

Members present: Kevin M. McCormick Christopher A. Rucho
John W. Hadley Siobhan M. Bohnson

Mr. McCormick convened the special meeting of the Board at 6:00 p.m.

Discussion on Town Administrator Search

As Town Administrator Leon Gaumond has tendered his resignation, the Board is meeting this evening to discuss the process they will use to fill the vacancy. Mr. Gaumond provided the Board with a Kopelman and Paige packet on Search Committee Protocol. Mr. McCormick explained that when Mr. Gaumond was hired the Board of Selectmen was the search committee as they felt that because they would have to work with the individual, they would be involved from the start. Then we had 37 applicants, which were reviewed by each member, seven were interviewed, and from those seven, three were finalists and interviewed for the second time. The Board did check references for the final three candidates. Mr. McCormick would like to amend the previous advertisement and have a special meeting to approve the final version. As the previous advertisement was done ten years ago, Mr. Gaumond provided the Board with a current ad for a Town Administrator position which was in The Beacon.

Mr. McCormick would like to give candidates four weeks to apply and he would like to hire interim person. He would like to do this quickly. Mr. Hadley questioned where we would advertise. Mr. Gaumond recommends The Beacon and the MMA website. As the deadline for the April edition has passed, we will go with the May publication. Ms. Bohnson questioned how we would go about finding an interim. Mr. Rucho would like to discuss what the interim person will do. Ms. Bohnson asked if we do not have an interim how would that be covered. Mr. McCormick noted that we could ask Mrs. Lucier if she is interested. Ms. Bohnson asked if it could be covered by a member of the Board. Mr. Gaumond noted that the Special Act says you need to have an interim, and it cannot be an elected person. Ms. Lucier indicated that she is not interested in the interim position.

Mr. Gaumond added that we need to follow the Special Act that created the position of the Town Administrator. The MMA also has a list of people who do interim assignments. Mr. Hadley asked how long this would take. Mr. Gaumond thinks we would have an interim in for more than a few months. We will need to advertise, review applications, do back ground checks, make a job offer and the person who accepts the job would have to provide notice to their employer. Mr. Hadley suggested having the Board meet twice a week to speed up the process. Mr. Rucho suggested having the interim help the Board through the search process.

Ms. Bohnson asked if it would be a good idea to have someone from the community help us in the process. Mr. Gaumond advised that there are search firms out there who would help. Ms. Bohnson noted that when they did the search for a School Superintendent they had two residents involved. They had a Screening Committee who handed the finalists over to the School Committee to interview. Mr. Hadley feels that getting others involved would prolong the process. Mr. McCormick would like to get the interim in for a shorter time and he could work with Mr. Gaumond for a couple of weeks. He does not want to see a delay. Mr. Hadley asked how long the ad should be opened for. Mr. Gaumond recommends at least 30 days. Ms. Bohnson suggested two weeks because if people are interested they will apply quickly. Mr. Rucho asked Mr. Gaumond if he could come back to town and cover town meeting and the budget. Mr. Gaumond is sure Sturbridge will be very accommodating. The question would be would the Board want the person who is no longer the Town Administrator presenting the budget.

Discussion ensued over the advertisement. Mr. Gaumond recommends it refer to the

Special Act as the town has a strong Town Administrator form of government. He thinks that will make this an attractive job and draw many applications. It was agreed to advertise the position for the month of May and when we get to interviewing we will have a full Board. Mr. Gaumond explained that they have changed the Open Meeting Law and Boards of Selectmen can no longer interview in executive session. That is why other towns use a screening committee because they vetted out the candidates and give the finalists to the Board to interview in open session. Mr. Gaumond provided the Board with the processed used in Wilbraham who just hired a Town Administrator. They have been working on this since October of 2014. He asked the Board to consider using that process.

By using a search committee everything is confidential until the Board of Selectmen gets The list of finalists. Mr. McCormick suggested having the Board serve as the Search Committee. Ken Cleveland of The Banner advised that if you have a quorum of the appointing authority, Information you used in executive session might be used in open session. Ms. Bohnson noted that one member of the School Committee served on the Search Committee for the School Superintendent. Mr. Rucho asked if the only main issue is that the applicants are public he doesn't care if that do not want their name to be public they shouldn't apply. Mr. McCormick suggested numbering the applications. Mr. Gaumond noted that the names must be included in the executive session in the minutes and kept separate from open meeting minutes. Mr. Rucho prefers not to rush this process. Ms. Bohnson feels a Search Committee makes sense. Mr. Hadley recommends two members of the Board serve on the committee. It was agreed to include on the next agenda, discussion on the make-up of the Search Committee. Mr. McCormick thinks the full Board should be able to review all the applicants. The Screening Committee will give the Board of Selectmen the number of candidates they would like to interview and the Board will narrow those down. Mr. Cleveland does not believe that the Screening Committee shows the Board of Selectmen all of the applications. Mr. Gaumond explained that the Board will have to tell the committee what it is they are looking for so the committee can select candidates with those qualifications. Mr. Gaumond believes the salary should also be included in the ad. Ms. Bohnson suggested using a number rating for each category. Mr. Gaumond will prepare a draft ad with some minimum requirements. The Board will think about the make up of the Search Committee. He will also put together the duties of the Screening Committee and a list of interims. We will appoint the screening committee the second meeting in April. Mr. Rucho asked if there will be changes in the budget to pay for all of this. Mr. Gaumond will work with Mrs. Lucier and the town accountant on that.

With no further business to come before the Board, motion Mr. Hadley at 7:15 p.m. to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Bohnson, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: April 14, 2015

Nancy E. Lucier, Municipal Assistant

Kevin M. McCormick, Chairman

John W. Hadley, Vice Chairman

Siobhan M. Bohnson, Selectman

Christopher A. Rucho, Clerk