

MEMORANDUM

To: Belmont Select Board

From: New Hire Advisory Committee: Geoffrey Lubien, Sami Baghdady, Jon Marshall, Shawna Healey, Ralph Jones

Re: New Hire Advisory Committee Recommendation

Date: April 24, 2020

At the April 13, 2020 Select Board meeting the Select Board appointed the New Hire Advisory Committee to review and provide recommendations on filling any of the current vacancies prior to July 1, 2020 during the current hiring freeze. The New Hire Advisory Committee reviewed each position and met with the following departments: Police, Library, Public Works, Community Development and Facilities. As a reminder, the charge given to the Committee by the Select Board was:

- Examine employment positions proposed to be filled immediately, not all of which report to the Select Board. The Human Resources Director will advise independently elected Boards of the Committee's work, in hope that they will agree to participate in the process.
- Evaluate the department manager's justification for an immediate hire, considering the needs of the department and the Town as a whole.
- Consider the impact of a delay in hiring on the department and Town.
- Recommend to the Select Board which hires should have a start date in FY20.
- If recommending to not fill the position in FY20, recommend a potential timeline to fill.

The Committee reviewed the vacant positions, evaluated the department head's justification for immediate hire, and considered the impact of a delay in hiring on the department and the Town. Understanding the current financial situation of the Town, many departments understood the necessity for a hiring freeze through July 1, 2020 and the discussions with the departments helped inform committee members as to what each position contributes to the department, the Town and the residents. The Committee focused their efforts on the need to hire these positions prior to July 1 considering the respective impact by not filling these positions prior to July 1. If recommended that the position be filled on or after July 1, 2020, the Committee did not recommend a potential timeline for filling the position in FY21 as the Committee did not feel that there was enough information to make an informed recommendation. The Committee believes that timing of filling these positions should be considered as part of the overall department needs and budgets for FY21.

Police Department

The Police Department has two current open positions needing to be filled in FY20: Assistant Police Chief and Captain; the Committee examined both. After thorough review the Assistant Police Chief position had six qualified candidates to interview; the interviews were scheduled for

March 23, 2020 but had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. The Committee recommends that Chief MacIsaac reschedules the interviews with the interview panel as soon as possible and goes through the hiring process to identify the best candidate.

Chief MacIsaac, successor to the former chief of police four months ago, has had to manage a significant workload in addition to dealing with the pandemic and its ramifications. There is currently no formal backup for the Chief. There is a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) that would keep the department operational in an emergency but not a backup for the administrative needs. The committee believes that hiring an Assistant Police Chief prior to July 1, 2020 will be beneficial to the Town, the Police Department, and the community.

The Committee fully understands and appreciates the importance of the Captain's position as part of the management, efficacy, and efficiency of operations for the Belmont Police Department. The position of Captain is currently scheduled for a standard civil service assessment center with Badge Quest on May 19, 2020. Chief MacIsaac stated Badge Quest can hold the assessment center with social distancing measures and believes there will not be a postponement of the assessment center. The process of the assessment center is costly and the Committee recognizes the importance to not delay the process; therefore it recommends the Select Board encourages the Police Department to hold the assessment center with Badge Quest as scheduled and delay the promotion of the Lieutenant until July 1, 2020. This will ensure the department does not lose any investment they have already put into the process with Badge Quest and the Town will realize the full \$89,102 in salary and health insurance savings estimated for the Captain's vacancy in FY20.

Department of Public Works (DPW)

The Committee met with the Director of Public Works and the Assistant Director of Public Works regarding the Mechanic and Part-Time Recycling Coordinator positions. The Committee recommends the DPW start the recruitment process for the vacant Mechanic position and, if the process allows, to fill the position prior to July 1, 2020 and delay the hiring of a Part-Time Recycling Coordinator.

The DPW currently has two Mechanics and one supervisor working, therefore, filling this vacancy will bring on the third Mechanic. The Department originally was staffed with four Mechanics and one Supervisor but in 2008 one Mechanic was cut from the budget during the economic downfall. The DPW has had justification for a fourth Mechanic since but due to budget constraints has been unable to get the position added to the budget. Currently the department is doing the best they can but has had to outsource some of the Mechanic work that would normally be done on-site, which is an additional expense to the Town. The Mechanics serve over 200 Town vehicles and a total of over 400 pieces of equipment; staffing of three Mechanics for the DPW is an important role that impacts many Town departments utilizing the Mechanics' services. Further delay in hiring the Mechanic will bring on more expense to the Town through outsourcing and/or overtime; therefore, the Committee recommends hiring the Mechanic.

The Committee recommends the DPW delay hiring the Part-Time Recycling Coordinator until July 1, 2020. Although the Part-Time Recycling Coordinator assists with obtaining grants and providing communication to residents, the Committee believes this vacancy can wait until July 1, 2020.

Community Development

The Community Development Department had two full-time openings, Planner and Local Building Inspector. The department has been able to provide services while these positions are vacant, but they need to fill these positions over time to fully meet the demands on the Department. The Committee recommends delaying hires for both positions until July 1, 2020. Glenn Clancy noted that there could be changes within the Department's structure to attract a better candidate pool for the Local Building Inspector vacancy and the Committee recommends that the Department finalizes changes and moves forward with posting vacancies for hire after July 1, 2020.

Facilities

The Facilities Department has an opening for Administrative Coordinator, currently a grade 10. The Committee and Facilities Director discussed the importance of this position and the job responsibilities, although the position currently needed is more junior than that held by the previous employee. The Facilities Director agreed and noted he was trying to reduce the position to a 9 but that would need to be negotiated and agreed upon with the Union. The Committee recommends that the position go through the process to reduce the grade and delay hiring until July 1, 2020.

Library

The committee met with the Library Director and the Chair of the Library Trustees to discuss their vacant positions. The Library currently has openings for a Full-time Children's Librarian, a Full-time Young Adult Reference Librarian, two Part-time Library Assistants, and a Technology Librarian Intern. Understanding the Select Board does not have authority for these positions, the Committee will be making the following recommendation to the Library Trustees.

The Committee recommends the Library Trustees delay hiring for the vacancies of the full time Children's Librarian and Full-time Young Adult Reference Librarian until July 1, 2020, and that it delay the hiring of the Part-time Technology Librarian Intern until the Fall 2020 semester and delay the hiring of the Part-time Library Assistants until the building is opened and the hours opened to the public are determined so the department can assess the need in these two positions. While the Library is providing online services to residents while physically closed to the public, the lack of a Young Adult Reference Librarian has left online services limited to the Teen population and Children Services as well.

Assessors

The Assessors Department has a vacancy approaching on June 1, 2020 for the position of Assistant Assessing Administrator. The Assessors Department did not meet with the Committee but to Town staff believing they will not hire for this position until after July 1, 2020. However, the current position will be staffed until 5/31/2020 and with accrued vacation payout there is no salary savings for the rest of FY20.

Position	Estimated FY20 Savings: No Hires Prior to July 1	Estimated FY20 Savings: Limited Hires Prior to July 1
Police Department		
Assistant Police Chief *	\$60,698	\$50,538
Captain	\$89,102	\$89,102
Department of Public Works		
Mechanic *	\$38,937	\$33,358
Part Time Recycling Coordinator	\$28,715	\$28,715
Community Development		
Planner	\$45,533	\$45,533
Local Building Inspector	\$73,768	\$73,768
Facilities		
Administrative Coordinator	\$9,462	\$9,462
Library		
Children's Librarian	\$22,484	\$22,484
Young Adult Reference Librarian	\$9,229	\$9,229
PT Library Assistant		
Technology Librarian Intern		
Assessors		
Assistant Assessing Administrator	\$0	\$0
Total	\$377,928	\$362,189
Difference in Saving from Limited Hires		\$15,739

* Assuming June 1 hire date for Assistant Police Chief and DPW Mechanic