

Fairhaven TGSC
February 19, 2014 – Round Table Discussion

Phil Washko called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Present: Chairperson, Phil Washko, Vice Chairperson, Bernie Roderick, Dick Douglass, Siobhan Henebury (arrived at 6:55pm), G Steve Riley, and Pattie Pacella

Absent: Linda Meredith

The Fairhaven TGSC met with Mark Sylvia (past Town Administrator (TA) for Plymouth), Mike Gagne (TA for Mattapoisett), and Joe Markarian (MA DOR) in a round table discussion. The meeting started at approximately 7:00 p.m. The following notes are what were discussed.

Mike Gagne advised he has been a TA for the last 28 years. He said that in Dartmouth, the TA does not hire/fire, that was under the BOS or DPW/BOH.

Mr. Gagne said that in Mattapoisett there are 3 elected Commissioners (Water/Sewer) and a Highway Surveyor that he works daily with on any/all issues.

Steve Riley felt this was the equivalence to Vinnie Furtado and the BPW Board.

Phil Washko asked in review of our TA Job description if the three invited guests felt we were on track.

Mike Gagne advised that a top priority of a TA is a financial team, and that any issues with finances rest with the Town Administrator. He said that early on a TA needs to have a development of projected revenue, and develop a budget to present to the BOS and then they make that recommendation to Finance Committee and to Town Meeting.

Steve Riley asked if the BOS (Chief Executive Authority) has more juice/authority than the Finance Committee.

Finance Committee is a recommending authority to Town Meeting.

In Mattapoisett, BOS works close with the Fin Committee.

Mark Sylvia agreed that priorities for community are that the selectman work closely with the TA for shared vision.

Joe M. said that the TA has to have that authority.

Everyone agreed that communication is key. Mr. Gagne reported that he meets with his department heads every 2 weeks and it's a time for the communication to be important. He said that the first 20 minutes they talk about finances, then the department heads can share from there.

Communication is critical.

A well defined Charter also helps.

Dick asked if it was essential for department heads to go to the TA for anything/budgets.

Mike said that certain operations they don't need to go to him, but finances/budgets they absolutely do.

Joe M. is also the Town Administrator in Swampscott. He stated that there the PB & BOH are elected, but the Town employees are under the Administrator.

Dick asked about micro managing?

Joe M. stated that if we're not worried with BOS micro managing now, why would there be worry with a TA.

Length of contract? 5 year Maximum (negotiable)

Mike Gagne stated that "for cause is critical"; provision in contract – if deficiency needs to be brought to TA's attention. Expectations.

Everyone agreed on performance evaluations.

Dept heads choose who they want to hire & run by TA.

Consistent with Charter & by-laws.

Creating a Town Administrator is in a by-law, or you can do a Special Act via Legislation, for a Charter Commission.

Performance evaluations for elected vs. non, Joe M. said can't perform on elected. However, Mr. Gagne stated he does perform evaluations on Commissioners (they are elected)

Need to have very clear policy/consistency on Elected & Appointed Boards (subject to By-law)

Discussion on what current by-law says about BPW Board? (seems it's very vague) Just because Mr. Furtado may report to TA, doesn't mean BPW Board now appointed.

In talking about the TA job description, Joe M wasn't sure we should use word "vision".

Education: Masters consideration (in Finance, Public Administration, etc.) – from any 'accredited' college.
5 Years experience in Town Management

Bernie asked if we should consider live in Town requirement.

Mark stated it would limit pool of people, you want to get the best qualified person. Mike agreed that going outside of Town limits would get greater pool of candidates.

Bernie asked if our TA job description sounded desirable?
All agreed that because Fairhaven. Has had a long term, well managed executive secretary that makes it desirable.

Salary - \$120,000 to 125,000. Vacation, education time. Etc.

Joe M. asked Mike to answer Pattie's question about clean slate job description, would you delete anything off your job description?

Mike said he was very happy in Mattapoisett and has a good working relationship with all involved and doesn't hesitate to ask BOS anything. Communication is key!

Joe M stated the success of a TA is relationship with BOS.

Meeting ended with roundtable.

Pattie made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Bernie. Motion passed unanimously at 8:38 p.m.

Respectively submitted,
Patricia A Pacella