

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
MIKE ROY, CITY MANAGER  
PATTI DUBOIS, CITY CLERK

**FROM:** NICK ISGRO, MAYOR

**SUBJECT:** RESOLUTION 88-2015, RESOLUTION 89-2015

**DATE:** JUNE 17, 2015

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As we all know the City of Waterville has a long and proud history of working with our employees to provide competitive and fair contracts and wages. Likewise, the Waterville Police Department has its own proud history of serving our community in an exemplary manner, for which they should be commended. It is for these reasons that I do not weigh lightly vetoing the above referenced resolutions, the approval of which ratifies the most recent labor negotiations.

It is my understanding that the neither the majority nor even a few members of the council have read the details of these agreements. While I place no fault or blame for what has most likely been standard procedure for labor negotiations for decades past, I firmly believe that the city and the citizens herein will be best served by a greater representation at the negotiating table for the money that they are investing in all of our unions, city and schools alike. Unless unionized employees agree to a public process, the only recourse then is to ensure that all elected representatives of the people have read in detail the contracts that they are agreeing too.

While the city should be proud to offer competitive wages, a good benefits package inclusive of generous sick and vacation leave, paid holidays, health and wellness benefits, etc., we should at the very least question items such as annual longevity stipends and annual stipends based on education level. If our pay bands are appropriately priced then additional annualized stipends for outside factors (that in some cases could add up to an additional 5%+ of salary) should not be necessary. Also, our contracts continue to include what is known as “steps” whereby we inform the public we are offering broad raises of (in this case) 2%, but in actuality many employees could be receiving much more, but those numbers are not publicized.



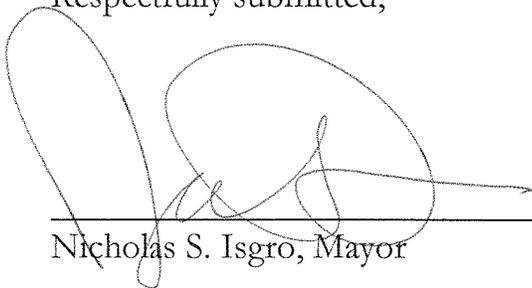
CITY of  
**Waterville**  
M A I N E

Although the steps are based on merit, does it not make sense to either choose between broad based pay increases or merit, not give both?

Finally, as most of the city union contracts are coming up for renegotiation over the next year we must ask ourselves the hard question of whether or not the city can, in its current financial state, afford such broad spectrum pay increases. In the past 5 years, city payroll has increased by an amount of \$783,000. That does not even include the school contracts (to which 11 non-union administrator contracts are tied to, without paying for union representation).<sup>1</sup> Of the city's increase in \$783,000, \$304,000 (or 39%) of our increase has been in police-related pay increases. If the city's financial state of affairs and tolerance for tax increases hits a breaking point while we are tied to a three year contract as it is, we must ask "do we need to have layoffs?" In such a case, nobody wins – not the city, not the police department, and most of all, not the citizens who rely on the great service they provide. There is no doubt that our employees deserve pay raises to be rewarded for the good work that they do. This veto is my attempt to shine light on a process that to many – including those who represent the public – remains shrouded in mystery and is voted upon without full understanding.

It is because of my respect for our officers and our citizens that I have chosen to veto RESOLUTION 88-2015 and RESOLUTION 89-2015. I ask that the Council take a second and thorough look at the details and work in tandem with the City Manager and City Solicitor to ensure that our contracts are understood and that the outcome is tenable for both our employees as well as the wellbeing of the city. The next three years will be tough, but Waterville still stands on the edge of economic turnaround. For us to be successful, we must work with our unions as partners and not adversaries, but that will require more negotiation than what has been presented in these resolutions.

Respectfully submitted,



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Nicholas S. Isgro, Mayor

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<sup>1</sup> In the past two weeks I have sent no fewer than four (4) requests to the school department asking them to perform a similar five-year payroll comparison as we have done for the city but have had no response whatsoever.