



The Nelson A. Rockefeller Center at Dartmouth College

The Center for Public Policy and the Social Sciences

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ADMINISTRATIVE AND ROAD CREW SALARIES

A Comparative Assessment of Vermont's Towns

Presented to the Town of Strafford Sub-Committee on Pay,
Classification and Compensation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vermont's towns determine compensation for municipal administration individually, and as such compensation for town offices is highly variable. This report compares administrative compensation and across Vermont to the Town of Strafford, with a particular focus on towns of a similar size. Road crew compensation is also analyzed across Vermont and compared with the Town of Strafford through metrics such as miles of road by road class. In all, 49 towns and two cities in Vermont were analyzed, with the 24 towns immediately smaller and larger than Strafford a special focus. In many cases, Strafford's administrative and road crew salaries were higher than what would be predicted, though its salary for the Town Clerk and Treasurer position is in line with what would be predicted for a town of its size, hours open, and property tax revenue.

Through our data analysis, we determined that Strafford's administrative and road crew salaries appear slightly higher than expected for a town with its weekly town office hours and property tax revenue. In some cases, such as population, it is not clear that Strafford's compensation is unusual. In particular, we note that the salaries for the office of Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer are significantly above what might be predicted for a town of Strafford's weekly town office hours and property tax revenue. However, we note that the salaries for the primary office of Town Clerk and Treasurer are line with the predicted trends for similarly sized towns. Salaries for road crew with respect to road classification are also largely inline with what would be predicted for a town with these specific miles of Class 2, 3, and 4 Road. On average, the 49 surveyed towns spent \$50,400 on administrative salaries, while Strafford spent \$86,025. The towns spent \$115,887 on road crew salaries, with a median of \$110,444, while Strafford spent \$179,774 on road crew salaries.



1. INTRODUCTION

To assess administrative costs in Vermont municipalities, 49 towns and two cities were examined. Specifically, the 24 towns immediately larger and smaller than Strafford in population were examined in addition to the cities of Barre and Brattleboro. We examined the administration of the 49 towns with respect to hours open per week, property tax revenue, and population. We hypothesized that towns with more town office hours per week might pay their employees more annually. Similarly, towns with larger property tax revenues may compensate their employees accordingly. Due to the low level of variance in population, we did not note a strong relationship between town population and administrative salaries. With regard to road crew salaries, we analyzed the relationship between these salaries, total miles of road, miles of Class 2, 3, and 4 Road, and population. We observed that towns with more total miles of road to paid their road crew more. Moreover, as miles of Class 2, 3, and 4 Road increase, we hypothesized that road crew salaries would also increase, as these different classes of road require different levels of care.

The red dot in each scatter plot graph indicates the Town of Strafford. The blue dots indicate the other towns in the study. Barre and Brattleboro were not included in the graphs so as to highlight towns most similar to Strafford. The line in each graph is a linear regression, which is the best predictive measure of how the two variables relate. The full data for all 49 towns and two cities are in the appendix.

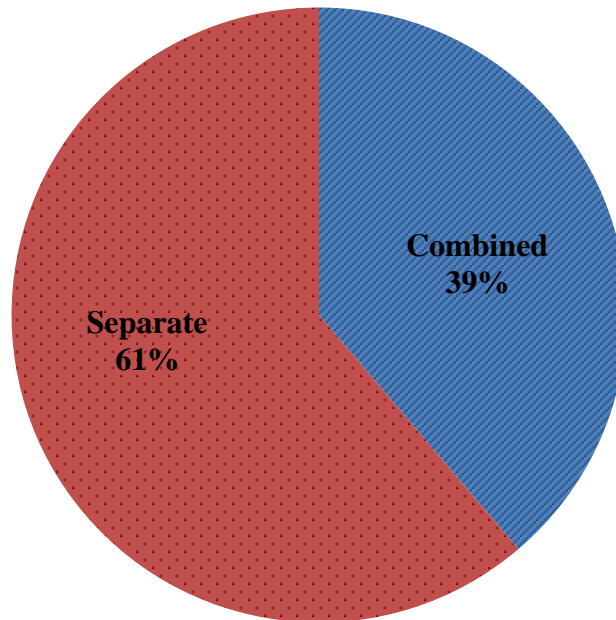
Salary information and property tax revenue data was collected from online town reports as well as emails and phone calls to town clerks. Road, population, and town office hour data was collected from state databases. For towns with separate town clerk and treasurer positions, the two salaries were combined to create better comparisons with the Town of Strafford. It was not possible to track additional forms of compensation, such as health benefits, across a statistically significant number of towns due to extreme variations in reporting methods.



2. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

2.1 Combined versus Separate Town Clerk and Treasurer Positions

Figure 1: Combined versus Separate Town Clerk and Treasurer Positions

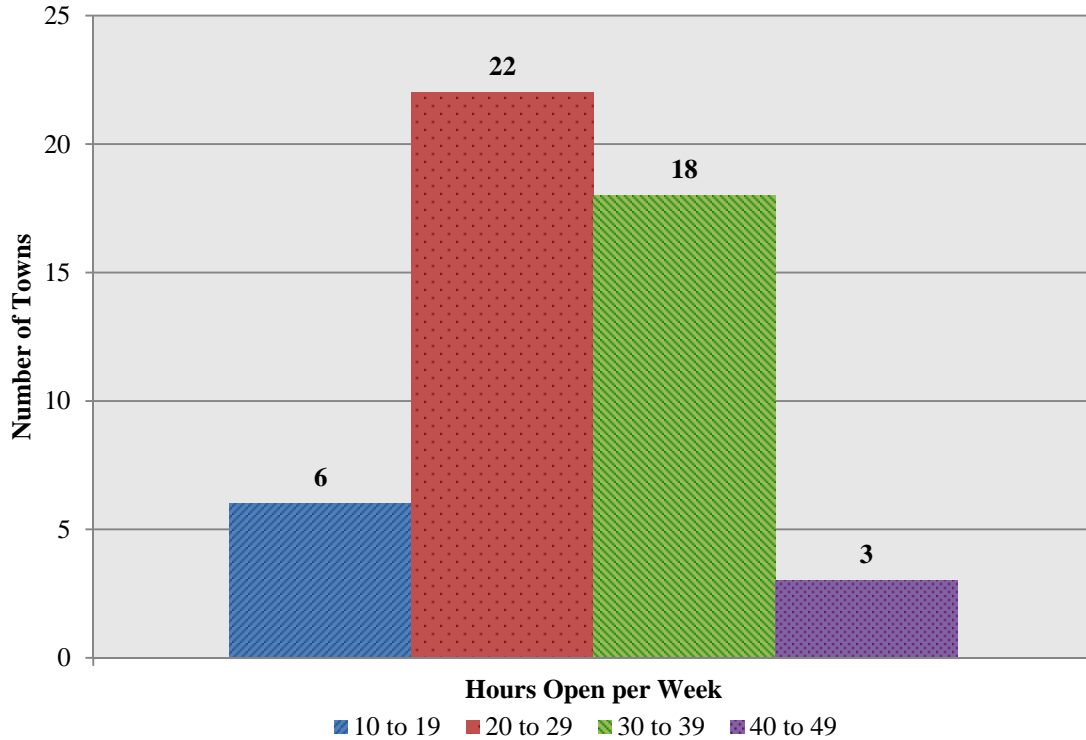


Of 49 surveyed towns, 19 towns, or 39 percent, have separate offices for Town Clerk and Town Treasurer while 30 towns, or 61 percent, have combined offices for Town Clerk and Town Treasurer. Barre and Brattleboro both also have combined office positions.



2.2 Town Office Hours

Figure 2: Number of Towns versus Office Hours (N=49)



Of 49 surveyed towns, six town offices are open from 10 to 19 hours a week. 22 town offices are open from 20 to 29 hours a week. 18 town offices are open from 30 to 39 hours per week. Three town offices are open from 40 to 49 hours per week. Barre town offices are open 50 hours per week and Brattleboro town offices are open 43 hours per week.



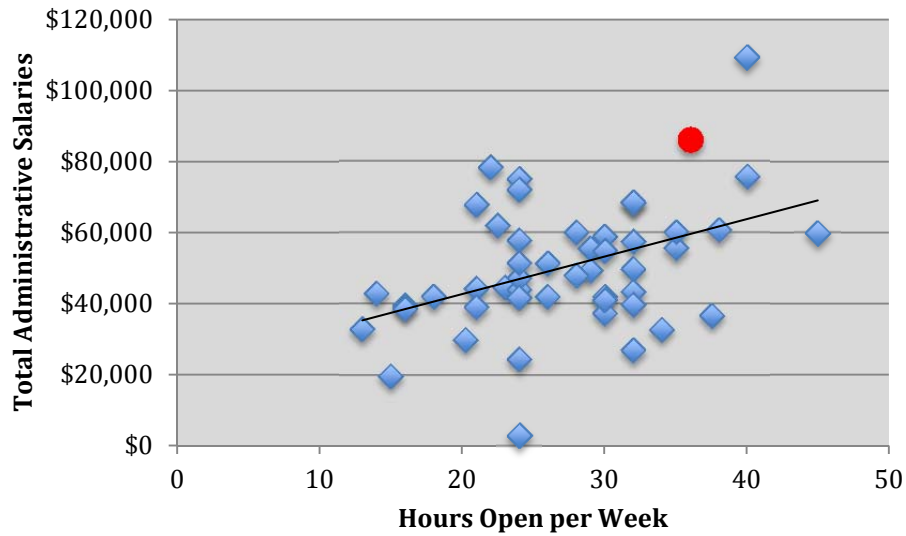
3. ADMINISTRATIVE SALARIES

When assessing the comparative administrative salaries for Strafford and the 48 other surveyed towns, we calculated the salaries for combined town clerk and town treasurer positions and their respective assistants with regard to town population, hours town offices are open per week, and property tax revenue. On average, the surveyed towns were open 27 hours per week with a median of 28 hours per week. Strafford's town office is open 36 hours per week. These towns have an average population of 1,091. Strafford's population, the median population, is 1,102. Finally, the towns surveyed have an average annual property tax revenue of \$1,216,732 and a median property tax revenue of \$1,078,175. Strafford's property tax revenue is \$927,000. On average, the surveyed towns spent \$50,400 on administrative salaries, while Strafford spent \$86,025. The median of combined administrative salaries was \$47,888. With regard to combined town clerk and town treasurer positions, the surveyed towns averaged a salary of \$45,528 with a median salary of \$39,795. The Strafford Town Clerk/Treasurer earns \$42,806. For combined assistant clerks and treasurers, the surveyed towns paid an average of \$14,998 in salaries with a median of \$10,140. The Strafford Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer and Administrative Assistant earn a combined \$43,219.



3.1 Combined Administrative Salaries for Town Clerk, Treasurer, and Assistants versus Town Office Hours

Figure 3: Total Combined Salaries versus Hours Open (N=49)

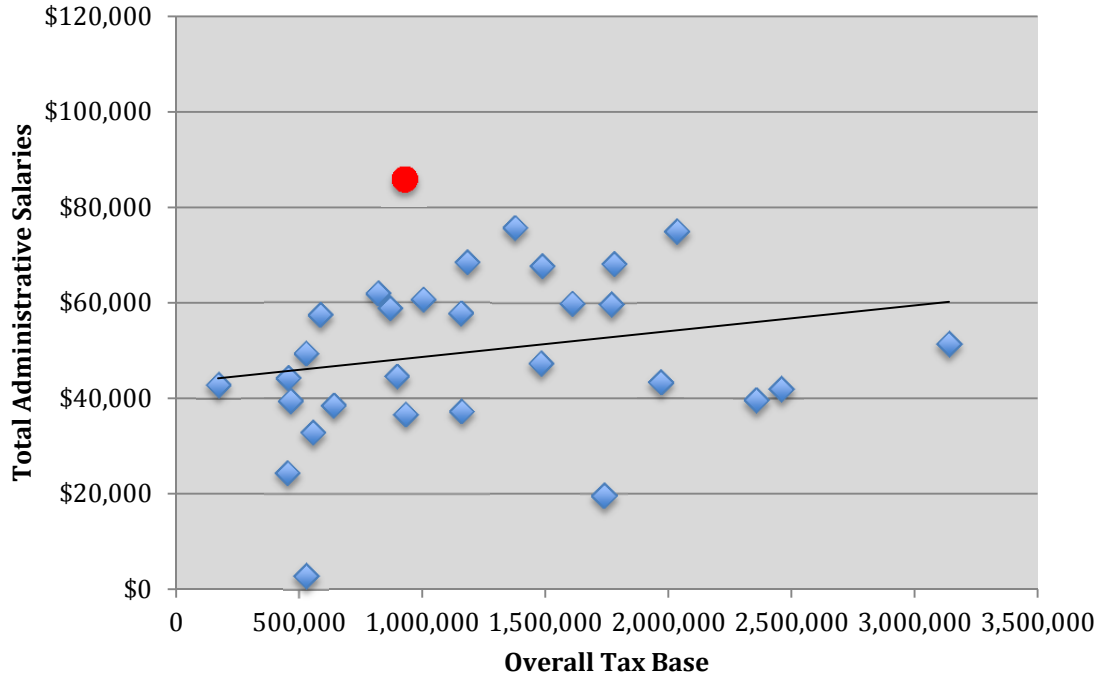


When comparing the combined salaries of Town Clerks, Treasurers, and their assistants in surveyed towns, Strafford's compensation appears significantly higher than would be predicted for the number of hours its office is open each week, and the correlation between administrative salaries and town office hours open per week is strong.



3.2 Combined Administrative Salaries for Town Clerk, Treasurer, and Assistants versus Property Tax Revenue

Figure 4: Total Combined Salaries versus Property Tax Revenue (N=30)

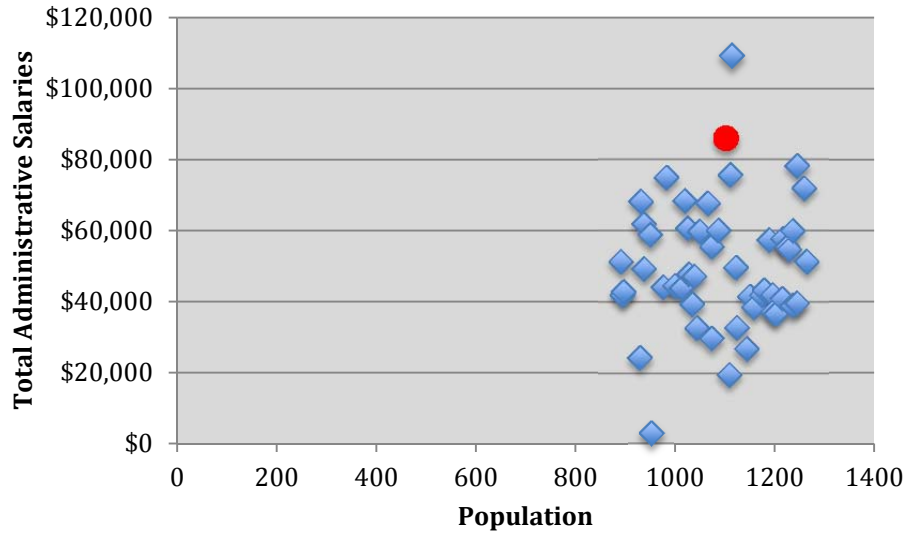


When comparing the combined salaries of Town Clerks, Treasurers, and their assistants in surveyed towns, Strafford's compensation appears higher than would be predicted from its property tax revenue, and the correlation between administrative salaries and towns in Vermont with similar property tax revenue to Strafford is strong.



3.3 Combined Administrative Salaries for Town Clerk, Treasurer, and Assistants versus Town Population

Figure 5: Total Combined Salaries versus Population (N=49)

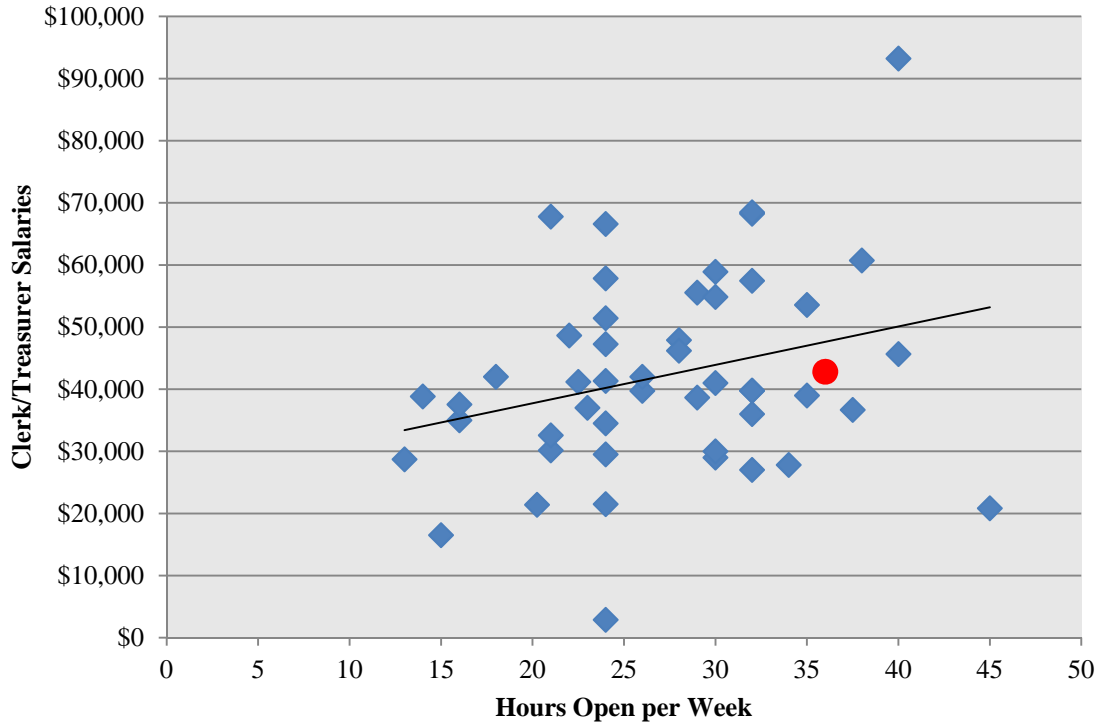


When comparing the combined salaries of Town Clerks, Treasurers, and their assistants in surveyed towns, Strafford's compensation appears high, though the correlation between administrative salaries and town populations in Vermont is weak.



3.4 Combined Administrative Salaries for Town Clerk and Treasurer Town Office Hours

Figure 6: Combined Clerk and Treasurer Salaries versus Hours Open (N=49)

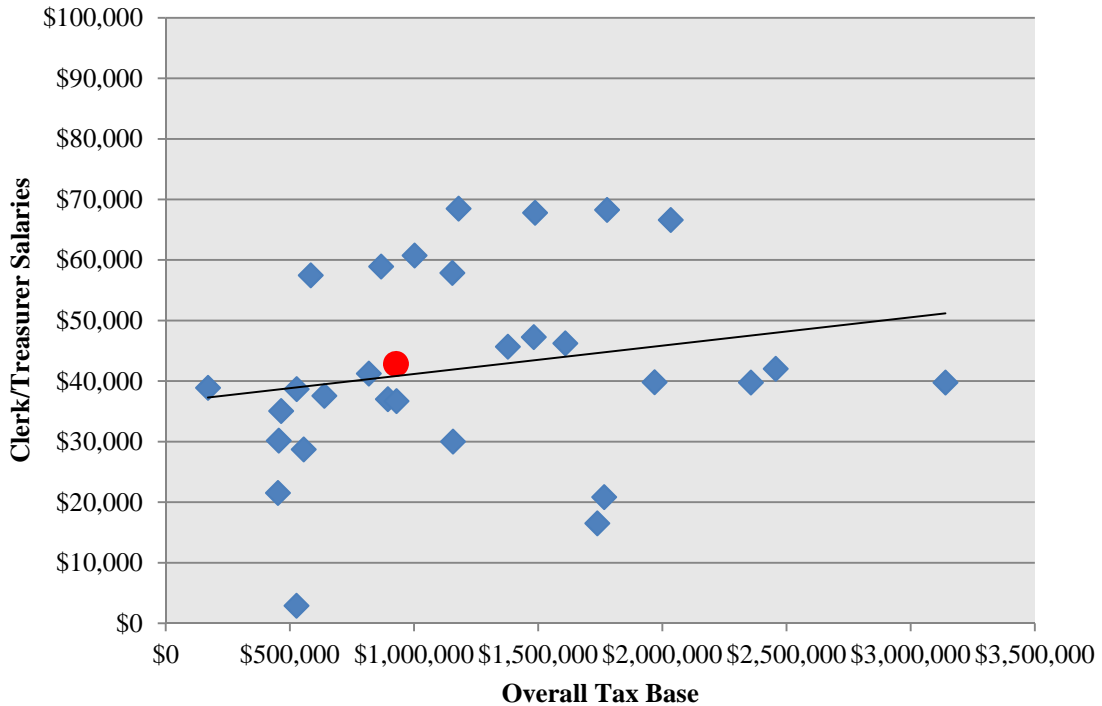


When comparing the combined salaries of only Town Clerks and Treasurers surveyed towns, Strafford's compensation appears only slightly below what would be predicted for the number of hours its office is open each week, and the correlation between administrative salaries and town office hours open per week is strong.



3.5 Combined Administrative Salaries for Town Clerk and Treasurer versus Property Tax Revenue

Figure 7: Combined Clerk and Treasurer Salaries versus Property Tax Revenue (N=30)

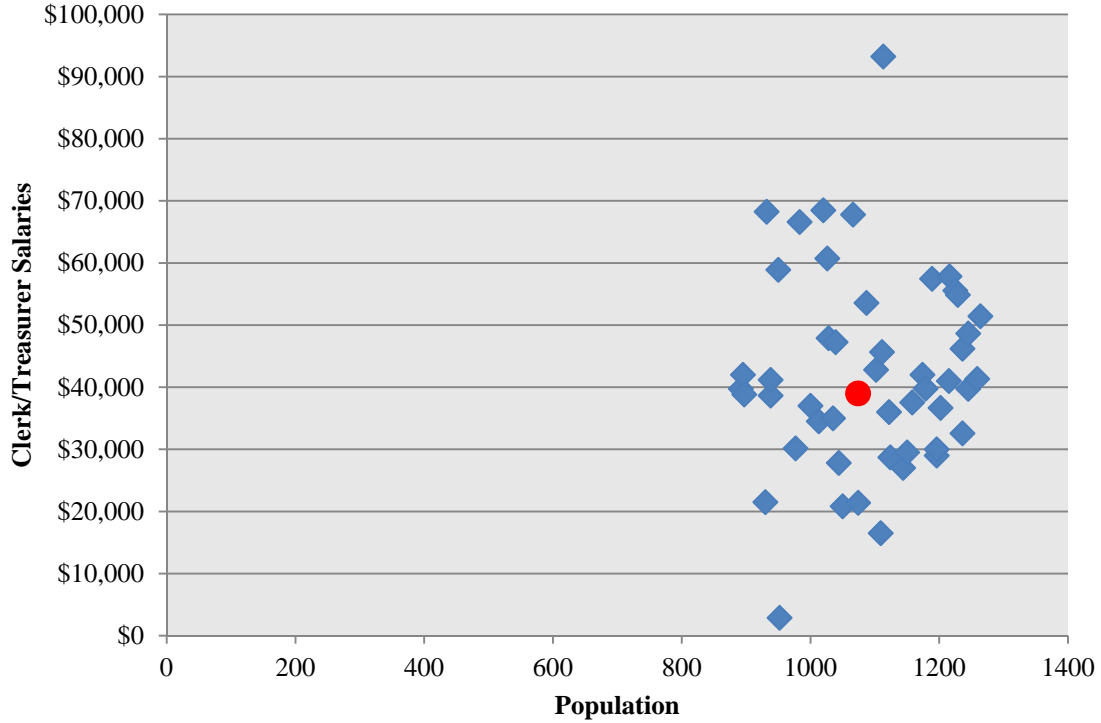


When comparing the combined salaries of only Town Clerks and Treasurers surveyed towns, Strafford's compensation appears roughly in line with what would be predicted from its property tax revenue, though the correlation between administrative salaries and towns in Vermont with similar property tax revenue to Strafford is weak.



3.6 Combined Administrative Salaries for Town Clerk and Treasurer versus Town Population

Figure 8: Combined Clerk and Treasurer Salaries versus Population (N=49)

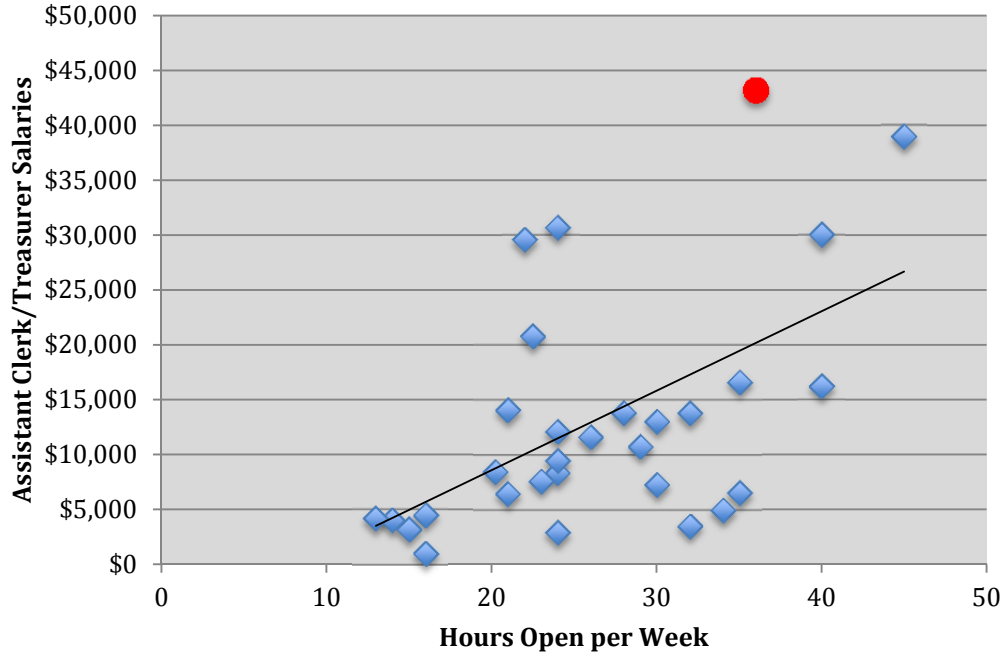


When comparing the combined salaries of only Town Clerks and Treasurers surveyed towns, Strafford's compensation appears close to the norm for its population size, and the correlation between administrative salaries and towns in Vermont is weak.



3.7 Combined Administrative Salaries for Town Assistants versus Town Office Hours

Figure 9: Combined Assistant Salaries versus Hours Open (N=30)

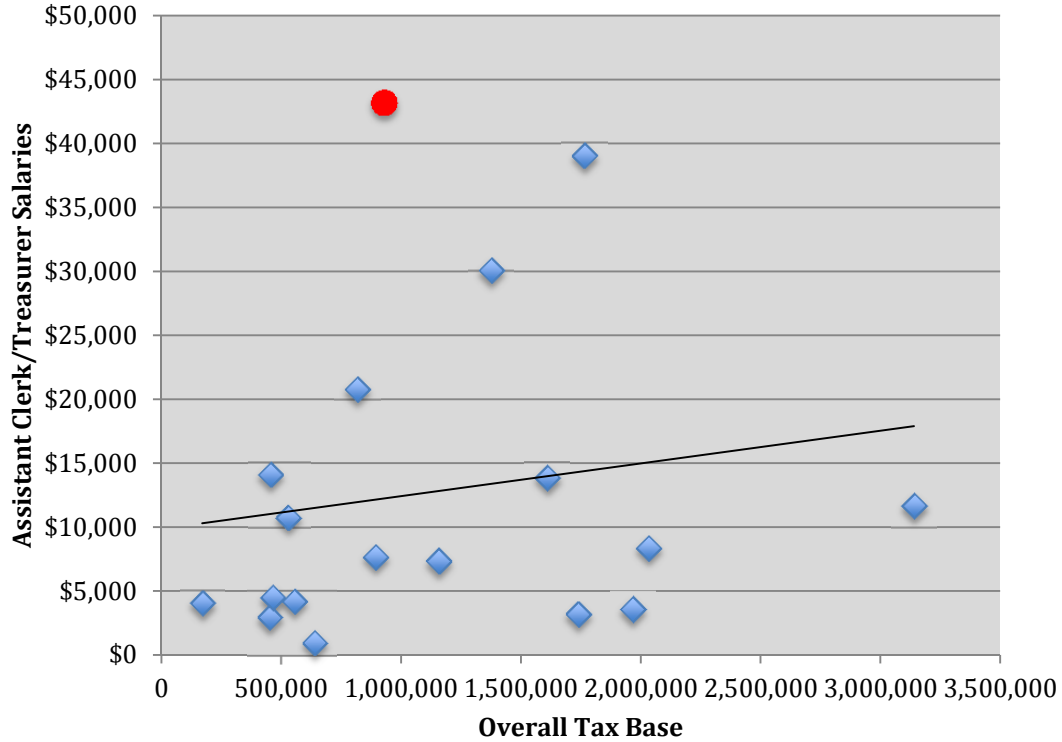


When comparing the salaries of assistants to Town Clerks and Treasurers in surveyed towns, Strafford's compensation appears significantly higher than would be predicted for the number of hours its office is open each week, and the correlation between administrative salaries and town office hours open per week is strong.



3.8 Combined Administrative Salaries for Town Assistants versus Property Tax Revenue

Figure 10: Combined Assistant Salaries versus Property Tax Revenue (N=30)

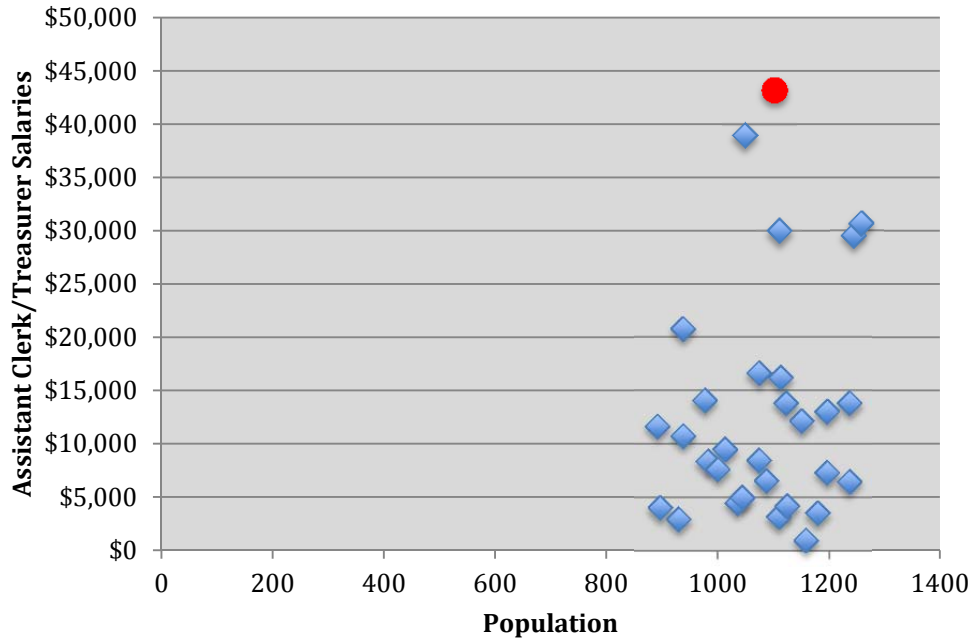


When comparing the salaries of assistants to Town Clerks and Treasurers in surveyed towns, Strafford's compensation appears higher than would be predicted from its property tax revenue, though the correlation between administrative salaries and towns in Vermont with similar property tax revenue to Strafford is weak.



3.9 Administrative Salaries for Town Assistants versus Town Population

Figure 11: Combined Assistant Salaries versus Population (N=30)



When comparing the salaries of assistants to Town Clerks and Treasurers in surveyed towns, Strafford's compensation appears higher than predicted for its population size, though the correlation between administrative salaries and towns in Vermont is weak.



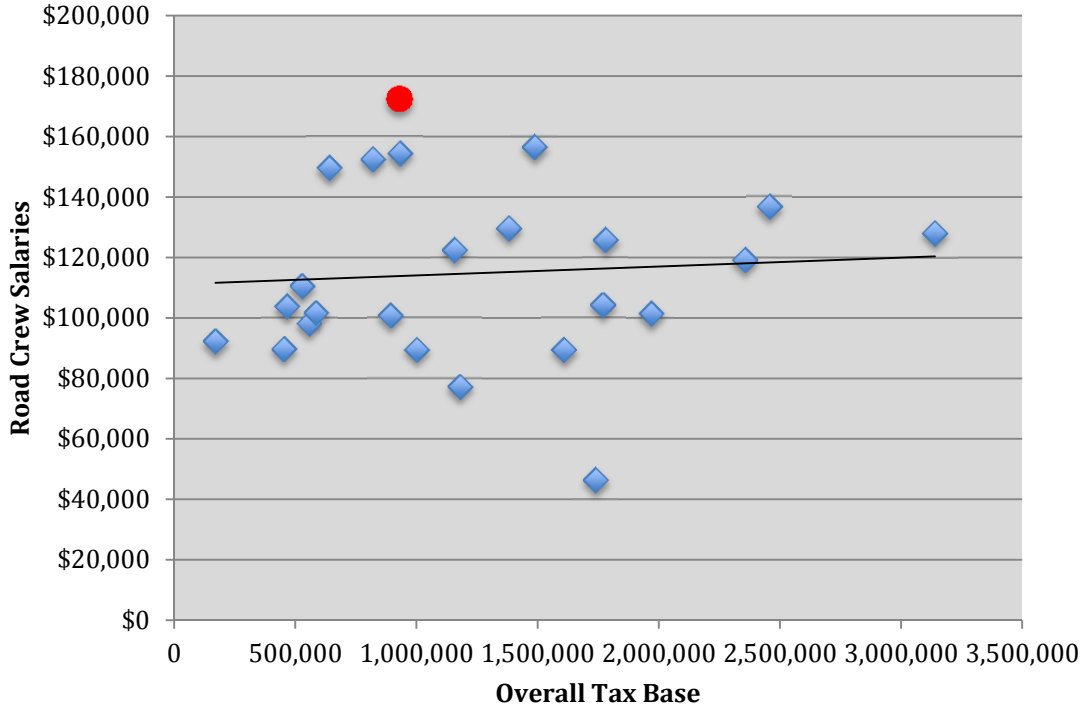
4. ROAD CREW SALARIES

When assessing the comparative road crew salaries for Strafford and the 48 other surveyed towns, we calculated the road crew salaries with regard to town population, property tax revenue, total miles of road, and miles of Class 2, 3 and 4 road. The surveyed towns averaged 62 total miles of road, with an average of 11 miles of Class 2 road, 33 miles of Class 3 road, and nine miles of Class 4 road. There was a median of 64 total miles of road, 11 miles of Class 2 road, 35 miles of Class 3 road and seven miles of Class 4 road. Strafford has 80 total miles of road, 16 miles of Class 2 road, 52 miles of Class 3 road and 12 miles of Class 4 road. On average, the surveyed towns spent \$115,887 on road crew salaries, with a median of \$110,444. Strafford spent \$179,774 on road crew salaries.



4.1 Road Crew Salaries versus Property Tax Revenue

Figure 12: Road Crew Salaries versus Property Tax Revenue (N=26)

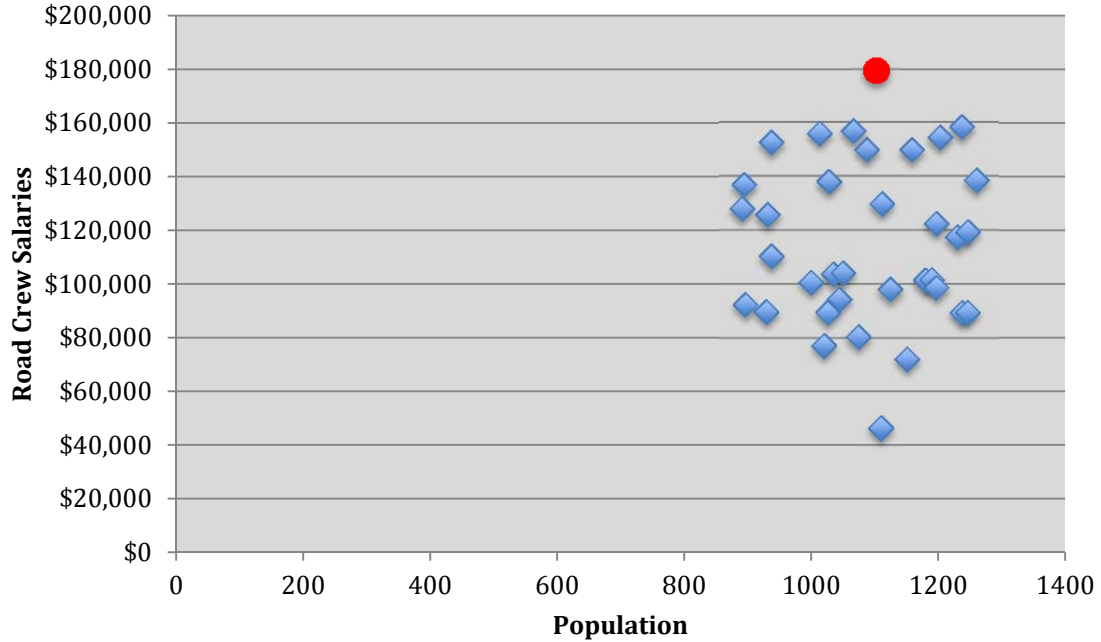


When comparing the salaries of the road crew in surveyed towns, Strafford's compensation appears higher than would be predicted from its property tax revenue, though the correlation between road crew salaries and towns in Vermont with similar property tax revenue to Strafford is weak.



4.2 Road Crew Salaries versus Town Population

Figure 13: Road Crew Salaries versus Population (N=36)

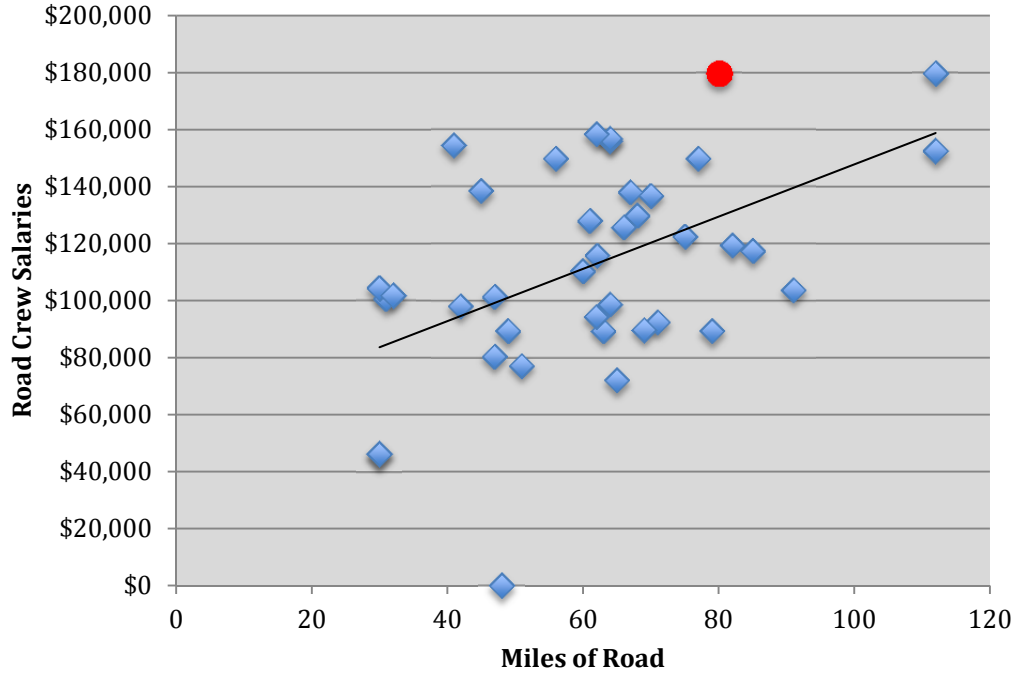


When comparing the salaries of the road crew in surveyed towns, Strafford's compensation appears higher than would be predicted for its population size, though the correlation between road crew salaries and towns in Vermont is weak.



4.3 Road Crew Salaries versus Total Miles of Road

Figure 14: Road Crew Salaries versus Total Miles of Road (N=36)

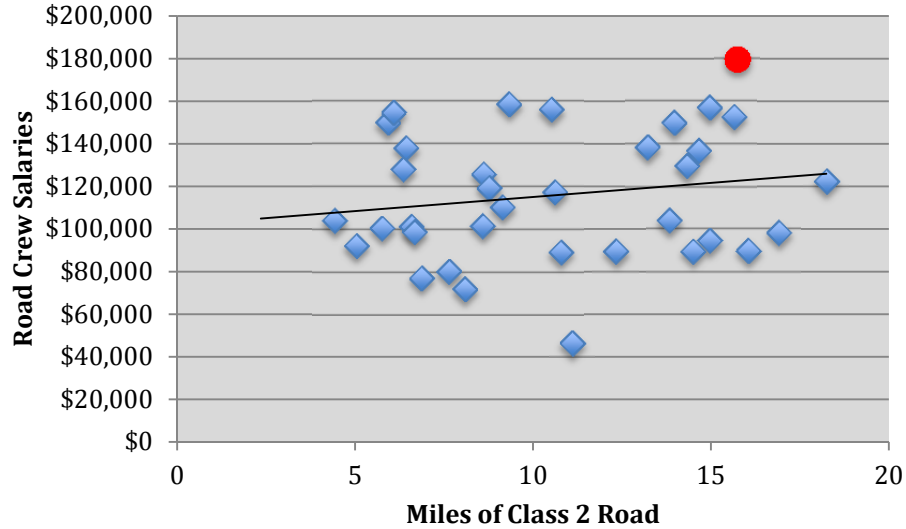


When comparing the salaries of the road crew in surveyed towns, Stafford's compensation appears higher than would be predicted from miles of road, though the correlation between road crew salaries and miles of road in each town is strong.



4.4 Road Crew Salaries versus Miles of Class 2 Road

Figure 15: Road Crew Salaries versus Miles of Class 2 Road (N=36)

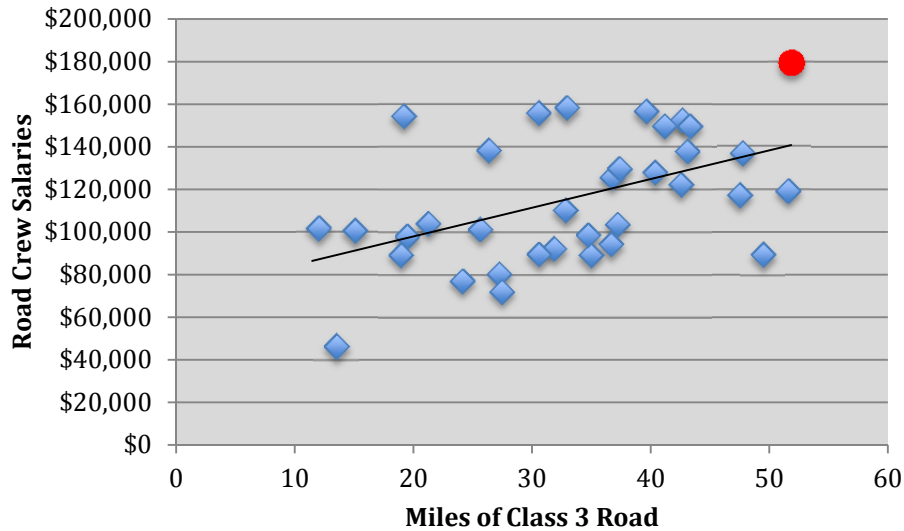


When comparing the salaries of the road crew in surveyed towns, Strafford's compensation appears higher than would be predicted from miles of Class 2 road, though the correlation between road crew salaries and miles of road in each town is weak.



4.5 Road Crew Salaries versus Miles of Class 3 Road

Figure 16: Road Crew Salaries versus Miles of Class 3 Road (N=36)

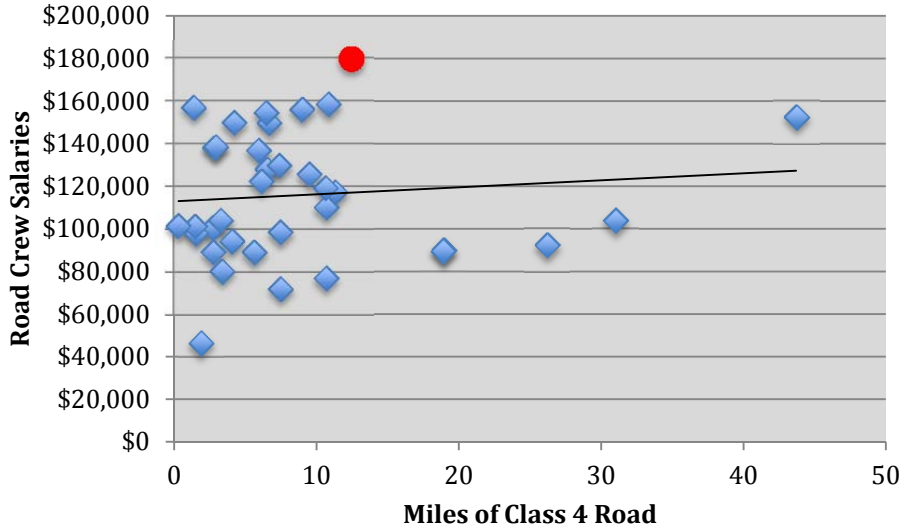


When comparing the salaries of the road crew in surveyed towns, Strafford's compensation is higher than what would be predicted from miles of Class 3 road, though the correlation between road crew salaries and miles of road in each town is somewhat strong.



4.6 Road Crew Salaries versus Miles of Class 4 Road

Figure 17: Road Crew Salaries versus Miles of Class 4 Road (N=36)



When comparing the salaries of the road crew in surveyed towns, Strafford's compensation appears higher than would be predicted from miles of Class 4 road, though the correlation between road crew salaries and miles of road in each town is weak.



5. CONCLUSION

Strafford's administrative and road crew salaries usually appear slightly higher than might be expected for a town of its hours open per week and property tax revenue, though in some instances a definite conclusion cannot be reached. In particular, we note a weak relationship between the salary of Strafford's administrative salaries and what might be predicted for a town of its size, and the Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer's salary is significantly higher. When looking at the salaries for the primary office of Town Clerk and Treasurer, however, Strafford's salary is in line with what would be predicted for towns of a similar size and tax revenue.

Salaries for road crew with respect to road classification are similar to what would be predicted for a town with these specific miles of Class 2, 3, and 4 Road. Specifically, salaries with regards to Class 3 Road are exactly in line with what would be predicted for a town with Strafford's Class 3 Road mileage. Strafford's road crew salaries are, but so are its miles of road.

On average, the 49 surveyed towns spent \$50,400 on administrative salaries, while Strafford spent \$86,025. The towns spent \$115,887 on average on road crew salaries, with a median of \$110,444, while Strafford spent \$179,774 on road crew salaries.



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