

Personnel Board Meeting
Wayland Town Building - Selectmen's Office/ Selectmen's Meeting Room
Meeting Minutes
October 2, 2013

Members Present:

N. McCarthy (NM); P. Schneider (PS); Jessica Green (JG)

NM called the meeting to order at 6:30pm

Public Comment:

Annette Lewis stated that in her view, the Personnel Board (PB) has been less active in providing input into contracts than it had been in the past, and that she would like to see the PB play a more aggressive role. Ms. Lewis provided the example of the DPW Director's contract being executed by Fred Turkington without the PB's (or the Board of Public Works') knowledge or input. Ms. Lewis stated that several contract provisions are too employee-favorable. PS and NM stated that to perform a fair comparison, one would need to look at contracts for similar positions in similar towns. All members agreed that the PB should be involved in the drafting/execution of contracts.

Minutes:

JG distributed draft minutes for the PB meetings on 9/5, 9/16 and 9/23 to be reviewed and discussed at a future meeting.

Review Town Administrator Job Description and By-Law:

M. Peabody (MP) arrived at 6:45pm

The members agreed that after having reviewed both the TA job description and the town by-law relating to the TA position (Chapter 60), the two documents seemed to track each other very well. PS stated that it would be helpful for the Board of Selectmen (BoS) to provide some guidelines as to how the TA performs these responsibilities, which could be changed easily if things were not running smoothly. NM agreed and stated that there needs to be an expectation of open communication flowing both from the BoS to the TA and vice versa. For example, the members discussed the phrase in the job description "regular contact", and agreed that the BoS and TA should have a shared understanding of what constitutes "regular contact".

The members specifically discussed the phrases "work with the finance committee and finance director to establish budgetary guidelines"; "oversee the legal issues for all Town Boards..."; and "work across Town departments, boards, commissions and committees...."

The members agreed that the language of the job description did not literally require a TA candidate to have municipal government experience, but that someone with such experience would likely be viewed as a preferable candidate.

Discuss Community Participation for Town Administrator Search

The members reviewed and discussed the materials that John Senchyshyn had distributed to the PB and BoS regarding the 2010 Superintendent's search conducted by the School Committee, particularly the aspects of the documents relating to gathering community input.

MP suggested incorporating a question into the RFP about what consultant firms had done in the past to solicit community input to get a sense of their experience level and approach.

The members discussed asking the BoS what, if anything, they would like the PB to be doing with respect to the outstanding items prior to the selection of a consultant: hiring an interim TA; finalizing the RFP; interviewing the Collins Center; establishing a selection committee; developing a survey/work on ideas for an open forum; developing a communication about gathering community input, possibly after consulting with the League of Women Voters or someone involved with the school superintendent search.

Joint Meeting with the BoS to Review the TA Job Description and By-Law and to Discuss the Hiring Process of the TA

BoS members present: Steve Correia (SC); Ed Collins (EC); Doug Leard (DL); Joe Nolan (JN); Tony Boschetto (TB)

Also present: John Senchyshyn

TB distributed a redline copy of the TA Job Description, showing his suggested edits to the existing language - he noted that he had only additions and did not seek to delete any existing language.

NM stated that the PB's view is that overall, the job description and by-law tracked very closely and seemed to have the same intent.

TB stated that he would like to see language relating to the quality of services, such that delivering high quality services in a cost-effective manner would be a designated part of the TA's job. SC stated that he was nervous about using the word "ensure" in this context, because the TA could not ensure high quality services if circumstances beyond his control resulted in large cuts to budgets. The members continued to discuss the use of the word "ensure" in the job description and whether other words would be more appropriate.

In the "Supervision Exercised" section of the job description, the members discussed the Manager of Information Technology and whether any changes should be made to reflect the consolidation currently underway with the school side Director of IT. JN pointed out that it is important to make sure that the language requiring the TA to "consult with relevant primary boards and committees working with the department heads prior to implementing personnel related actions" actually happens, and EC reiterated the importance of elected boards having a say. SC stated that where the job description called for groups to "provide input", it would be important to have a shared understanding of what the input would be - for example, a conversation with the Board Chair, a written report, or something else.

With respect to the job description language stating that the TA is “evaluated annually by the BoS”, DL asked how the BoS could best evaluate the TA. NM, MP and TB discussed various evaluation tools including smart goals. SC stated that it would be helpful for the BoS to have recommendations for the BoS on evaluating all different levels of town employees. TB suggested that goals and competencies should be established in conjunction with a new TA.

In the “job environment” section of the job description, NM noted that the language relating to “errors” committed by the TA is consistent across many of the town’s job descriptions.

In the “essential functions” section of the job description, the members discussed the TA “championing the development of quality standards”, as well as “evaluating annually the job performance of all town officers and department heads under the jurisdiction of the BoS....” DL and TB asked to add language to the effect that the PB would see all of the performance evaluations. NM said the PB would need to discuss it.

The members discussed various provisions of the job description dealing with the finance committee and how the TA works with the BoS on financial matters. The members agreed that the objectives of using sound financial data for assumptions and providing adequate financial controls are important goals for the town, but that the TA is not in a position to know the details of these matters. The group discussed the process of developing budgetary guidelines. NM suggested that the BoS should discuss how they intend to work with the TA and finance committee on the guidelines to ensure smooth operation.

DL asked John Foskett (the town’s labor counsel) about exit interviews. JS explained that the town has a current practice of asking departing employees to answer a form questionnaire.

The group then moved on to discuss the TA search process (10:05pm).

JS described the timeline for completing the RFP for a consultant and stated that the Collins Center would be submitting a Scope of Work and would likely come in to be interviewed on either 10/21 or 10/28.

JS stated that he had not had much success collecting candidates for an interim TA position, but he had a few candidates to be interviewed and he could try to target those for 10/21 or 10/28.

JS distributed the information he had received about the School Superintendent selection process.

The group discussed reviewing the responses to the RFP’s, and agreed that regardless of which group reviewed them, they would need to be reviewed in open session rather than closed session.

TB suggested that the BoS should select the interim TA, while the PB would be involved in the selection of the consultant for the TA search process.

The group discussed the composition of the selection committee for the new TA. John Foskett noted that although the school superintendent search committee was very large, the school committee had differing obligations to include different groups, and stated that he would recommend a smaller, more narrow search committee that could more easily get the job done. The members discussed the pros and cons of including a representative from the school side, a TA from another town, and citizens at large. The members also discussed how the members of the selection committee would be appointed. TB wanted the BoS to have involvement in the selection of the selection committee. JN wanted the process to be transparent and worried that the public would not see it as such if the BoS was heavily involved in the appointment of the committee's members.

NM asked the BoS what the PB should be doing prior to the engagement of a consultant. The members agreed that the BoS would develop a better understanding of how it wanted to proceed on the selection committee issue.

The PB left the BoS meeting at approximately 10:40.

Next Meeting:

The PB agreed to meet on 10/16, and to hold 10/21 and 10/28 to possibly interview the Collins Center, as had just been discussed with the BoS.

PS moved to adjourn the meeting. JG seconded. Four members having voted in the affirmative, the motion passed. The Board adjourned at approximately 10:50pm.

Jessica Green