

Minutes from the Town Manager Selection Committee Meeting – December 18, 2017

Karen Kruger, Chairperson of the Committee to hire a new Town Manager (TM), called the meeting to order at 3:11 pm on Monday, December 18, 2017.

Members present: Karen Kruger, Dell Tush, Steve Montgomery, Jimmy O'Connor, Lanie Odum. Also present were Mayor T.J. Redefar and Commissioner Dale Cooke and two members of the public.

The two other committee members, Dave Davis and Marty Seitz, requested to participate by phone and there was some discussion about that. The Delaware Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) appears to allow electronic participation for discussion but not for voting. There was a quorum present for the meeting, so it appeared that their voting participation might not be necessary.

Steve Montgomery moved that we allow the phone members to listen in and not participate in the discussions. After some discussion with the committee members who were present, Steve amended his motion to allow their participation in the conversation. The motion was seconded by Jimmy O'Connor and approved.

The draft announcement for the Town Manager position was discussed. We agreed to call the position "Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Exempt". Dell feels that the new TM should be required to take municipal and National Incident Management System (NIMS) training. The State of Delaware notifies the Town about all the different kinds of training that is available: emergency training, zoning and planning training in addition to many other kinds of training. Several committee members agreed that this was a good thing to include in the position description. We also discussed taking the duty hours and dress code out of the description. We agreed to strike the "just cause" sentence and would relook at the residency requirement.

Jimmy O'Connor made a motion to accept the position description with the modifications discussed. This was seconded by Steve Montgomery and passed.

Karen noted that we have received 12 resumes already, some from people with strong qualifications. These resumes were distributed to all committee members. Since the resumes constitute personnel information that would be protected under the Delaware FOIA, Karen asked the committee members to treat them as confidential out of consideration for the applicants.

We discussed where to post the position description. Use of association and municipal websites was encouraged. The use of a head hunter was discussed but for the time being, the group thought we should see how we do advertising on our own. Dell feels strongly that we need someone who knows Delaware law well. Karen thinks an appeal to the tri-state area makes sense.

We discussed how to screen resumes, when to set deadlines for moving forward and when to meet again. A preliminary screening for salary can be done by one individual, but for phone screening about the position, having two committee members participate in the phone conversation is preferable. TJ wanted to talk about the salary range, which does not appear to be set. We did not reach any resolution on this point.

A chronology for future activities was determined as follows:

Resumes must be submitted by January 19, 2018

Committee members submit their rankings by January 20, 2018

Interviews/Presentations by candidates: February 3, 2018

TJ can set up a mailbox that Karen and one other person will have access to. There was some discussion as to what the committee members can discuss with one another. Karen pointed out that all emails to the committee are discoverable, so we should be very careful in things that we write to one another.

This meeting was open to the public. Subsequent meetings when we are discussing candidates will not be open to the public. We talked a bit about how the interview process will go. Some liked the idea of a presentation followed by questions; some preferred just a presentation.

Dave and Lanie will look in their notes from last time to see what questions were asked. Dave and Lanie will also look at developing criteria for ranking the resumes.

The list of places to advertise came up again and the following sites were recommended:

Sussex County Association of Town Managers

Delaware Association of Counties

ICMA

Cape Gazette

News Journal

Lanie suggested that we might send an email to all the Town Managers in Delaware asking them if they had any people to recommend for the job, but others felt that this was too much like poaching and would not be a good thing to do. Steve Montgomery pointed out that everyone in Delaware is well aware of the fact that the Town Manager position is open in Dewey Beach.

The group agreed to have a look at the resumes we were given at the meeting. Steve Montgomery suggested that the Committee send their rankings to Karen to get things moving along.

The meeting was opened up to the public for their input. Gary Tall (?) said that Bob Sickles might be able to advise this Committee, though he is not interested in the position himself. Gary said that the new Town Manager will be dealing with some very tough issues and he encouraged the committee to take the time to get it right.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 4:55.