



Woodbury's employees

OK freeze

Deferring raise may stop potential layoffs

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WOODBURY — Town employees have agreed to freeze their salaries in a bid to avoid potential layoffs and cuts to hours stemming from the economic crisis. On Wednesday, employees belonging to unions representing the town's clerical workers, supervisors, police and public works employees agreed in principal to forgo a scheduled 3.25 percent pay increase for the coming fiscal year, according to Stephen Ferrucci, senior staff representative for CSEA/SEIU Local 2001.

In return, First Selectman Paul D. Hinckley agreed to avoid job cuts or reductions to hours unless the economic situation in town became "unbearable."

"Even though there were departments that weren't facing layoffs, they agreed to take a See **SALARIES**, Page **5B**

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pay freeze to protect the other workers," Ferrucci said of what he called a largely affirmative vote. "It was all for one and one for all. I was very impressed with that."

Hinckley also praised the workers and said he hoped voters would recognize their sacrifice when considering the coming budget referendum.

"These town employees made a decision which was not easy on their part," Hinckley said. "They are sharing in the need for cost control in the whole town. They didn't have to do this, and they have."

Though the Board of Finance does not control individual salaries, it controls the total amounts spent on payroll.

Hinckley said the board's members did not agree to provide enough money to accommodate the scheduled pay increases without cutting jobs or hours.

Hinckley said the town would save about \$80,000 by freezing all employee salaries, including non-**union** workers. However, the town has agreed to pay for expected increases to health insurance premiums, which Hinckley said could amount to about \$16,000.

In addition, the town and **union** workers agreed to add an additional year to each group's contract. Next year, workers would receive this year's raises. And in the final year, they could recoup some of the increase eliminated for this coming year.

"Management was very reasonable," Ferrucci said of the negotiations. "It's basically a sign of the times. Not just Woodbury — it's all over."

Hinckley said he would fill vacant positions in the public works, parks and police departments. But he would delay hiring a full-time replacement for former Town Planner Christopher Wood, instead paying Wood as a consultant only when he is needed.

"How much planning can you do in an economic downturn?" Hinckley said.

Hinckley said that while he would first look to cut capital projects if the economy continues to deteriorate, he could not rule out future job cuts.

"Who knows what's going to happen next year?" he said.