



SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 25, 2023

Members: Judy Bickford, Don McDowell, Christopher Palermo, Travis Sabatase, Laura Streets

Absent:

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Eric Dodge, Town Administrator; Judi Alberi, Administrator's Assistant; Kevin Barrows, Highway Superintendent; Jason Luneau, Police Chief; Paula Beattie, Human Resources Director;

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS: Tom Cloutier, Martin & Laura Green, Alexander Cyr, Christy & Tom Snipp, Kristen Mariott, Sheila Tarbox, Tony Cote, Ed Loewenton, Evelyn & Jerry Throne, Attorney Brice Simon*, Alexia Maizel*, Nancy Banks*

**participating via Zoom*

CALL SELECTBOARD MEETING TO ORDER

Judy Bickford called the Selectboard Meeting to order at 5:30PM at the Tegu Building.

AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Structure of the TA Hiring Committee

During the May 8th Selectboard Meeting, Don McDowell voted to involve 2 community members in the interview process. After much thought by Don McDowell, he reconsidered his decision regarding citizen involvement in the interview process for the new Town Administrator and has asked to rescind the vote and reconsidered the options.

Motion made by Don McDowell to rescind the motion "Motion made by Don McDowell to include Sara Haskins, Judi Alberi, Tina Sweet, Kevin Barrows, Jason Luneau, Paula Beattie, 2 community members and the Selectboard members to represent the hiring committee. Motion seconded by Travis Sabatase . Motion carried (5/0). " of May 8th . Motion seconded by Chris Palermo. Motion carried (5/0).

After a poll of the Selectboard members, there was no expressed interest in taking on the interim or full-time job of Town Administrator.

Don McDowell has thought about the size of the committee, the structure of the committee and how choosing two community members is going to be very difficult, regardless of the parameters in place for choosing folks. The community has elected 4 out of 5 Selectboard members to represent the community, so there is no need to have other community members involved. There will be 5

Selectboard members who represent the community, 6 staff from the town to aid in the interview process and to offer different perspectives. 11 individuals on the hiring committee is sufficient for Don McDowell.

Laura Streets would like to see two separate committees for interviewing the applicants for the Town Administrator position. The 6 staff identified above are on one committee and the Selectboard is on a different committee. Laura would like 2 Justices of the Peace selected and to place one on each committee to make a total of 13 individuals on the hiring committee. Travis Sabatase expressed concerns over not engaging the public in the interviewing process. Travis mentioned having candidates meet with community members, a citizen panel possibly, and maybe a presentation to the community.

Chris Palermo mentioned that he had been through the hiring process at Waterbury prior and there were no outside participants involved. Chris does not see the inherent value of including citizens in the process. The 6 staff and 5 Selectboard members are a mix of community members, and feels the 11 folks will work fine as is. Chris respectfully disagrees with Laura Streets and Travis Sabatase. Judy Bickford feels that the Selectboard is elected and can serve the folks of the town in the hiring process of a new Town Administrator, no community involvement is necessary on the hiring committee. We are the community voice as voted.

Paula Beattie feels the structure of the committee should not involve the community as confidentiality could be problematic. Paula also agreed that 11 folks is a lot, but she has the process outlined very well and uses this process currently, so she is confident she could make this work well.

A few citizens also voiced their opinion on wanting community involvement, and felt this was a complex process. There was some citizen support for keeping the committee to the 11 folks suggested and offered up some other ideas for community involvement. Maybe candidates could make a video offering up some answers to questions, writing prompts, an in-person meeting, coffee sit down at a local cafe were some suggestions offered.

Motion made by Don McDowell to include Sara Haskins, Judi Alberi, Tina Sweet, Kevin Barrows, Jason Luneau, Paula Beattie, and the Selectboard members to represent the hiring committee for Town Administrator. Motion seconded by Chris Palermo. Motion carried (3/2). Laura Streets and Travis Sabatase voted nay.

2. Discuss TA interview process

Paula Beattie informed the Selectboard of the hiring process she has used in the past and will be using it for the Town Administrator position, with the Selectboard's approval.

A job description has been written and is on the town website as well as the various advertisements. Paula will be placing the ad in Seven Days newspaper. Paula asked Travis Sabatase to be a second set of eyes on all applications that are received. Questions have been written and shared with the Selectboard members. As of today, Paula has received 11 applications, 7 out of state and 4 in state. She feels that 3 of them might be candidates. Paula has developed a scoring sheet for the candidates and will share that with the hiring committee. The resumes will be sent to all on the hiring committee, narrow down the applicants, interview them, break them down to the top folks, do a background check and then a job offer. The deadline will be extended until filled and/or to June 16, 2023.

Paula inquired with VLCT in regards to a pool of applicants that could be chosen from as an interim TA but that does not exist. Also, the cost for VLCT to assist in the selection process would be through a

head hunter organization and that is costly, up to \$11,000. Paula and Travis are both experts in the field of Human Resources and have the experience to go through the selection process without the need of a head hunter. Travis offered many suggestions and ideas on the process. The Selectboard asked Travis to write up his thoughts and distribute them to the board members and Paula Beattie.

Paula also asked if she could reach out to a retired individual that was shared with her as a possible interim candidate. The Selectboard was in support of this idea, so Paula would reach out. The Selectboard would like to see possible writing prompt, speaking prompt, video of questions, speaking engagement, presentation at a Selectboard meeting or some other way to see how the individual presents themselves in a public forum. The Selectboard was in agreement with finding a way to see the potential candidate in front of the public prior to a job offer.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Discuss Bull Moose Road Improvements

Don McDowell met with Ken Grimes, Kevin Barrows, and others during a site visit to Bull Moose Road to explore options for road work to widen Bull Moose Road, which is a class 4 road. Selina Rooney has asked to improve Bull Moose Road in order to get equipment into the back section of their field. All of the work will be done within the town's right-of-way. Attorney Brice Simon represents the abutters of Bull Moose Rd, the Maizels, and expressed the concerns the Maizels have with the process. There has been a surveyor out to Bull Moose Rd and has not found a deed for the width of the road. The default is a 3 rod road. The Maizels are concerned that a larger culvert will dump more water on their plantings, erosion of the road is a concern, and previously a request was granted verbally for some work, but the Maizels would like to see a formal process developed.

Kevin Barrows will meet with Ken Grimes and discuss replacing the culvert, creating or adding waterbars, moving the entrance to Bull Moose Rd, addressing water management so not to damage Mud City Loop where Bull Moose Road meets, slope the road correctly, tree & stump removal, and any other considerations for a proper road improvements. The Selectboard will approve the upgrade when the parties agree their concerns have been addressed.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Possible Executive Session - Legal

Motion made by Don McDowell to go into Executive Session because I find that premature general public knowledge of pending or probable civil litigation or prosecution, to which the public body is or may be party, will clearly place the town at a substantial disadvantage by disclosing its negotiation strategy. Motion seconded by Chris Palermo. Motion carried (5/0).

Motion made by Don McDowell to go into Executive Session to discuss the pending or probable litigation or prosecution under the provisions of Title 1 section 313 (a) (1) of the Vermont Statutes, to include Town Administrator, Eric Dodge. Motion seconded by Chris Palermo. Motion carried (5/0).

Motion made by Don McDowell to come out of Executive Session. Motion seconded by Travis Sabatano. Motion carried (5/0).

ADJOURN

Motion made by Don McDowell to adjourn. Motion seconded by Travis Sabatasa. Motion carried. (5/0)

Meeting adjourned at 8:21pm

Submitted and filed this May 31,2023

Judi Alberi, Scribe

Please note all minutes are in Draft form and are subject to approval at the next Selectboard meeting.