



**TOWN OF BILLERICA
TOWN MANAGER'S SCREENING COMMITTEE MINUTES
AUGUST 21, 2024**

Members Present: Chair Darlene Torre, Vice Chair Larry Norman, Secretary Dawn Burns, Michael Rosa, Dina Favreau, Marion DePierro, John Kleschinsky, Michael Parker (Remote), Blake Robertson, David Gagliardi, Don Damon and Josh Mahoney

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Recording Secretary Dawn McDowell

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2024 NOV -5 P 3: 24

TOWN CLERK
BILLERICA

Call to Order 6:00 PM

Chair Torre called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

A roll call for attendance: Vice Chair Norman was present, Secretary Burns was present, Mr. Rosa was present, Ms. Favreau was present, Ms. DePierro was present, Mr. Kleschinsky was present, Mr. Parker was present via Zoom, Mr. Robertson was present, Mr. Gagliardi was present, Mr. Damon was present, Mr. Mahoney was present, and Chair Torre was present.

1. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The Committee held a moment of silence for the recent passing of Paul Holmes. A long time resident and police officer.

2. Open Microphone

There was no one for open microphone.

Chair Torre stated that we are going to discuss item #4 first.

4. Utilizing a Third-Party Company to Aid in Search

Chair Torre stated that information was sent out regarding hiring an outside firm to do the candidate search including costs. If we chose this option, we need to send it to at least 3 firms.

Mr. Rosa stated that the firms' cost can range from \$10,000 - \$15,000. The RFP from Westford for example was 19 pages. This process is time and cost prohibitive. This will take us over a month to get started.

Mr. Gagliardi stated he believes this is the best way to go and most other communities use outside firms. This will save us time and work. These firms usually have a database of dozens of candidates that they can reach out to. We still will review all the resumes, and we make the decision.

Mr. Burns stated that he would agree to hire an outside firm. It would be the same as HR posting a job and going through the resumes then setting up the interviews with the hiring departments. The firm would be doing that for us.

Mr. Rosa stated he agrees that this would be easier, but this could be a 4-month process, and the cost is unnecessary. The last time we did this process, we had 3 candidates, but by the time it went to the Select Board, we only had 2 because the other candidate took another job. We were selected to do the job and by doing the job we will save money and allow us to move quickly. Usually when there is an internal candidate, people tend to back off.

Mr. Parker stated that this will require a lot of clerical help and do we have the resources to take on this work. Chair Torre stated that Dawn has already been researching this information.

Mr. Damon stated that he likes both ideas and according to the timeline from the Charter, we have until January 19th to recommend candidates to the Select Board. The question is, can these firms turn it around this quickly.

Mr. Gagliardi stated that we already have Westford and Sudbury RFPs as templates, so we don't have to reinvent the wheel. Mr. Damon asked if we could get this updated and send it out and get it back in 10 days. Chair Torre asked if 10-day turnaround was legal. Mr. Rosa stated that we usually give at least 14 days. Mr. Gagliardi stated that as far as money is concerned, we have \$85,000 in the Finance Committee Reserve that we can pay for this out of.



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Ms. Favreau stated that she used to read legal documents, and the RFP for Westford was very cumbersome. This could take as long as a 30-days to hire a firm and we are on a tight timeline.

Mr. Mahoney stated that hiring a firm is a good idea and we will get a better pool of candidates. Reading used an outside firm, and they had 19 candidates even though they had an internal candidate. Is this a full RFP process? Mr. Rosa stated that it is not a legal RFP process, we have to send it to at least 3 candidates.

Mr. Kleschinsky stated that he agrees that an internal candidate will lower the pool of candidates that will apply. We can shorten the RFP process, but we should reach out to the firms and find out what their schedule is, but he is in favor of an outside firm.

Ms. DePierro stated that she is going back and forth. She sees both sides. If we hire a firm, we will get a potential bigger applicant pool but if we do it inhouse we can save money and be quicker.

Vice Chair Norman stated that he is concerned with the timeline and the upcoming holidays and if we put this out to them and no one applies, we would have lost all the time. We only have a 150-day deadline. The databases that these firms have could have stale applicants.

Mr. Robertson stated that the calendar and schedule are tight. Whether we spend one month or five months, it's a tough time constraint. We are 12 people who were put in this position to do the work, and we should do it. He likes to be in control and nothing disparaging to the firms, but we should keep this internally.

Ms. Favreau asked if we would have to get estimates from the firms and then interview them to decide. Mr. Rosa stated that a sample timeline could be: RFP approved on 9/4, Send out RFP on 9/5, 2-week deadline to return 9/20. We would then interview and pick the firm and then go to the Select Board. We have to deal with the Town Meeting. We are then looking at least mid to late October/November to interview. Mr. Gagliardi stated that we met every week last time.

Mr. Kleschinsky asked if once we select a firm would they meet with us as a group or individually. Mr. Rosa stated that we could meet individually or as an entire group.

Chair Torre stated that we were all selected to represent our committees and the residents. We knew this process would take our time. We all have different strengths to build on and we can meet the timeline. The firms cost a lot of money, and we have a tight timeline. She checked with other towns, and they had 19 applicants but only 5-6 real candidates. Mr. Gagliardi stated that these firms can get us real candidates but there will be candidates who use this process to get a raise in their current jobs. Chair Torre stated that she feels strongly that we should do this from start to finish.

Mr. Burns stated that if we send out the RFP on September 4th, we select a firm in two weeks which is around September 25th, they collect candidates resumes for 4 weeks, we could start interviewing by mid-November. That only gives us 8 weeks so we will need to meet more often.

Vice Chair Norman stated that since these firms have databases of candidates, we can shorten the submission of resumes to a period of 14 days instead of 30 days. Mr. Gagliardi replied possibly.

Ms. Favreau stated that we lose time during the week before and during Town Meeting. Mr. Burns stated that any slide of schedule will put us at critical mass but there are going to be times that we are not doing anything, but the firm is.

Mr. Gagliardi stated that if we are going to handle this ourselves, that is a lot of work and who is going to do this. In this regard, hiring a firm would be a time savings.

Mr. Mahoney stated that they are professional recruiters and can reach a better candidate pool.

Mr. Gagliardi stated that we have \$85,000 in a Finance Committee reserve fund that we can use to pay for it.



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MOTION - Vice Chair Norman made a motion that the committee send an RFP to the three recruitment firms to handle the search for the Town Manager. The motion was seconded by Ms. Favreau and voted 7-5-0. On a roll call vote: Mr. Rosa vote No, Mr. Damon voted No, Secretary Burns voted Aye, Mr. Parker voted Aye, Mr. Gagliardi voted Aye, Ms. Favreau voted No, Mr. Kleschinsky voted Yes, Mr. Mahoney voted Yes, Vice Chair Norman voted Yes, Ms. DePierro voted Yes, Mr. Robertson voted No and Chair Torre voted No. The motion passed.

Vice Chair Norman asked when we would approve the RFP and send it out. Mr. Rosa replied that we could meet next week to approve the RFP. Ms. Favreau stated that we could require them to respond within 14 days if allowed by the procurement laws. Mr. Rosa stated that we should not wait until September 4th, we should meet next week on August 28th. Chair Torre stated that she will work with Mr. Gagliardi and Vice Chair Norman on the RFP. She will call the three firms and try to get information on their turnaround time and let them know the RFP is coming. She will also try to get what was the least number of candidates they received and what was the success ratio.

3. Town Manager Job Description Discussion

Chair Torre stated that a draft job description has been provided and asked if anyone has any changes. Ms. Favreau stated that it should be changed to generic pronouns. Mr. Robertson asked if we should add a statement about Economic Development and MBTA status. Mr. Rosa stated that under projects we should add the new Rec Center, COA, Ditson and Kohlrausch park and the new North Billerica Fire Station.

Ms. Favreau stated that she likes the Lexington job description, and they should be swapped out. It was noted that the bullets are from the Town Charter. Ms. Favreau stated that we should make sure that they have a strong financial background.

Vice Chair Norman stated that the salary range seems low and does this include everything. Mr. Rosa replied no that this is the base salary. For example, Mr. Curran was getting a base of \$230,248 plus \$7,000 in car/clothing allowance and \$37,722 in longevity/deferred compensation for a total compensation of \$269,970.

Mr. Robertson stated that he has to leave.

The next meetings are August 28, 2024, September 4, 2024 and September 18, 2024 at 6:00 PM.

5. Adjournment

MOTION - Ms. Favreau made a motion to adjourn the meeting of August 21, 2024 at 7:06 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kleschinsky and unanimously voted 12-0-0.

*Respectfully Submitted by Dawn McDowell,
Recording Secretary*



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Exhibits for the Town Manager's Screening Committee Meeting – August 21, 2024

Call to order 6:00 PM

- 1. Pledge of Allegiance – No Exhibits**
- 2. Open Microphone – No Exhibits**
- 3. Town Manager Job Description Discussion –** Draft Billerica Town Manager Position Statement undated, Lexington Invitation to Qualified Candidates undated, Tewksbury Position Statement undated, Dighton Position Statement undated, Job Posting locations undated, Memo from Select Board dated 08/21/24, spreadsheet of similar towns for salary undated
- 4. Utilizing a Third-Party Company to Aid in Search –** Town of Westford RFP #23-01 for Search Firm to Assit with Town Manager Recruitment, Town of Sudbury RFP Search Firm to Assit with Town Manager Recruitment
- 5. Adjournment – No Exhibits**

Approved On: October 23, 2024