

MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
NEW HIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY APRIL 21, 2020 AT 3:00PM
REMOTE PARTICIPATION

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: April 29, 2020
TIME: 9:00 AM

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the New Hire Advisory Committee was called to order by Jon Marshall at 3:00pm. Geoffrey Lubien, Ralph Jones, Sami Baghdady, Jon Marshall and Shawna Healey were present.

Organization of Committee

The committee discussed the organization and decided to nominate a Chair. Mr. Jones moved to appoint Geoffrey Lubien chair. Seconded by Sami Baghdady. Vote 5-0-0 Ralph Jones Aye, Jon Marshall Aye, Shawn Healey Aye, Sami Baghdady Aye, Geoffrey Lubien Aye

Review of Charge

Mr. Marshall read the charge as delegated by the Select Board:

- 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 the Town.
- Recommend to the Select Board which hires should have a start date in FY20.
- If recommending not to fill the position in FY20, recommend a potential timeline to fill.

Discussion was had on the charge and the committee agreed the focus is on what jobs can wait to hire until 7/1/2020.

Mr. Lubien noted we are not making comments on making the position opened in FY21.

Mr. Marshall noted it is our decisions to recommend when the hires can happen. What recommendation do we have for FY21 hiring if we think positions can wait until FY21.

Mr. Lubien suggested we develop standard questions to ask each department in regards to their openings and ask the committee members if they had any suggestions.

Mr. Jones suggested asking if the position should be filled at all?

Mr. Lubien suggested the following questions: How close is the department to filling the position? Where is the department in the hiring process? Have there already been costs associated with hiring for this position? If the position was postponed to FY21 what would the department not be addressing for the remainder of FY20? Will a hire into the vacancy help with pandemic at all?

Mr. Lubien also stated he would like to get an understanding where the patrol officer positions are at since they were in the Memo the Chief sent but not on the list form the Town.

Ms. Healey noted the Patrol Officer positions are civil service and is interested to see if these openings are anticipate openings from upcoming retirements and promotions to the vacant Captain role of if these are existing openings.

Mr. Marshall recommended asking are there alternatives to filling the need within the operation?

Mr. Lubien discussed for the rest of the meeting today the plan is to meet with the Police Department, Library, and Department of Public Works.

Mr. Baghdady asked if the committee was making recommendations to the Select Board for all positions regardless of the appointing authority or if the positions for the Library be recommended to the Trustees?

Mr. Marshall confirmed we would be giving a recommendation to the Library Trustees for the positions at the Library.

Mr. Baghdady inquired if the Select Board have the right impose a hiring freeze for the positions in the Police Department with a “Strong Chief”?

Mr. Jones believes the Police Chief has the right to make the decisions.

Mr. Marshall thinks the department recognizes the Town is in a difficult time and are looking to collaborate and take recommendation from the Board.

Discussions with Departments

Chief MacIsaac joined the meeting to discuss vacancies with the Police Department.

Mr. Lubien thanked the Chief for providing the Committee a memo and information prior to the meeting and noted the go through each position one at a time.

Chief MacIsaac gave an overview of the department and history of the structure. He stated the Assistant Chief position was created in 2004 when the Chief was taken out of civil service. The department has two divisions: administrative wing and patrol wing. The idea is that the Captain would oversee patrol and the Assistant Chief would oversee the administrative division. The Captain would report to the Assistant Chief and the Assistant Chief would report to the Chief. As a “strong Chief” Chief MacIsaac has the ability to hire, fire and discipline. The Captain would handle internal investigations and report to the Assistant Chief who would make a recommendation to the Chief on discipline. The appeals would go to the Chief. The organizational structure is important to the department especially in regards to internal

investigations as noted above. The Assistant Chief does not get paid over time, is not in the union and can attend night meetings. An important position to have and the Captain is just as important.

Chief MacIsaac noted the department is budgeted for 49 sworn officers: 2 patrol vacancies- all the academies are closed, and understand it is a tough time to get an academy. There will be a savings if it these positons are not filled now.

Chief MacIsaac stated the Assistant Chief vacancy had interviews scheduled but had to be cancelled because of the state of emergency.

In regards to the Captain position Chief stated that the union and Town negotiated a civil service assessment center as the hiring process eliminating the exam. A request for bids were put out for the assessment center, and the department hired Badge Quest. Badge Quest is having orientation with candidates on May 7, 2020 and the assessment center is scheduled for May 19, 2020. To be able to run the assessment center the department needs four lieutenants to sign up for the assessment center, if less than four sign up then the department has to open the assessment center up to sergeants. Chief MacIsaac noted the department would likely receive recommendation from Badge Quest the first or second week of June to be able to promote and hire the third week of June.

Chief MacIsaac's main concern is about the fear of what he doesn't know because there is only so much he can be informed of without the command staff. Daily as Chief he is reading through reports and CAD entries but there are a lot of moving parts for one person to be able to be on top of everything is not ideal, currently the department is a flat organization.

Mr. Jones noted we have a Police Department with a Chief and no one assigned to take over if he is injured or unable to perform his job. Mr. Jones believes the Assistant Chief position needs to be filled.

Mr. Lubien asked who would fill in if he couldn't perform his job as Chief?

Chief MacIsaac noted it is rotating COOP plan and if he is unable to perform his job the Office in Charge would act as Chief but this cannot be the permanent plan. The Assistant Chief can do everything that Chief can do, sign payroll, contracts etc. the Officer in Charge cannot do these things.

Ms. Healey asked if the assessment center would happen with COVID?

Chief MacIsaac stated he talked with Badge Quest two weeks ago and they feel they can do the assessment center with social distancing in a big enough room.

Mr. Lubien asked about external candidates for the Assistant Chief position and the delay in that?

Chief MacIsaac noted the Captains position is opened internally only. The Assistant Chief positon was opened to external candidates as well as internal.

Mr. Lubien asked what is it from a time frame stand point on how quickly an Assistant Chief could be hired?

Chief MacIsaac noted he could interview electronically like this meeting today zoom and the Captains position was delayed 7 weeks because of the assessment center process through civil service and the union.

Mr. Marshall asked for clarification for the Captains position, if four lieutenants do not sign up then it has to be opened to Sergeants and regardless the promotion of a sergeant or lieutenant will create another opening in the department.

Chief MacIsaac confirmed it would. Civil Service plays a significant role in the vacancies within the department, he also noted that employees in civil service could file grievances on the extra work being requested by the Chief to be done while there are vacancies in command staff.

Mr. Lubien noted the opened patrol officer positions may not be filled in FY21, or at least late in FY21 because of the Academy availability.

Chief MacIsaac confirmed it would be later in FY21 and Chief MacIsaac wanted to point out that the department eliminated the communications operations manager position when Dan MacAuley retired and repurposed that FTE to add an SRO to the middle school.

Mr. Jones noted the possibility if there was no Captain, a Lieutenant may complain of unfair labor practice if they are given more responsibility.

Chief noted it would depend on what he asked the Lieutenant to do. Chief MacIsaac noted on a temporary basis he has given responsibility to union members and they have been opened to doing the work but it would depend on what is asked and how much it cuts into their work. Giving additional work to any Lieutenant means their daily work is being impacted. For instance right now Lieutenant Daley has been a significant help but she has had to cut back on some of her work in community service, it impacts the other departments.

The committee thanked Chief MacIsaac for the thorough explanation of the vacancies in the Police Department and invited the Library to join.

Kathy Keohane, Chair of the Library Trustee thanked the committee for serving and feels this is a good idea for the community. Ms. Keohane noted the Library is independent in regards to decisions and the Library has already made some adjustments with working with Patrice, Jon, Jess and Shawna. She stated the Library has a similar challenge to the Police Chief with regard to having a Director and no assistant director to backfill when Peter is not able to be at work. Ms. Keohane discussed some of the state regulations the Library will have to meet for FY21 and how the positions will impact the Library's ability to meet the regulations.

Library Director Peter Struzziero noted the open positions the Library has. Mr. Struzziero noted these positions can wait until 7/1/2020 and his goal is to go through the process for the full time Librarian positions and hire for 7/1/2020. The Library is expecting to be busier this summer with school not opening until September. Peter noted the assistants are important too, 68 hours a

week the Library is opened and the assistant help on a part time basis by allowing the Library to be staffed weekends and evenings.

Mr. Struzziero noted the Library has been able to give back close to 6 figures to in FY20 when meeting with Mr. Marshall and Ms. Garvin.

Mr. Marshall noted the Library has given back close to six figured in expense line items which is why they are not on the report of potential savings the committee has in regards to salary savings. The savings in expense line items will make a difference still in the overall budget.

Ms. Keohane noted they shared the details with the warrant committee as well.

In addition Ms. Keohane noted many of the non-union part time staff have been furloughed because the Library does not have work to offer them. The Library has pivoted to online delivery and many of the programs are now online via zoom. The Library team has done a great job pivoting the service delivery in the young adult sections and children sections.

Mr. Lubien asked what currently is not being provided? And if the Library is closed how will these resources be missed if opened or closed?

Mr. Struzziero noted service to the youth is being missed right now, all teen services would fall by the way side if an Young Adult Reference Librarian is not hired. The Librarian works closely with the school department specifically with the summer reading program, and buying materials for teenagers. For the Children's department it is the only FT Children's Librarian. The ability to do programming, spend time purchasing materials and curating the materials would be missed if this position is not hired into. In addition it would affect the ability to open the Children's room during the evenings and weekends which is primarily when the Library has the working families visiting. Currently there is nothing online happening for teens and without a Young Adult Reference Librarian there will be nothing happening for teens while the Library is closed. The Children's Librarian has a Coordinator of Children's Services that has been able to provide services online for Children right now.

Mr. Struzziero notes there is a lot of unknown in regards to when the Library will reopen and he expects there will have to be a phased approach.

Ms. Keohane stated right now the Library staff is working 9a-5p, but once that starts to change and go back to more hours opened it will be more significant impact not having the two full time positions filled. Ms. Keohane anticipates openings in mid-June and seeing what that operations looks like the staffing is important. The summer is the busiest time in the Library for teens and children it is critical to have people in place to start July 1.

Mr. Struzziero stated that the Children's room does 45% of the business, the community wants more Children's services and he knows this from the research for the schematic design of a new Library.

Mr. Jones thanked Mr. Struzziero and Ms. Keohane for the cooperation and asked if they need to start in June or can they wait to FY21 for these positions?

Mr. Struzziero said they can wait until July 1, 2020. Peter noted all these positions are critical but he can hold off the few weeks until July 1, 2020. Ideally he would like to post May 1, 2020 and interview in June to hire 7/1/2020.

Ms. Keohane noted the perfect world mid-June they would bring these people on and it will be hard to get people on board sooner than July 1, 2020 because of the hiring process. Trustees recommend to post and look to onboard for July 1, 2020.

Mr. Baghdady asked what if the state of emergency is extended until 8/31/2020? How does that impact these openings?

Mr. Struzziero noted the focus of online resources for teenagers would be non-existent like it is now. He would still like to hire a Young Adult Reference Librarian even if the Library is closed to the public to be able to provide online resources to this group. In addition the amount of things for children would be diminished as well without a Children's Librarian hired. Again he would like to hire a Children's Librarian if the Library is closed to the public to be able to provide more online Children's resources.

Ms. Keohane reiterated the requirements from the state for the Library for FY 21 need to be met. When the July budget starts, if we cannot meet the requirements from the state, to get state aide and participate in the network then the Library isn't doing their job. The Trustees have to consider conditions for FY21. Kathy noted there is a gap in service right now for teens online. The biggest concerns with the state requirements is an annualized budget consideration.

Mr. Marshall asked if there was a sequencing that would make sense with these positions? Is one more critical from a structural standpoint?

Mr. Struzziero noted not really, there has been a decent candidate pool for the Children's Librarian and it is important job, the reposting brought in more candidates and there is an opportunity to bring in a better than usual candidate. Currently has a candidate pool for Children's and Teen (Young Adult) would have to be posted and start from the beginning. Neither is more important than other.

Mr. Lubien asked about the part time positions being filled this year, can they wait until 7/1/2020?

Mr. Struzziero noted the part time work can wait until the Library reopens.

Mr. Struzziero noted the intern is a helpful this to have, more for the intern than the Library. The interns have turned into employees and has been a feeder pool for good candidates.

Ms. Keohane noted the new talent from the internship has been a helpful asset for the Library.

Mr. Baghdady asked how long are the internships for?

Mr. Struzziero stated the internships are meant to be a one semester, the Library kept the first intern for 1 year. Her replacement worked as an intern for 6 months and hired full time. Typically it is a semester but has had one for two semesters.

Ms. Keohane noted it has been helpful to bring in newer folks.

Ms. Healey asked if the internship was for the fall?

Mr. Struzziero said sure it would be good for the summer but can wait for the fall, the full time positions are more important.

The committee thanked Ms. Keohane and Mr. Struzziero for joining and invited the DPW to join.

Mr. Lubien noted there are two positions in the DPW, Mechanic and the Part Time Recycling Coordinator.

Mr. Marcotte noted the part time recycling coordinator the position is only 19.5 hours not benefited, the position has been posted three times and the department has not been receiving qualified applicants. The position covers a lot of regulatory items, researching, applying and receiving grants is a major aspect of the position and why the previous recycling coordinator was upped to 25 hours because the job required more time. The department could limp along without it for a little more time but Mike, himself and the administrative staff would have to pick up the slack.

Mr. Marshall pointed out that there is a grant round coming up now that the recycling coordinator would have applied for but wasn't there. This position would be replacing Marybeth Calnan.

Mr. Santoro noted each time the state imposes waste bans on things, things need to be communicated to the residents, the Recycling Coordinator is certainly a public relations position.

Mr. Marcotte sated Marybeth has been working 4 to 5 hours a week since October when she resigned, she is helping bring it along but is not able to complete the entire job. He has been dealing with a lot of the big problems like writing contracts for the mattress program, coordinating the vendor but normally would be done by the Recycling Coordinator.

Mr. Lubien asked if we continue to get candidates that are not qualified would the department try to go back to the 25 hour a week to get better candidates?

Mr. Marcotte said he is not sure if he would be able to.

Mr. Lubien asked about the Mechanic position, what are the needs there?

Mr. Marcotte stated they are short a mechanic in general, a position was cut in 2008/2009 from the last economic downfall, the position is opened now because of a retirement as a supervisor, the replacement was an internal candidate leaving the Mechanic position opened.

Mr. Santoro noted in 1981 the Town went to a central vehicle maintenance, took the police and fire and combined everything into one so things would not be outsourced. Since 1981 things have been consolidated, Police and Fire can get equipment fixed in Town and cheaper. Occasionally Fire has to go out for special maintenance. The Mechanic position needs to be filled, the department could limp along for the rest of this fiscal year for FY21 the department

needs the additional Mechanic. The department hopes that maybe now there may be a good Mechanic out there that would be looking for a job.

Mr. Baghdady asked if they do oil changes too?

Mike confirmed yes oil changes go through the Town's shop. Right now the department only has 2 Mechanics, in the 2008/2009 went down to 3 Mechanics, serve over 200 vehicles and over 400 pieces of equipment (chainsaws, pumps, lawn mowers etc)

Mr. Jones asked what type of backlog is there?

Mr. Santoro noted there is not much of a backlog because they are sending things out, right now we are in between seasons so it is not as bad as it could be.

Mr. Lubien asked for confirmation, right now there are 2 Mechanics and 1 Supervisor.

Mike confirmed yes and with vacations coming up it will be difficult to maintain staff. The Mechanic position effects all Town departments, the mechanics keep the fleets rolling.

Mr. Lubien asked if these positions can wait until 7/1/2020.

Mr. Marcotte said long term Mechanic is number 1 the Recycling Coordinator work could be divided up for a year or so. Mr. Marcotte noted 7 years ago a request for a full time Recycling Coordinator was submitted, the department needs someone that knows about the grants and knows how to bring in money for the Town through the grants. The Mechanic position is critical.

Mr. Marcotte noted the position for Mechanic had been offered to two different candidates and they didn't accept the position. The pay is low and we are competing about other Towns with similar roles and higher pay.

Mr. Marshall asked what would be the earliest you could fill the position?

Mr. Marcotte noted maybe we could get a hire within a month to 6 weeks.

Mr. Lubien noted clearly there is a need, with an aging fleet.

Mr. Baghdady noted the importance of the Mechanic role especially servicing first responders.

Mr. Lubien noted there could be some opportunity now for finding a qualified candidate with other companies laying employees off.

Ms. Healey stated that right now could be a better time to get more qualified candidates for the positions that have been posted a few times without receiving a good candidate pool because of the amount of companies effected by the pandemic. Whether employees are laid off and looking for work or have more time to job search while working from home, she is hopeful the candidate pool for all of the positions will be better over the next few months. Ms. Healey also noted the time it takes to hire someone from posting to hire is typically no less than 8 weeks, so many of these positions that have not been posted yet will be hard to fill before 7/1/2020 anyways.

Mr. Lubien noted tomorrow the committee will meet with the Facilities Department and Community Development and will meet again Thursday to finalize a recommendation to the Board. We will vote minutes on Thursday.

Adjournment

Mr. Jones made a motion to adjourn at 4:31pm, seconded by Mr. Baghdady. Ralph Jones Ayes, Sami Baghdady Aye, Jon Marshall Aye, Geoffrey Lubien Aye, Shawna Healey Aye.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shawna Healey

Assistant Human Resources Director