

MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 29, 2018 BOARD OF SELECTMEN SPECIAL MEETING

MEMBER'S PRESENT: Board Members Bob O'Sullivan, Joe Lovejoy, Mike Houghton and Town Administrator Paul Deschaine

At 7:00 pm Mr. Houghton opened the special meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Houghton stated the purpose of this evening's meeting is to discuss the transition strategy for the Town Administrator position, and more specifically, a timeframe which we have yet to determine for which we would want to engage Mr. Deschaine for his future services.

Mr. Deschaine reviewed the timetable as set by MRI: Resumes are due September 10th. By September 14th, essay questions will be given to those that meet the criteria and will be due by the 24th. Those will be reviewed until October 12th. The best candidates will then be selected for interviews the week of October 22th. A background check will be done on the final candidate. If everything comes back satisfactory, the candidate will be signing a contract with the Selectmen around November 5th. MRI will assist with developing the contract as part of their services. Mr. Deschaine discussed the importance of having a contract. The start date for the new Town Administrator is estimated to be December 3rd.

Mr. Deschaine explained that HB561 has an impact on his retirement. Part of it states that there is a 28 day waiting period, after a person retires, before they can work again. If he retires December 31st, January 29th will be the first day he can work for the Town again, making him unavailable during budget season. If he retires Dec. 1st and works at least one day in December, HB561 recognizes his position as a grandfathered position. Mr. Houghton believes the transition will take time and prefers Mr. Deschaine retire after Town Meeting in March. In addition, if he retires Dec. 1st, he will lose one month's payroll and that will affect his retirement income. As far as the work for the fiscal year end, he said that Accounting Supervisor Valerie Kemp and Town Clerk Joyce Charbonneau have been through it many times and they know what to do. Hopefully, the new administrator has been through it also.

Timing of the budget meetings was discussed. Mr. Lovejoy voiced disapproval of the current budget process. Mr. O'Sullivan described the elementary school's process which is similar to the Town's. Mr. Deschaine explained why the process is as it is now but said the process is not set in stone. It was noted that the CIP and Compensation (which isn't reviewed with the Budget Committee) are the biggest discussion items. Mr. Lovejoy advocated reviewing the department head's budgets to have their questions answered before it goes to Budget Committee but he didn't want the Dept. heads to have to come in twice. Department budgets are due Oct 1. It was suggested that some departments, like Public Works, may need to come to both, whereas others may not have to. Mr. O'Sullivan cautioned against simply paying lip service to the Budget Committee; we need to involve them and take their recommendations seriously.

Mr. Deschaine reviewed the calendar noting warrant due dates and holidays. They discussed Mr. Deschaine's personal goals regarding his retirement. He envisions a consulting role, providing support if needed. Additionally, he'd like to clear out the 30 years' worth of paperwork in his office. Mr. Houghton feels that even an experienced person will take some time to get up to speed as it relates to matters with the Town. It is the busiest time of year; there is a lot to accomplish and plenty to do, therefore Mr. Houghton would like to see him work through this time of year. Mr. Deschaine said he would not work past April 1st. Everyone's priority is to have a successful budget process and Town Meeting. If we hire someone with experience, Mr. O'Sullivan observed, the process would be familiar, unless they came from an SB2 town. There are a lot of unknowns.

They discussed again the impact of HB561 and how it affects the timing of Mr. Deschaine's retirement. If he retires on or after Jan 1, he is subject to an hourly restriction if employed part-time. If he retires prior to, he is grandfathered in but only to that position with that community. SB 561's biggest impact is the 28 day waiting period. Mr. Deschaine noted that paying two full time town administrators for three months would be costly. In addition, it might create organizational turmoil. Mr. O'Sullivan would like to look at the pool of candidates and their capabilities and experience before determining how much/how little they'd need Mr. Deschaine's assistance. Mr. Deschaine related some personal reasons as to why he would like to retire earlier rather than later but said he doesn't have any solid reasons at this time as to why he wouldn't be able to do full time. Mr. Houghton said they will revisit the issue after looking at the resumes in October. The dialog will continue and urged Mr. Deschaine to let them know if anything changes for him personally. Mr. Houghton reiterated that he would like to have him stay until March 16th. Mr. Deschaine said in order for him to maximize his benefits, he would have to cash out his sick and vacation in 2018 or he will lose it. If he stays on full time after Dec. 31, the Board will have to waive the existing policy that states that you can only cash out when you retire (if he is working full time, he is not retired). If he is working full-time, he is still eligible for health insurance. Mr. Houghton said he didn't want to do anything to Mr. Deschaine's detriment. Retirement is based on highest three years income. Mr. Deschaine noted that going part-time after January 1, there is concern for health care insurance. He would be willing to work a day a week in return for it (the insurance would be his compensation, approximately \$20,000/year with dental).

The selectmen discussed the best times/days to meet to work on the budgets.

It was decided that waiting to see what the pool of candidates looked like will allow them to make a better decision as to how to proceed. Mr. Houghton asked Mr. Deschaine to draft a waiver regarding the policy that was discussed earlier so that it would be ready should they decide to implement it.

At 8:01pm, Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to go into a non-public session to discuss several personnel matters. Mr. O'Sullivan seconded the motion which passed unanimously. At 8:30pm

Mr. Lovejoy motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes. Mr. O'Sullivan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine recommended Jason Pond be offered a conditional offer of employment for the Building Maintenance Foreman position at a compensation rate of \$20/hour. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to approve the recommendation. Mr. O'Sullivan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine recommended making a conditional offer of employment to Shanti Wolph for the position of Code Enforcement Officer / Building Inspector at an annualized salary of \$62,000/year. The conditions for both are a favorable criminal background and motor vehicle check and a pre-employment physical. Mr. Houghton made a motion to approve the recommendation. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Lovejoy wondered if they would have a committee comprised of residents who would be involved in the selection process for the Town Administrator position. Mr. Houghton and Mr. O'Sullivan felt that some resident participation in the interview would be beneficial. Some residents have expressed interest. Those residents would be people that have been involved with and are familiar with the Town. Ultimately, the hiring of the new Town Administrator will rest with the Selectmen.

At 8:46 Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to adjourn. Mr. O'Sullivan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary