

## **MINUTES OF THE JUNE 29, 2009 BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman David Canada, Selectmen Bruno Federico and Tim Copeland, and Town Administrator Paul Deschaine.

The meeting was opened at 7:33 PM by the Chair.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Town Treasurer Kevin Peck reported he had \$1,720,434.70 in the general checking account. He also reported he had \$800,000 in general funds invested. Mr. Peck also intended to invest \$1,700,000 tomorrow.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Alan Gould, of Municipal Resources, Inc., was present to discuss the Police Chief selection process. Mr. Gould stated his qualifications as being a retired Police Chief, and also serving three years as the Town Administrator in Rye. He also serves as the Chief Financial Officer of MRI. Mr. Deschaine summarized the selection process MRI proposed and the elements of that proposal that were selected previously by the Board. Mr. Gould elaborated on each of the items in the proposal and the selection process in general. He says there is a general question and answer process whereby Municipal Resources creates a challenge statement, which the applicants are measured against in an ideal candidate profile. Mr. Gould estimated it would take between forty-five and sixty days to advertise for the position. He proposed advertising in the Union Leader, the Boston Globe, the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Municipal Leagues of Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Maine since their postings are free. Mr. Copeland also suggested the use of the Police Standards in Training Newsletter.

Mr. Gould asked if the Board had any questions or thoughts concerning the proposal. Mr. Federico said the strongest impression from the Community Input Session was regarding community-policing efforts, which are community orientation and police efforts. Mr. Copeland said it was something he called "stop, walk and talk" efforts. He also said the Department needed to be brought up to date with standards by adopting a new set of Standard Operating Procedures. Mr. Gould suggested that all applications be sent to MRI in order to maintain document management. He will process them for an initial screening. Mr. Canada asked if the Board would see all the applications. Mr. Gould said that they could, adding that they would do anything that the Board asked them to do at any time during the process.

Mr. Gould advocated using the essay assessment. The essay questions require the applicant to do some level of research on the Town of Stratham in order to do justice to the process. He feels it really cuts through those who really do care and want to serve the Town of Stratham. The essay also further refines those finalists who are capable of doing a public domain search on various issues. What comes out of the essay can also give you information for follow-up during future interviews with the candidates. Mr. Canada supported the essay component, and Mr. Federico concurred, in order to discern those candidates who had a Town focus. Mr. Copeland was skeptical of the value of the essay. He stated it could be very subjective. Mr. Deschaine stated there was value in at least determining if the candidate had critical writing skills and measuring the ability to do research. Mr. Canada moved to authorize the use of the evaluation

tool described as item #4 in the proposal that had been previously rejected by the Board. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The Board discussed the position announcement and job description. Mr. Deschaine explained that a department position and announcement has been done by the Board and a job description is still being redrafted. Mr. Copeland said he felt the education requirement should be a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree with a Master's Degree preferred. For experience, he would suggest five to ten years. Mr. Gould said that five years of progressive command experience would capture this minimum along with ten years of service. Mr. Gould passed out a critique of the position announcement. The points he advised to add were a physical requirement, increase the length of time to obtain a New Hampshire certification to a year to meet the State requirement, and the course schedules offered by the State. Mr. Canada asked how long a probationary period could be. Mr. Gould said the courts have said up to a year is acceptable. Mr. Canada asked if that could be extended. Mr. Gould said the State would probably not support extending the probationary period. You should know if the new hire is acceptable within one year. Mr. Copeland said the additions to the job announcement made sense, particularly the physical agility test requirement. The test does not apply to officers certified prior to the year of 2001. Mr. Deschaine asked if the Town could require it regardless. Mr. Gould said it could. Mr. Canada asked if that was desirable. Mr. Copeland questioned if it would be unnecessary. Mr. Gould noted that out of State candidates would have to meet that standard regardless, so requiring it of all candidates would be equalizing that requirement. Mr. Copeland saw value in making the physical agility test a requirement. Mr. Gould suggested including a reference to the new Police Station also in the job announcement. Everyone agreed that the remaining materials would be solicited from the challenge statement to be created from interviews with the Board.

Mr. Deschaine asked if the salary range was appropriate to the market. Mr. Gould said that the range of \$70,000 to \$80,000 a year was appropriate for a community this size. Mr. Copeland said his preference is not to have the Chief work details. Mr. Gould said that that was an acceptable policy as long as the starting range is a place to start. Negotiation of future compensation with increases associated with satisfactory performance would be appropriate.

Logistics of hiring a new Police Chief were then discussed. The ads would go in immediately with a closing date being thirty days from the posting of the last ad. That usually leads to a maximum of forty-five days.

The Board then discussed the composition of the search committee. Mr. Copeland explained whom they have recruited so far. Mr. Gould said that there is usually a professional panel, an employee panel and a community panel. The professional panel is done internally at MRI. The employee panel can or cannot be done depending upon the size of the Town and the Department. The community panel is one of the larger groups. If you are only doing one panel, a large group should be expected.

Further discussion regarding what papers to advertise the position in resulted in identifying the Union Leader, the Boston Globe and/or Boston Works, the Portsmouth Herald, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Local Government Center, New Hampshire Police Standards

and Training, and the Municipal Leagues in Rhode Island. Mr. Canada moved to advertise in those venues previously stated. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The Board would next try to establish a challenge statement, which would be used to determine the ideal candidate profile. They would then forward their collection of comments in an email to Mr. Gould.

Mr. Gould finished a review of the proposal and suggested using a management style assessment tool for an additional \$150. This would be predictive of a candidate's fit with the department and the Town. Bob Goodrich, of the audience, thought the overall process was good.

Mr. Canada asked when the Board could meet to formulate the challenge statement. Mr. Federico suggested 7:00PM on Wednesday. The other Board members agreed. The Board of Selectmen thanked Mr. Gould for his presentation.

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

Mr. Canada asked the Board if they had any further thoughts on the Transportation Enhancement Grants. The Board had discussed it before, but Colleen Lake said she had some additional information. Ms. Lake presented information on applying for the Transportation Enhancement Grants. The deadline for a letter of intent for these grants was July 2, 2009. She was here to advocate that the Town send a letter of intent. She claimed there is \$670,000 available in the grant. A completed application needs to be done by September 15, 2009. In the meantime, a project management workshop is required. She proposed interconnecting the nearby trailheads with pedestrian walkways, bike paths and energy efficient, but period, lighting in the Town Center. Mr. Canada asked Ms. Lake what she was willing to do. Ms. Lake responded she did the letter of intent and turned it over to the Town. Mr. Canada asked if there was any support from the Board. The Board felt that it should be signed to at least keep the option open. Mr. Copeland questioned what the expense would be to maintain this added infrastructure. Ms. Lake suggested that the equipment needed would be used in the Gateway District too. Mr. Federico asked who would become the lead person on this project, who will make sure the application is done when it is due in September. With no answer, it was left to be determined. Mr. Copeland moved to sign the letter of intent. Mr. Canada seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Lissa Ham reported she had attended a storm water workshop where she ran into several people who were willing to spread the word about the Planner's position opening. The Board thanked Ms. Ham and would keep any applications on file. The Board has already advertised and has begun reviewing the list of applicants.

**PARK PERMITS/MUNICIPAL CENTER RENTALS:**

The following Park permit was reviewed and authorized:

Linda MacDonald for a graduation party on July 12, 2009 at the Scamman Pavilion.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

**Administration:** Mr. Deschaine reported that the HVAC proposals are still being received and reviewed and he is meeting with the Energy Committee later this week.

Mr. Canada has posted the old E2 on Craigslist. He is working on getting the Fenton Fire Equipment posting now that he has a questionnaire that he needs to complete with assistance from members of the Fire Department. Mr. Deschaine asked if Fenton Fire was actually a Canadian firm. Mr. Canada did not know and would look into it.

The Board then discussed the interview with Abby Sykas for general legal services. The Board had no objection to having Mr. Deschaine trying her out and authorized him to sign an engagement letter from her.

Mr. Canada suggested a Planner Applicant Review Committee consisting of the Board of Selectmen, Mr. Deschaine, and Janet Johnson of the Planning Board. Mr. Canada explained his thoughts on not making the committee too large and said it was not fair to have only one Board member on the committee. Mr. Copeland suggested having at least one more community member. There were more people at the Planner's input forum than were at the Chief of Police forum. Mr. Federico agreed. It was decided to add two community members and the Board would consider whom to place on the committee by the meeting next Wednesday.

Mr. Canada expressed a concern about the State's downshifting of costs from the State's budget to the Town's by requiring to pay additional retirement on details. Mr. Canada moved to authorize Mr. Deschaine and the Acting Chief to adjust the detail rates to cover all those added costs. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The Chair also identified the meeting on July 13, 2009 to be a point in time when the Board would review the status of the Town's budget and discuss the impacts of the State's budget on it.

Mr. Copeland stated that the Fair Committee has evaluated the damage to the middle gate on Jack Rabbit Lane at Stratham Hill Park. They questioned if the damage occurred during last year's fair. They thought it might have possibly occurred during snow removal operations this winter. Mr. Canada said that snow removal activities were highly unlikely the cause due to the nature of the damage. Mr. Copeland said the fair suggested offsetting the post to avoid future damage by the larger livestock trailers that go in and out of that gate. Mr. Canada suggested splitting the costs for replacing one of the posts and one of the gates, which would widen the entire entrance. Mr. Copeland agreed and moved to split the costs of one gate and post to widen the entrance. Mr. Canada seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The Board discussed the Scamman Farm and Ranchland Protection Program Grant. Mr. Deschaine said the Easement Committee needed to review the cooperative agreement and make a recommendation to the Board after July 6, 2009 so the Town will hopefully know of the decision to award the grant.

At 10:19 PM, Mr. Canada moved to go into non-public session to discuss possible litigation. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. At 11:10 PM, Mr. Canada moved to come out of non-public session and to seal the minutes due to the nature of discussions concerning litigation and to adjourn. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Reviewed By,

Norma Corrow  
Recording Secretary

Paul Deschaine  
Town Administrator