

SELECT BOARD MEETING

July 10, 2023

Chair Gary B. DePalma called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in Room 9 of the Town Hall. Present were Select Board members Gregory B. Bendel, Kevin A. Caira, Lilia Maselli and Frank J. West. Also present was Town Manager Jeffrey M. Hull and Joseph Fair, Esquire, KP Law Personnel & Labor. Assistant Town Manager/HR Director Susan L. Inman participated via ZOOM.

Chair DePalma asked those present to rise and he led the pledge of allegiance.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TOWN MANAGER RECRUITMENT

Town Manager Hull stated that he and the Assistant Town Manager/HR Director have had discussions regarding the transition process. He noted that Ms. Inman has compiled documents which have been provided to members. The memorandum outlines documents that were provided and decisions the Select Board should make this evening. Town Manager Hull stated that the Board should consider establishing a Temporary Town Manager. The second major decision is to determine whether the Board wishes to hire a recruiter. The estimated cost is between \$12,000 and \$16,000. If the Board chooses to hire a recruiter, the Town would be required to solicit at least three quotes. If the Board decides not to go with a recruiter there are a series of steps to be considered including the position profile and advertisement.

Chair DePalma asked for comments from the Board on whether to hire a recruiter. Select Board Member Bendel asked what a recruiter is able to offer. He noted that this is a decision he does not take likely as Wilmington has only hired two Town Managers in 40 years. Attorney Fair stated that there are a few agencies that operate in Massachusetts and the range of services varies. He opined that there is an advantage from a time standpoint to hiring a recruiter noting that the process is time consuming. He also noted that recruiters are active in the field and have inside knowledge of who is looking, where, what's out there and trends. Attorney Fair noted that with a recruiter, the Board will not have as much of an active hand in vetting candidates. He suggested to start from the premise of what does the Board/Town have the capacity to handle.

Select Board Member Maselli asked whether the Board could entertain outside applicants if it chooses to use a recruiter. Attorney Fair stated that there is no legal prohibition but when working with a consultant they have their own process.

Select Board Member Maselli asked Ms. Inman if she has experience using recruiters for this type of position. Ms. Inman stated that she does. Ms. Inman stated that Arlington had four candidates and three backed out where the Town had to get guidance from the state because the recruiter was supposed to provide two candidates. She stated that a lot of applicants see who other candidates are, know who will get the job and choose that they do not want to be public at that point. Ms. Inman stated that the documents in the packet would normally be provided by a recruiter. She cautioned against starting the process internally and then going to a recruiter.

Select Board Member West asked about the search process for the Assistant Town Manager. Town Manager Hull advised that in each of the cases he convened a group of personnel to go through the screening process. The committee went through the resumes, conducted preliminary interviews and provided a recommendation to the Town Manager for him to interview. Select Board Member West asked whether a screening committee would be made up by the five Board members or would the Board convene a search committee. Chair DePalma stated that it is his understanding that the Board would select two members, five residents and two department heads to serve on a screening committee. He believes it is important to have residents involved in the selection of the next Town Manager.

Town Manager Hull stated that, in terms of the screening committee, the purpose is to review resumes, whittle down to a number of resumes that they would interview in Executive Session. A shorter list of candidates will be presented to the Board and those interviews will have to be in public session.

Select Board Member Caira stated that he is favoring towards having an internal process. A recruiter does not know Wilmington. He stated that he would want to review all applications and if the Board goes with a recruiter, they won't have that opportunity. He commented about conducting a direct mailing to those individuals that the Board is interested in recruiting. Attorney Fair cautioned about targeting direct mailing to certain individuals, the overall fairness of the approach may be called into question.

Attorney Fair stated that any more than two Select Board members on a committee will require the process be in open session. Having an internal process will still need to have structure.

Select Board Member Bendel suggested having a recruiter locate applicants and the screening committee vet the applicants.

Discussion took place regarding the timeline to hire the next Town Manager. Members were in agreement that it is an aggressive timeline and, to hire the right individual, there will be a need to hire a Temporary Town Manager. Select Board members also noted that the transition will be taking place as the FY 2025 budget process is beginning.

Select Board members questioned whether funds were available for the Town Manager search. Town Manager Hull advised that funds are available in the current budget.

Chair DePalma asked if there were additional questions or comments regarding whether or not to hire a recruiter. There were none. A motion was made by Select Board Member West and seconded by Select Board Member Maselli that the Board conduct an internal search and form a search committee. Select Board Member Bendel asked if the motion was appropriate based on the agenda. Attorney Fair stated that there are two items on the agenda and noting it is broad as written but discussion is broad. He said that the agenda is not specific enough to address specific actions. Select Board Member Bendel stated that he would vote in opposition because he feels he needs to give more consideration and receive feedback. With a motion having been duly made and seconded, Chair DePalma called for the vote and by the affirmative vote of four with Select Board Member Bendel abstaining, it was

VOTED: That the Select Board conduct an internal search and form a search committee.

COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

BOARD TO CONSIDER ACTIONS RELATED TO TOWN MANAGER RECRUITMENT

Select Board Member Caira asked whether the Board could begin advertising. Attorney Fair stated that there is a known vacancy. Select Board Member Caira commented that the vacancy wouldn't be posted prior to review by the Board. Town Manager Hull advised that draft notices were included in the agenda packet. He noted that there was no reference to salary. Select Board Member Bendel opined that the salary is a crucial part of the advertisement. Select Board Member Maselli suggested modifying the notice to say "salary commensurate with..."

Select Board Member Caira acknowledged receipt of the salary study for Town Managers of local communities and stated that he is interested in obtaining information on the salaries of the Assistant Town Manager for those communities that have assistants.

Attorney Fair stated that the more the Board discusses specifics, it needs to take place at another meeting where the specifics have been included on the agenda.

Select Board Member Maselli asked if it is determined to have an interim Town Manager when that begins. Attorney Fair advises that interim is when the position has been vacated. He stated that a transition period can be worked out so one comes in prior or the Town Manager stays longer as long as it is clear there is only one Town Manager. Attorney Fair cautioned the Board regarding the Open Meeting Law relative to their discussion on specific actions.

Town Manager Hull noted that, from a timing perspective, the Board's regular meeting is July 17 and items that the Board should consider can be on that agenda.

Select Board Member Maselli asked how residents are chosen to be on the search committee. Select Board Member Caira stated that committees formed recently, each Board member chose a committee member. He opined that he is not in favor of Department Heads serving on the committee as they will essentially be choosing their boss. He stated that if a Department Head is included, he suggests it be the Department Head that the Select Board hires, Bryan Perry, Finance Director/Town Accountant. He suggested that Paul Ruggiero, Assistant Superintendent of Administration and Finance for the School Department be included as well as a member of the Finance Committee, Planning Board and Conservation Committee. He commented that members of the Board will be interested and attend the meetings.

Attorney Fair stated that having residents serve on the committees is very valuable and you want to make sure you have people who are familiar with municipal government. He noted that a municipal corporation is much different than a private corporation.

Select Board Member Caira stated that when a Town employee retires, there is a post employee limitation. He stated that retirees are allowed to come back to work for a maximum of 1200 hours per year. The Board can consider him, if he accepts, to serve as interim Town Manager.

Discussion took place using different scenarios for an interim Town Manager.

Town Manager Hull clarified the Board's intention for actions to be included on the July 17, 2023 agenda.

Discussion took place regarding attendance of Board members at screening committee meetings and whether a meeting of the Select Board will have to be posted. Attorney Fair stated that provided they do not participate in the discussion, it would not need to be posted. He noted the difficulty because members of the committee may seek their comment.

Chair DePalma asked if there were any additional questions or comments and there were none.

Members of the Board thanked Attorney Fair for attending the meeting and stated they appreciate his feedback.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair DePalma commented that, on the fourth of July, he was watching the news and saw the Wilmington Minutemen participating in the festivities in Boston. He offered congratulations to Select Board Member West and members of the Wilmington Minutemen.

Members of the Select Board offered congratulations to the Fourth of July Committee for a successful event. Select Board Member Bendel noted that the volunteers on the committee spend 364 days planning for the event and noted that his daughters loved the events.

Select Board Member Caira reiterated his desire to be provided with data relative to the salary of Assistant Town Managers of the communities that provides Town Manager salary.

NEW BUSINESS

Select Board Member Bendel asked to confirm that, on the July 17, 2023 meeting agenda, there will be an agenda item to consider forgoing the Town Manager evaluation process.

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was made by Select Board Member West, seconded by Select Board Member Maselli and by the affirmative vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Select Board adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Recording Secretary