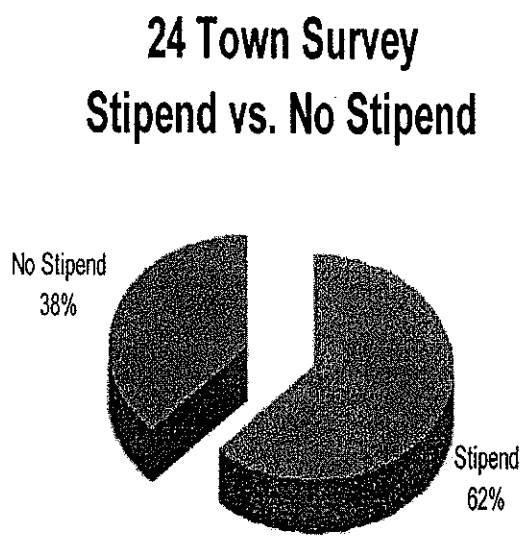
Area Municipalities

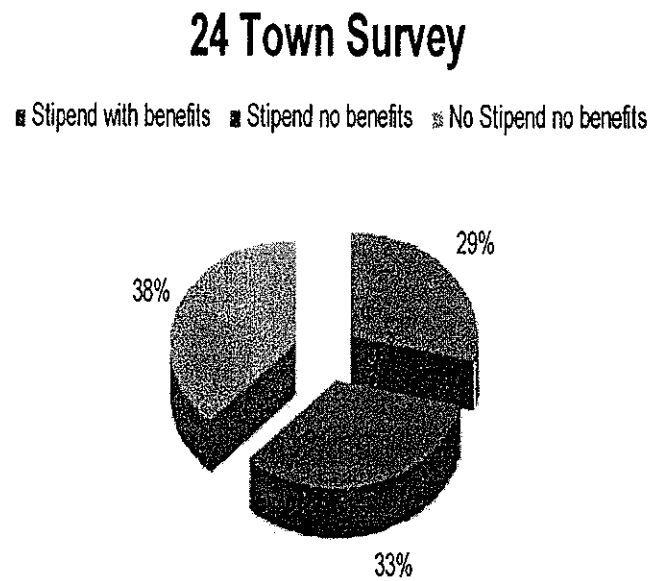
Andover
Bedford
Billerica
Danvers
Dedham
Dracut
Framingham
Franklin
Hudson
Littleton
Mansfield
Marlboro
Maynard
Natick
North Andover
North Reading
Northboro
Saugus
Shrewsbury
Stoughton
Tewksbury
Tyngsboro
Westford
Wakefield

Results of Surveying 24 Towns

- Chelmsford fell in the middle to lower end.
- Stipends ranged from none to $6,000 for selectmen
- Stipend committees ran from none to almost all

Stipend Study Charts





In meeting with the 1991 committee, general public and town meeting reps the following was clear:

- The vast majority don't want health benefits extended to elected and appointed officials.
- A large majority (80%) are in favor of stipends that are fair

MGL Chapter 32B

- Stipend Elected officials <u>may</u> receive health benefits.
- Town Counsel "Decision is with the Board of Selectmen".
- Health Benefits *must* be the same across all eligible employees
- Home rule petition would be required for anything beyond yes/no vote by selectmen.

Recommendations

- Any Stipend should end at the end of the fiscal year.
- Any health insurance benefit terminated, should continue to the end of the elected officials' term.
- Selectmen should vote "not to offer health insurance benefits to stipend officials".
- School Committee should be stipend.
- Only the Board of Selectmen and School Committee members should be stipend

Recommendations - continued

- Board of Selectmen and School Committee members should be stipend at $1500 per member and $2000 for the chairman.
- A separate line item should be used at town meeting for stipend officials.
- Personnel Board should make an annual recommendation on amounts to town meeting.
- If the Board of Selectmen would like to offer health insurance benefits to elected stipend officials at 100%+ paid by the employee, they should ask for a home rule petition in the attached format

- Section 1. Notwithstanding chapter 32B of the General Laws, part-time elected officials of the town of Chelmsford who receive a salary or a stipend shall not be eligible for participation in the town's contributory health and life insurance plan. Part time elected officials who receive a salary or a stipend and who elect to pay 100 per cent of the cost of the official's participation in the town's health and life insurance benefit plan, plus any administrative costs that may be assessed by the board of selectmen, may be considered eligible to participate.

Thanks

Paul Cohen
Attorney John Giorgio
Jeanne Parziale