

MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
NEW HIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday April 22, 2020 AT 1:00PM
REMOTE PARTICIPATION

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: April 29, 2020
TIME: 9:06 AM

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the New Hire Advisory Committee was called to order by Chair Geoffrey Lubien Marshall at 1:05pm. Geoffrey Lubien, Ralph Jones, Jon Marshall and Shawna Healey were present. Sami Baghdady was absent.

Discussions with Departments

Community Development

Glenn Clancy Director of Community Development joined the meeting.

Mr. Lubien asked Mr. Clancy to give an overview of the positions and what is not currently getting done in the positions.

Mr. Baghdady joined at 1:12pm.

Mr. Clancy first discussed the Planner vacancy within the department. The Planner position was staffed by Spencer Gober, he left at the end of November. The Planning Division has a lot of tasks that migrate to the Planning Board and a fair amount of the committees require staff from the planning division. The timing of the vacancy was a benefit to the department because the major committee Spencer spent a lot of time on was transitioning to the engineering phase in which Mr. Clancy is responsible for now. This position has a lot of involvement with the Historic District Committee, Spencer provided a lot of staff support there, the administrative position picked up a lot of the work there now. The administrative position is a union position, a lot of responsibility was brought to her and she was interested and was trying to build good will and was willing to step up and take on responsibility out of her job description scope. The Planner vacancy is not a pressing need for FY20 however Mr. Clancy is concerned long term for this position, the Economic Development Committee is on the horizon, the data gathering and analysis for the Planning Board isn't being done right now. A lot of the Planning Board focus has been on drafting zoning bylaws which has been good timing for this vacancy as well. Long term Mr. Clancy would like the Planner to continue to provide the analysis and data gathering to the Planning Board. Timing wise the department can survive, Jeffrey has been working remotely, and the administrative staff has been in and out to obtain materials as needed.

Mr. Baghdady asked if for some reason Jeffrey was unable to work who would staff the Planning Board?

Mr. Clancy, stated the position would be divided up between himself and Ara. Having the second position sets the department up for succession planning. There needs to be someone in the position but the department can muddle the way through this year.

Mr. Baghdady stated he doesn't know a department that is involved in more committees than Community Development.

Mr. Clancy agreed and said his main concern is being able to provide the support to the committees as needed.

Mr. Clancy moved on to the Inspector position. This is a true Inspection and Enforcement Officer position, there are two employees in this role. The Inspector position has been vacant for FY20 in July 2019 it became available, there were only three applicants the first time and one applicant the 2nd time the job was posted. The applicants did not have the requirements needed for the position. The department has been paying the existing inspector over time, about \$8,000 since July 2019. The duties and the responsibilities in this position cannot be covered by one person. There is probably an argument for two full time positions, but you cannot do it with just one. Kevin Pickering the current Inspector has worked nights and Saturdays. One of the requirements in the building code is that inspectors are required for inspecting publicly occupied facilities, restaurants, schools etc. have to be inspected annually, these inspections have suffered and are not being done as they should be. It is a concern for the department, if there is ever an incident at one of these buildings insurance will look to see if they have been inspected which would be a liability to the town there. The reason you need two inspectors is because of the code enforcement piece which is based on the desire the residents have to enforce certain codes. The active general bylaw enforcement has not been enforced like it would be if there were two inspectors on staff. There wasn't much snow this year so that was helpful it is a high profile bylaw. People want certain bylaws enforced. Kevin was able to focus on building codes, permitting etc. Mr. Clancy believes it is good Public Relations to have the quick response time and permits processed quickly.

In general Mr. Clancy noted it is important to keep the construction projects going in Town but now with COVID-19 some work is being deferred and it has not ramped up like it normally is in the spring which has helped keep the inspectors work load down. Kevin has been working with Steve and John to inspect the schools, they have been able to do this in April vacation week.

Mr. Clancy noted similar to the Planner position in the short term the department can ride it out without hiring through June 30, 2020 but is concerned long term, discouraged on applicant pool and hoping to get better candidates now. Mr. Clancy is giving the Inspector position more thought on how to divide work up with the two Inspectors. If he can find a way to have a full time inspector job that doesn't require overtime and create a position that is not a certified position he thinks he could get better candidates. Having two certified inspectors is a large asset to the town in addition to Ara and himself being certified but they cannot take on the role long term.

Mr. Jones asked if the restructuring of the building Inspector positions with one focusing on enforcement if it would help with applicants.

Mr. Clancy thinks it would because he is anticipating the position would not require certification. The talent pool would be broader.

Steve Dorrance Director of Facilities joined the meeting.

Mr. Lubien asked Mr. Dorrance to give an overview of the vacant Administrative Coordinator position and what parts of the job would not be done if it were to be vacant through June 30, 2020.

Mr. Dorrance stated the department is short staffed to begin with, he feels the department should have two additional professional staff. The work of the current Administrative Coordinator will be shifted to Kevin a current staff member and himself. The impact will be on the capital projects, currently Mr. Dorrance works and manages 25-28 projects and these cannot be delegated because of his expertise. If contractors are not being watched then there will be expense changes to the department. The impact will be on him and the two professional staff in the department taking on other administrative tasks. This is an administrative job and now the department is using more highly skilled people to do basic administrative tasks. The position is mostly data entry, low level work that their skills shouldn't be used on work like this. There are some higher level responsibility to the Administrative Coordinator, like setting the lock codes for the different buildings. Steve is nervous the buildings won't be unlocked when needed, and making sure the right staff is assigned to buildings for custodial coverage is also an important task of this position. In this case we are in violation of the AFSCME contract because all overtime assignments for events that require custodial support must be assigned by seniority, and this is not being done. Mr. Dorrance has agreed to do it by seniority starting 7/1/20 and the administrative person should handle. The department has three other professional level staff, when there is one person in the office it makes it difficult to respond and man the phones, the department may miss a major event that is happening. Facilities has to be able to respond in a short notice someone has to be available for the call and that is the Administrative Coordinator responsibility.

Mr. Lubien asked if the position has been posted yet?

Mr. Dorrance noted it was not because the department is waiting to meet with the committee and the union to downgrade the position.

Ms. Healey stated the position is hoping to be downgraded by 1 but it has to be approved by the union.

Mr. Jones could you eliminate the position of Administrative Coordinator and make it a data entry position?

Ms. Healey noted it is a process with the union and there are other Administrative Coordinators in Town so the title would not get eliminated. The position is looking to be more of an Administrative Assistant rather than Coordinator.

Mr. Lubien asked what the timeline would be from the negotiations to hire?

Mr. Dorrance believes it would take time and agreed deferring to 7/1/20 is realistic with the timeline to get the position downgraded, posted and recruited for.

Mr. Lubien noted it is important to fill the position but the process seems to bring the department until July 1, 2020 anyways.

Mr. Lubien thanked Mr. Dorrance for joining the committee.

Discussion of Open Positions

Mr. Lubien talk about going through the position and where the committee stands on each role.

Mr. Baghdady thinks that is a good idea and based on comments he didn't think we will be too far apart.

Mr. Lubien jumped into the Police Department positions. While these positions have the most savings they are critical. Chief gave a lot of information ahead of time, he has no back up, and it appears the earliest a hire will happen for Assistant Chief is early June and the difference in savings won't be significant so he believes it is critical. Mr. Lubien also recommends that the Captain position go through the assessment center process as scheduled.

Mr. Baghdady believes that the Assistant Chief is first priority and would not recommend holding them up in the process. As far as Captain, he remembers what the department went through in 2002 and he thinks it is important to maintain this position. Best to be prepared from a first responder perspective but could say hire the Captain July 1st but continue process as scheduled.

Mr. Jones agrees with both Mr. Lubien and Mr. Baghdady, the Assistant Chief is the most important position and the Captain opening should proceed with the pace.

Mr. Marshall had a similar thought on both, with the Captains position he recommends we should would move forward with process but hold to a July 1st start date and believes the Assistant Chief position is critical.

Ms. Healey agrees with Mr. Marshall and noted the savings in the other positions if there is a promotion.

Mr. Marshall also pointed out that there is a difference between the Select Board's authority to the Police Department vacancies because the Select Board controls the budget and the dollars. He believes the Chief would receive recommendation from the Select Board.

Mr. Lubien noted the Patrol Officer vacancies don't need to be commented on since the Academy is not running and hires won't be until FY21.

Mr. Marshall said to put a footnote about the vacancies.

Mr. Lubien moved to the Library vacancies. He thought about if the Library could stagger the hires throughout the fiscal year and knows the demand is high for online services. The Library is willing to wait until June 30th he feels the positions became vacant at the wrong time, and it is important for these vacancies to be looked at as a whole in the department. Hard to make a recommendation on a delay because there may be other positions in Town that are more

important. The entire staffing levels need to be looked at to determine which positions may be delayed.

Mr. Jones the Library has been cooperating for the past five years with the Town and they have made themselves a part of the Town. Agree with the general preference to wait until July 1, 2020.

Mr. Baghdady thinks the kids are going to have to be more engaged over the summer. The Young Adult Librarian is very important and he appreciates the value of a Children's Librarian as well. Mr. Baghdady recommends a freeze through 6/30/2020. Question the need for the part time and intern, and wants to hear discussion on that.

Mr. Jones noted the part time people are important for Library hours on evenings and weekends.

Ms. Healey noted part time positions cannot be filled until the building is opened again and the Library knows what hours it needs staff for.

Mr. Lubien stated Mr. Struzziero said the internship can be put off until the Fall.

Ms. Healey agreed with the internship waiting until Fall.

Mr. Baghdady inquired if the internship can be unpaid.

Mr. Jones noted he thinks paying is helping get qualified interns.

Mr. Marshall, agreed it is good the Library came to the table and meet with us. They have been prepared and wanted to be part of the process.

Mr. Baghdady hopes if they new hires are brought on while the Library is closed they will do online service and expand it even more.

Mr. Lubien moved on to the DPW positions. Recycling Coordinator, sounds like they can wait until June 30th. Understands it has brought in over \$100,000 in grants and is an important role to keep but recommends waiting.

Mr. Marshall agrees with Mr. Lubien, they can defer until July 1, he does not think this is a make or break position.

Everyone agreed.

Mr. Lubien moved on to the Mechanic position. He felt there has been justification for a 4th Mechanic for the past few years, currently only at 2 working Mechanics, could say July 1st hire date or could say find the best candidate and hire before July 1 if that becomes available.

Mr. Jones agrees, thinks we should look to hire someone now.

Ms. Baghdady mentioned we could save money if we fill it.

Mr. Marshall, wouldn't want to hold the process up, and would be okay with this hire starting before June 30th, if it is a couple of weeks before July 1 he wouldn't want to potentially lose someone for such a technical position.

Mr. Lubien noted the summer will be busy with the back log of winter equipment and vacations and hiring sooner could save money and time.

Mr. Marshall noted there is two open positions worries not being budgeted for the fourth Mechanic the last few years.

Ms. Healey stated she agreed with recommending having the Mechanic hired sooner than June 30th if the right candidate is found.

Mr. Lubien moved on to Community Development, the department is behind on inspecting public services. The department needs to figure out the backlog and the Planner is on many committees. Mr. Clancy is willing to wait until June 30th, Mr. Lubien recommends we should get the openings filled over the summer.

Mr. Jones, Mr. Clancy is always willing to do more work, wants to get them staffed properly over the summer and thinks waiting is best so Mr. Clancy can review the positions and identify the post way to post..

Everyone agreed.

Mr. Lubien moved on to Facilities, and thinks the committee should support the process with the union and downgrading the position, and to recommend a start date of July 1.

Everyone agreed.

Mr. Lubien noted the committee will meet tomorrow at 8:30am to review the memo that will be shared with the Select Board on Monday April 27, 2020. We will also review and vote minutes tomorrow.

Adjournment

Mr. Jones made a motion to adjourn at 2:14pm, 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