

**Enfield Board of Selectmen
Enfield, New Hampshire**

MINUTES of March 25, 2002

Board of Selectmen: Keith Oppenneer, Chairman; Donald J. Crate, Sr.; Ilene P. Reed

Administrative Staff: Stephen B. Griffin, Assistant Town Manager; Alisa D. Bonnette, Secretary

Others: Donetta Haley & Gail Wilson, NHMA; Patrick MacQueen, Municipal Resources, Inc.; Julie Huntley; Marjorie Carr; Dwight Marchetti; Peter H. Giese, Chief of Police.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Oppenneer called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

BUSINESS

Proposals for Professional Assistance with Town Manager Search:

Donetta Haley and Gail Wilson presented the services available from the NH Municipal Association (NHMA) Professional Recruitment Service (PRS). A presentation package was provided to the Selectmen, including a list of towns for which these services were recently provided.

The base price for NHMA services is \$1,000. Any costs related to advertising in newspapers and publications; travel, food, and lodging for candidates; or special interview board expenses, if paid through PRS, will be added to the final bill. NHMA can provide as little or as much assistance as the town would like. Should the town opt for a national search, recruitment costs could be considerable, probably between \$5,000 and \$10,000. Ms. Haley recommended confining the search to New England. The entire process is expected to take a minimum of 6 to 7 weeks.

Patrick MacQueen provided a presentation packet of services available from Municipal Resources, Inc. (MRI), including a scope of work and list of recruitments done for other municipalities in the not too distant past.

The basic package of MRI services would be provided for a lump sum fee of \$7,950 plus mileage expense at \$.345/mile. Cost of advertisement, candidate and professional panel travel and accommodations as well as the cost of (if any) for facilities to conduct the interviews will be paid directly by the Town. Optional services elected by the town will be charged at an hourly rate of \$85.00.

Mr. MacQueen feels there will be plenty of qualified individuals in the New England area and does not recommend a national search. Mr. MacQueen estimates that the entire process could take 4 to 5 months. His feel for the salary range would be \$60,000-\$65,000, plus benefits.

Mr. Oppenneer noted that the MRI approach is the more robust approach, but is also quite a bit more expensive. Both MRI and NHMA would be a third party. The Board is of the consensus that professional assistance is needed.

Mr. Oppenneer noted that the town could bring in an interim town manager. Mrs. Reed disagrees with this approach. She feels it would be easier for the staff. The staff is important to the town and they should have some input.

Mrs. Reed does not think hiring a town manager is going to be any less expensive than MRI. The School is paying the superintendent \$70,000, plus benefits. Mr. Oppenneer agreed that it probably will not be less expensive, but the town will have more coverage.

Julie Huntley asked if there was any way the town could buy back any of the currently allotted MRI hours to get a break on the MRI recruitment service. Mr. Griffin will provide a breakdown of hours provided to the town.

Mrs. Huntley also pointed out that MRI has been here for 7 years and know the town of Enfield. To bring in an interim...do we really need it?

Mr. Crate responded that an interim might see something we aren't seeing. They might think we need even more.

Mrs. Huntley asked if this isn't what the town is paying NHMA or MRI to do? She has been working with the town for 15 years and knows the turmoil a change in management causes. It seems a waste of money [to hire an interim manager]. They pick up on a few things, but how many things will they *not* know. The Selectmen have a pretty clear sense of what they want and what they don't want.

Mr. Oppenneer noted that someone had suggested bringing Chief Giese in as interim Town Manager. This would give Capt. Crate an opportunity to try the Chief's responsibilities. There would be pros and cons to this too.

Mrs. Huntley would not be in favor of this. Among other reasons, she is opposed to this because the Police Department is very specialized and is run in a different style than the town offices. She feels there might be conflicts.

At the request of the Board, Mr. Griffin will provide a copy of the latest NHMA salary survey for Town Managers.

Marjorie Carr stated that, based on what she's heard, she does not support an interim Town Manager. If the town is looking at 4 to 5 months, she thinks we're better off with MRI for continuity. She feels we need that sense of stability. While Mr. Crate is right, an interim town manager could see something, there is a learning curve. With the hiring of an interim manager

there will be upheaval with every department in town not just once, but twice. Staff would have to build rapport with the new individual. Mr. Griffin may have time to bring a new manager up to speed so this new individual might better serve the town. The Town also has some tremendously expensive projects coming up and Mr. Griffin can bring the new manager up to speed. It is a big responsibility. The less rippling the better off the town is going to be. Mrs. Carr would like to see continuity.

Mrs. Reed agrees that it is hard on the staff to have to adjust to a new manager, and then another.

Dwight Marchetti stated that over the years he has worked with quite a few town managers. He has also worked with an interim town manager that was a retired Chief of Police. A couple of weeks ago the Selectmen heard the voice of the people. When the Selectmen make a decision they are not going to please everyone. The Board has made inroads by hearing two proposals for professional recruitment assistance. The Town is looking at a 3 to 5 month process, a large cost disparity [for recruitment services] and a possible projection of \$65,000 [town manager salary]. The more quickly you do this and the more smoothly, the better. Mr. Marchetti recommended that the Selectmen not make hasty decisions, but not to be afraid to make them. No one likes change, but when you go through a process like this there's going to be change. The main thing is to move on. The Board needs to establish stability. You can poll all of the town's employees and get 25 different opinions, but you don't want to turn a deaf ear to your employees.

Peter Giese had just two comments: everyone wants to move forward, and everyone wants to be on the search committee. Chief Giese is willing to do anything he can do to help.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Oppenneer moved to adjourn at 6:45pm.; Mr. Crate seconded, vote unanimous.