



MINIMUM WAGE RESOURCES

CRPA Members,

As you are aware, Connecticut's **minimum wage will rise** from \$10.10 to \$11.00 on October 1, 2019. It will then increase by \$1.00 every year until it reaches \$15.00 on June 1, 2023. Future increases will be tied to the federal employment cost index.

This increase is expected to have a dramatic impact on municipal budgets. In light of that, **CRPA has prepared a few resources** that we hope will be helpful in your upcoming budget negotiations:



1.) A statement that directors may include when presenting budget packets to their Town Managers and Finance Committees.



2.) A sample article to include in program brochures to educate residents on how the increase in minimum wage could impact programs and services.

CRPA Statement on Minimum Wage:

Municipal park and recreation departments are one of the largest employers of part-time and seasonal employees, many of whom are paid at or near minimum wage. The state mandate to increase the minimum wage by nearly 50% to \$15.00 per hour from the current \$10.10 per hour over the next four years will have a detrimental impact on departments' budgets. Lack of adequate funding will limit a department's ability to provide affordable access to programs and services. It will lead to increased user fees to services such as childcare and swim lessons as well as cuts to services. These cuts can lead to safety issues surrounding facility maintenance and security, increased child-to-counselor ratios at camps and daycares, and fewer lifeguards on duty at our town pools and beaches. This reduction in services creates additional liability to cities and towns. Furthermore, departments need to offer competitive wages to recruit and retain quality employees and each community needs to consider the consequences of wage compression that this new mandate has created. Due to the aforementioned reasons **The Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association, Inc. (CRPA) urges local officials to maintain or increase funding to park and recreation departments to ensure their ability to comply with this new state mandate** while allowing them to continue their mission of combating health issues like childhood obesity and the on-going opioid crisis.

You may consider including a message to your residents in your Winter/Spring program brochures to inform them of changes to program offerings and fees. Please **be cognizant of your municipality's political climate** and remember to **clear all messages with your Town Manager and Mayor.**

See below for a sample forward written and used by South Windsor Parks & Recreation. Please update it with your own statistics and budget impact statements.

over the next four years was passed by the General Assembly on May 17, and signed into law by the Governor on May 28. The approved phase-in looks like this: (1) October 1, 2019: \$11.00, (2) September 1, 2020: \$12.00, (3) August 1, 2021: \$13.00, (4) July 1, 2022: \$14.00, (5) June 1, 2023: \$15.00, then establish COLA indexing thereafter beginning October 15, 2023. Every October 15th the Commissioner of Labor is to announce an increased minimum wage effective January of 2024 and every subsequent January. This anticipated state mandate will have a dramatic impact on municipal budgets, and **South Windsor** is not exempt. This nearly 50% increase will have detrimental effect on our payroll budget necessary to deliver our programs and services. The vast majority of our **200+ employees** are seasonal between the age of 15 and 23, students seeking supplemental funds in their quest for an education that will advance them from a “learning “minimum wage to an eventual higher-paying “living” wage elsewhere. The impact is not just at the entry level however. The wage compression created has a tremendous “domino” effect on proportionate wage increases necessary for veteran and supervisory seasonal employees. We will be looking at an **estimated additional \$400,000+ in labor cost** alone to meet the \$15 threshold. Undoubtedly we will be paying more for products and services from our vendors who will likewise raise their prices to cover their increased operating cost.

So, how do we recover this additional cost? How will this affect your expectations of parks & recreation? What does this mean to you, our loyal customers and patrons? Some impacts you can expect to see include:

- Unusually substantial incremental increases in user fees for programs and services over the next three to four years and beyond challenging our ability to remain affordable
- Reduction in services to our residents, like **closing one half hour earlier each day of the week at VMP.**
- Less funding available for financial assistance to accommodate families in need
- Decrease in our capacity to employ seasonal help
- Fewer dollars to maintain our parks and facilities, and ...
- Do we reach a point where we need to return to a partially tax-subsidized recreation division which is currently self-sustaining?

Some of these responses and actions you will already see as you peruse this magazine. These are steps we truly do not want to take, but we do not have a choice. Although we must comply with this new state mandate, we have the moral and professional obligation to provide a level of service that delivers a quality of life that you have all come to enjoy and expect. We WILL do our best to achieve that!

