

David Campo

From: Danielle Gelinas <steward-gelinas@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 10:31 AM
To: David Campo; susan_driscoll@sbcglobal.net; jorose2@gmail.com; childsmm22@gmail.com; Robert Brule
Subject: Correspondence

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Good morning Dave,

I request that this letter be entered in as correspondence for our June 1, 2026 RTM meeting and distributed to all members. I realize it may be redundant, but I have included the Moderator, Majority Leader, Chairperson of FWP and First Selectman in this email.

Thank you,

Danielle

May 27, 2026

Re: Salaries of Elected Officials (RTC 12/2/24)

Dear Moderator Driscoll, Chairperson Bennett and Fellow Representatives,

Salaries of Elected Officials was referred to the Finance, Wage and Personnel Standing Committee (FWP) of the RTM on 12/2/2024. The original request from Selectman Brule was to review the annual salary adjustments for elected officials and consider bringing them in line with our Non Union Management Professionals (NUMPs). Article XIX (1982) Amendment was raised, and the conversation shifted from considering the structure of annual salary adjustments to fear that we have violated the Constitution. The FWP has done extensive work reviewing this amendment which has skewed the conversation away from the charge of the committee. It is my opinion that this amendment is being misinterpreted.

This amendment was created in 1982. Municipalities all over Connecticut have been offering annual salary adjustments to elected officials with no violation of the Constitution.

Under the Connecticut Constitution (Article XI, Section 2, as amended by the 1982 Amendment—commonly referred to as Article XIX), elected officials generally may not receive increases in compensation during their current term of office. For officials serving terms of four years or more, one midterm increase is permitted after completion of two years in office. This amendment ensures that elected officials are not giving themselves raises mid term that were not approved by the legislative body. It also allows the legislative body to consider “bumps” in salaries if our elected officials salaries are falling short compared to surrounding municipalities.

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Annual salary adjustments are permissible only if they are established prior to the start of the elected official's term. Pre-set, multi-year compensation schedules are considered lawful because they do not constitute new midterm increases but rather a predetermined structure known to voters and officials before the term begins. As an RTM, our FWP committee set a schedule for elected officials' salaries that was approved by the RTM. This decision, in effect, is our contract with these officials currently in office and moving forward.

Waterford operates under a Selectman-Representative Town Meeting (RTM) form of government. The RTM serves as the legislative body responsible for establishing compensation for elected officials. Therefore, any salary changes must comply with constitutional restrictions, meaning increases should either apply to future terms or be built into a pre-approved salary schedule.

Based on this information, the RTM should adopt a compensation structure that includes: (1) a base salary established before the election cycle; (2) a defined multi-year schedule with modest annual adjustments (e.g., inflation or capped percentage); and (3) periodic comprehensive salary reviews every 4–6 years to ensure competitiveness with comparable municipalities.

With this information, "salaries of elected officials" should be referred back to committee to determine the appropriate salary/step structure for our elected officials. The current structure is in place for this term and can only be changed prior to the next election. I strongly recommend that no action be taken on items two and three of this agenda until there is more clarification and that this issue be referred back to committee for further review.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle Steward-Gelinas

Minority Leader