Assembly Advances Compensation Ordinance

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Last night the assembly approved an ordinance that would adopt and implement a new employee classification and compensation plan. The plan was actually the result of a study done by Fox Lawson and Associates last May, but it took a year to make its way back to the assembly for a vote.

Bill Roberts works for the borough’s assessing office and said the plan had to go through a quorum of the personnel advisory board.

“That was a problem, we finally got it in November. There was some people that had questions. Couldn’t re-meet with that board until I think February or March, so now you have this thing instead of being before you in August, you have it before you now.”

That wouldn’t be a problem, except for the study found some borough employees were underpaid, and part of the implementation would bring their salaries in line with similar jobs around the nation.

The ordinance was amended during last night’s meeting to implement the plan as of January 1, 2014, meaning borough employees that were underpaid according to the study would be retroactively paid for the past five months.

While that amendment was ultimately approved, Assemblyman Tuck Bonney voiced objection to the retroactive pay.

“I do support the study. It gives Bud the tools he needs to hire people. But like I said before I can’t support the retro. And somebody said to me, we have a responsibility to borough employees. Well I have a responsibility to the community of Kodiak, and that overrides everything. And I don’t think quarter million dollars in bonus money is in the best interest of this community.”

Assemblywoman Carol Austerman said she didn’t feel like borough employees should be punished by the borough process when it was known more than a year ago that certain positions were underpaid.

“And it’s the reason that the assembly implemented the salary study however many years ago now at this point because it took an awful long time to get the original salary study done. So I think that we have drug our feet knowing full well that we’ve underpaid some of our employees for a very long time.”

If it had gone through faster, Austerman said the money would have gone to the employees anyway.

The assembly voted 5-2 on the first reading of the classification and compensation ordinance. It will now move to a public hearing and second vote at the assembly’s next regular meeting.