

TOWN MANAGER SCREENING COMMITTEE MEETING

August 29, 2023

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK

Town Manager Jeffrey M. Hull called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in Room 5 of the Town Hall. Present were members Michael A. Caira, Michael L. Champoux, John F. Doherty, III, Jonathan R. Eaton, Raymond N. Lepore, Bryan T. Perry, Robert C. Peterson, Jr., and Paul J. Ruggiero. Mr. Sean Hennigan was not present at the meeting. Mr. Hull advised that he was present for the purpose of facilitating the meeting until the Committee voted to elect a Chair. He noted that the meeting was being recorded for posting on WCTV and the Town's website and for the recording secretary. Mr. Hull noted that the Committee was provided with the Town Charter and a draft document of their charge.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr. Hull initiated the discussion by requesting nominations for the position of chairperson.

Raymond Lepore nominated Jonathon Eaton for the role of chairperson. Jonathon Eaton declined the nomination due to an already busy schedule. In response to the lack of other nominations, Michael Caira volunteered to take on the role of chair if no other individuals expressed interest. Robert Peterson expressed his interest in becoming the chairperson if he gets nominated. John Doherty nominated Robert Peterson for the role of Chairperson and Michael Caira seconded the nomination.

A motion was made by John Doherty, seconded by Michael Caira and by the affirmative vote of all, it was

VOTED: That Mr. Robert Peterson serve as the Chair for the Town Manager Screening Committee Meeting

Mr. Hull left after the appointment of the Chair.

DISCUSSION REGARDING RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

Discussion took place regarding the responsibilities of the committee. Bryan Perry proposed he leave as his name had been mentioned for the role of Temporary Town Manager. Mr. Caira asked if Mr. Perry would be a candidate for Town Manager. Mr. Perry advised that he would not. Mr. Perry said he would consider for the position of Temporary Town Manager. Mr. Perry left the room. Raymond Lepore asked if the current Assistant Town Manager is willing to step up and fulfill the role of Town Manager.

Following discussion, a motion was proposed by Michael Caira to recommend that the Select Board consider hiring a Temporary Town Manager who is a Department Head or a Senior Manager that will not be a candidate for the permanent Town Manager position. This motion was seconded by John Doherty. Mr. Peterson stated his position that he does not want to offer candidates to the Select Board as he feels that it is not the committee's position. Discussion took place regarding the motion.

Jonathan Eaton offered an amendment to strike the qualification that the Temporary Town Manager not be a candidate for Town Manager. The amendment was seconded by Michael Champoux. Mr. Caira commented his viewpoint that the Committee wants someone who knows the Town and can step in and do the job from within and not give the impression that the selection of Town Manager has been predetermined. Mr. Peterson called for a vote on the motion to amend the main motion. Upon the affirmative vote of seven, with Mr. Caira opposed, it was voted.

Mr. Peterson called for a vote of the amended motion that the Town Manager Screening Committee recommend that the Select Board consider hiring a Temporary Town Manager who is a Department Head or a Senior Manager. Upon the affirmative vote of seven, with Mr. Peterson opposed, it was voted.

Mr. Peterson reiterated his position that this committee should not be involved in the selection of a Temporary Town Manager and the responsibility should be remanded back to the Select Board without qualification.

Mr. Perry returned to the meeting. Mr. Peterson mentioned that he would write a letter and submit it to the Board of Selectmen regarding the discussion and decision of this committee.

Mr. Doherty asked whether the Committee can request a survey of communities Wilmington's size to obtain information on the salaries of Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager. He would also like to include benefits. Mr. Peterson stated he believed that was in the purview of the Committee's tasks.

Mr. Peterson initiated discussion on the tasks of the committee and stated that not having a consultant makes the task more difficult. Mr. Champoux questioned the statement that they can't have a consultant noting that the Select Board chose not to use a consultant. Mr. Eaton stated that the Committee can request funds to hire a consultant.

Mr. Michael Champoux mentioned a professional search firm will move things faster to bringing in mass resumes, reviewing, doing background checks, etc. He expressed concern that questions may be asked of candidates that are not consistent with the law. The discussion led to the fact that the Select Board rejected the idea of hiring a consultant firm in favor of appointing the Screening Committee. Mr. Robert Peterson asked the selectmen present in the audience to inform if they were against hiring the consultancy firm or if they were waiting for the screening committee to give the feedback. Mr. DePalma, Select Board Chair, replied that they would wait for the response from the committee to decide if they would want to move forward with recruiting a consultant but right now, they do not want a consultant.

Mr. Eaton summarized the discussion held by the Select Board regarding the hiring of a consultant. He also related his experience being on screening committees where a consultant was used. He noted one benefit was that the consultant provided information regarding the candidates that would not be obtained through the interview process.

A motion was made by Mr. Doherty that the Committee send a Request for Proposal (RFP)/Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to recruitment firms. The motion was seconded by Mr. Eaton for the purpose of discussion. Mr. Eaton expressed concern that this action is beyond the scope of their responsibilities and the Committee does not have a budget. Discussion took place and during the discussion Mr. Peterson suggested that the motion be amended to make the recommendation to the Select Board to issue an RFP/RFQ to provide assistance to the Screening Committee in hiring a Town Manager. Mr. Eaton made the motion to amend the initial motion and was seconded by Mr. Doherty. Upon motion made and seconded, Mr. Peterson called for a vote. It was the affirmative vote of six, with Mr. Perry and Mr. Caira opposed that the Committee request that the Select Board issue a

Request of Proposal/Request of Qualifications for a consultant to provide assistance to the Committee in hiring a Town Manager.

The committee would like to review the sample of job postings, potential survey documents, and other paperwork prepared by Asst. Town Manager/ HR Director with reference to hiring the Town Manager to get the knowledge and idea about the preparation to move forward. Mr. Eaton mentioned that if the Select Board declines their request, the documents will be useful to move forward.

Discussion took place regarding public outreach and speaking with department heads relative to future projects.

COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER SEEKING CLARIFICATION FROM SELECT BOARD RELATIVE TO RESPONSIBILITIES COMMITTEE

Mr. Peterson stated that the responsibilities of this committee depend on the Request for Proposal and Request for Qualification and the decision regarding the appointment of a consultant.

COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER REQUEST TO MEET WITH SELECT BOARD TO DISCUSS RESPONSIBILITIES OF TOWN MANAGER SCREENING COMMITTEE

Mr. Peterson advised that he will request to be on the agenda of the Select Board meeting on September 11, 2023. He asked if other members were going to attend that they notify the Select Board Recording Secretary, not later than Thursday, September 7, 2023, as an agenda for the Screening Committee will need to be posted.

COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER NEXT MEETING DATE

Mr. Peterson asked what day of the week is preferable. Discussion took place regarding posting requirements. Mr. Peterson asked members their availability for Thursday, September 14, 2023. Mr. Perry advised that he will not be available. The next Screening Committee Meeting will be held at Town Hall on Thursday, September 14, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Peterson opened the meeting up for public comments, requesting that speakers be brief in light of the time.

Kevin MacDonald, Andover Street, suggested that the committee should approach neighboring towns and request public records of the reports from their consulting firm, qualifications of the manager and complete package submitted by consulting firms.

Scott Neville, Chestnut Street, expressed concern regarding the makeup of the committee, noting that only two members have kids in the school system.

Frank West, Birchwood Road, a selectman, expressed his thanks and would welcome the committee to the Board of Selectmen meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, a motion was made by John Doherty, seconded by Jonathan Eaton, and by the affirmative vote of all, it was,

VOTED: That the Town Manager Screening Committee adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Surbhi Patel', written over a horizontal line.

Surbhi Patel, Recording Secretary