

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY – JANUARY 23, 2012 – 6:30 p.m.
LOWER LEVEL MEETING ROOM – TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Ed Vitone, Chair, Gregory Fagan, Clerk, Ron Reed, Member, Doug Briggs, Town Administrator and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator.

At 6:30 p.m. Vitone opened the meeting for the purpose of interviewing candidates for the Town Accountant position.

Alexandra Bergeron was the first candidate. Introductions were made and Ed Vitone noted that both candidates had a previous interview with the outgoing Town Accountant and the Treasurer.

Bergeron stated that she was concerned about the fact that the current Town Accountant was leaving with less than a year in the position and had asked her the reason why.

She stated that her current job had changed and she was looking for a position to utilize her accounting skills and education. When asked why she was working at her present job rather than in an accounting position she stated that she really hadn't pursued a job in that field. She stated her knowledge of government/fund accounting was limited to college course work but recently she had done some research in this area. When asked if she knew the Munis system she stated that she did not but that she was good with computers and had gone on-line to peruse the system. She added that there would be a transition period but that she was a quick learner. Vitone noted that there was a statewide certification program in March that would be helpful.

Bergeron noted her concern if chosen by stating that she might not be able to perform quickly enough. She did add that she would utilize on-line assistance.

When asked how closely she followed the Town budget she stated that both she and her husband attended Town Meetings and tried to stay informed. She stated that if chosen, she saw herself still in this position with the Town in five years and likely beyond.

Bergeron noted that as a medic she interacts with people all the time and was a "people person". She also noted that she had a small business on the side doing tax work for some individuals.

When asked about her availability she stated that she would need to give at least two weeks notice but would prefer to a month.

Vitone thanked her for coming in and stated that they would notify her of their decision soon.

A short discussion followed on each member's opinion of the candidate.

At this time, Vitone took a moment and asked the Board to approve the appointment of Donna Couture as Interim Town Accountant for an indefinite period during the transition. ***Reed motioned to approve the appointment and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.***

At 7:00 p.m. the second candidate, Tammy Coller, was introduced to all present.

Vitone noted that Tammy Collier had applied previously as a finalist when the present Town Accountant was hired. He explained to her that there were two candidates that they were interviewing.

He asked why she was interested in this position. She stated that she had a strong background and experience, has worked in Templeton for seven years starting out as a temporary employee and has worked well during that time with the Accountant there. She noted that numbers were her strong suit and that she liked both numbers and technology. When asked why she wanted to leave Templeton she stated that she has always wanted to do the accounting side. She stated that she was not familiar with Munis but she has read about it and "it didn't scare her".

She stated that she realizes that accounting is different from the treasurer side but that she liked chasing differences and resolving discrepancies. She also noted that she was very comfortable in a small town environment and that going from 40 hours a week down to 25 hours was not an issue for her financially and that she was willing to work extra to get the job done.

When asked what, if any concerns she had with the job she stated that learning the software but that she was self taught so that wouldn't be a big issue. When asked where she saw herself in three years she responded taking courses to learn more about fund accounting and continuing to pursue more education. She added that in her lifetime she had three primary employers and she didn't see herself leaving this position any time soon as she has family in the area. She noted that she likes technology and that she found it is under-utilized in most towns.

When asked if she would want someone to enter invoices for her she noted that she felt it was better to be hands-on. She also stated that she worked well with others and was very flexible.

Collier stated that she would need to give a two week notice to her present employer. Vitone stated that they would get back to her the following day with their decision and thanked her.

A discussion followed with each Board member and the Town Administrator reviewing comments, pros and cons, regarding both candidates. It was noted by Vitone that Paul Pollastri and Donna Couture recommended Tammy Collier and that since Paul is a public accountant with great knowledge and experience, he would be a resource to assist in the transition

Vitone also noted that whoever was chosen, the successful applicant should be sent to the 3-day accountant's seminar in March.

After a short discussion with pros and cons reviewed, Reed made the motion to offer the position of Town Accountant to Tammy Collier and Fagan seconded. Motion carried.

Vitone stated that he would call both candidates the following day and Briggs noted that they would need to set up times with Donna Couture for training. Vitone also noted that if a small accounting projects come up during the year they should consider offering it to Alexandra Bergeron to get her involved and gain municipal experience. He asked Briggs to pursue this.

At 7:48 p.m. Vitone motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Reed. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator