

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting Called By:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	09/23/13 at 5:30 PM
Transcribed By:	Kathy Tobine	Place:	Northfield Town Hall, 21 Summer Street, Northfield

Commissioner Auger called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

Present: Commissioners Paul Auger, Patrick Clark and Les Dolecal; Administrative Assistant Kathy Tobine.

Public Present: Tilton Selectmen Patricia Consentino, Northfield Selectmen Kevin Waldron, TNFD Budget Committee Jane Alden

Commissioner Auger stated the purpose of the meeting was to meet with Don Jutton from Municipal Resources Inc. regarding the services they offer.

Don Jutton stated they only work with municipal governments and schools. He explained they do a lot of recruitment. Their approach is custom fit to the community. They took over the recruitment for LGC including wage and benefit studies. They try to match the needs of the municipality for the next five years or so. He explained their process. They allow four to five weeks to receive resumes. They request essays from the top 30% of the resumes received. They review those and do telephone interviews with the top 50% that submit essays. They bring the top candidates for interviews. Interviews are structured in a number of ways; ie. panel, assessment center. They will prepare a written report for the Commissioners on each of the candidates. They will assist with the Commissioners interviews, drafting a conditional letter of offer, background investigation, help negotiate a contract. The cost is driven by the items they would like.

Commissioner Clark asked what a typical range on cost might be. Don replied it will be \$5,000 to \$7,000 and then add about \$3,500 if you do a full assessment center. This includes \$1,200 for the background investigation.

Commissioner Auger asked if we could pick and choose the services they wanted. Don replied they can. He explained they can do it as low as approximately \$3,500 depending on services selected. That is pretty basic. They would prepare and place the ad. They would screen the resumes, rank them and provide them to the Commissioners. They would have one person sit in on the interview process with them. Their office handles all the administrative details. The resumes would go to them in confidence.

Commissioner Auger asked the length of the process. Don stated from the beginning to have somebody to report it is 90 to 120 days. That assumes the person to be hired is already working and will want to give 30 day notice. They allow 30 days for the advertisement, 30 to 45 days to review and rank the resumes; to send out essay questions, review them; do telephone interview, review them. At the front end they try to set the date for the interviews so the candidates know going in to the process. They lay out a schedule so everybody understands they need to be in town. If started today, the District could plan on 90 to 120 days before someone started work.

Commissioner Auger asked where the ads are placed. Don replied they would put them in Fire Chief's magazine. There are search engines so you can use Google to search for positions. When the applications are received, they try to sort them out: what is their education, what is their experience, why do they want to move, etc. They tell them right up front they will be doing an in-depth background investigation. Before they go to interviews they do a preliminary Internet search.

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Commissioner Dolecal asked how they identify the needs of the District for five years out. Don explained there are several ways. The most comprehensive and most expensive is a survey. They prepare a survey and distribute it to all personnel in the department and the Commissioners as well as all the other departments in your service area that would have occasion to work with your department; ie. public safety department, public works department. Ninety percent of the material they would get from the surveys. One of things he was told walking in was that one of the District's challenges was a new fire station. They will tell the applicants and they will give preference to somebody who has had success in designing and building a fire station because that is a lot of work. If you are reliant on a significant number of volunteers, that is a big deal. They will want to know from somebody if they have had experience in a dual type agency. They will be looking for applicants who have experience in high school recruiting, etc. That is how they would try to define it. They might not do the surveys but they might do interviews with the Commissioners and then a group meeting with the members.

Commissioner Clark stated residency has been a big topic in the District. He asked Don his thoughts on the challenge that would present in attracting applicants. Don explained that what they are seeing is brutal. Housing costs are higher here. The typical commute is 45 minutes to an hour. If residency is required they need to structure the advertising to let candidates know that. Discussion ensued about the ad.

Commissioner Auger explained that the last two Chiefs have been working Chiefs. Commissioner Clark provided information on the District.

Commissioner Dolecal asked Don about their facilitating and documenting an evaluation after nine months. Don explained that it is a 42 point evaluation form. Eighty percent of their clients don't want to pay for that.

Commissioner Clark asked how many recruitments they had done in the past year. Don explained they do 10 to 12 a year.

The Commissioners thanked Don for his presentation and told him they would let him know their decision.

Discussion ensued about using an outside source or a committee.

Kevin Waldron stated the gentleman didn't offer anything they can't do themselves. He does not want experts from the fire service to pick the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief works for the Commissioners. They have an opportunity to find a Fire Chief who understands who the taxpayers are and they come first. The Commissioners can have their own committee. They can find their own person. He has confidence the Board can do this.

Commissioner Auger commented if they do it themselves it is still going to cost. Jane Alden asked if they had the time to commit. Commissioner Auger commented the committee is the right thing to do. Patricia Consentino commented they need to get neutral people to serve on the committee. Commissioner Clark commented they have a tremendous amount of experience with the three of them and feels they can do this. Commissioner Dolecal commented that the Sheriff's Office is willing to do the background checks including psych.

Discussion ensued about the committee. Commissioner Clark stated that he had contacted Steve Bluhm, Joe Jesseman, Scott Davis, Jim Clement and Kevin LaChapell and they are all willing to serve on the committee. Commissioner Dolecal commented she would like to see a woman on the committee. Commissioner Clark suggested Joyce Fulweiller.

Placement of the ad was discussed. It was decided they would issue a press release in the Winnisquam Echo, Laconia Daily Sun, Concord Monitor and Laconia Citizen. They will advertise the position with Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid, NH Chiefs Association, New England Fire Chiefs Association as well as on the following websites: TNFD, NH Municipal Association, NH Fire Academy, Vermont Municipal Association and Maine Municipal Association.

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Commissioner Clark made a motion to set up a Fire Chief Search Committee, be clear about what their charge is, have them narrow down their search and present the Commissioners with three to four candidates to choose from. Commissioner Dolecal seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

Pat Consentino stated that Nate Buffington is a certified polygraph examiner with Tilton Police Department.

The ad for the Chief's position was discussed.

Residency was discussed.

The press release was discussed.

It was unanimously decided that applications would be received by the Search Committee via email to maintain confidentiality.

The time line was discussed. It will be as follows:

September 24, 2013	Press Release in Winnisquam Echo, Laconia Daily Sun, Concord Monitor, Laconia Citizen and Union Leader.
September 25, 2013	Commissioners meet with Search Committee to give them their charge
September 27, 2013	Ads posted on websites: NH Association of Fire Chiefs, New England Association of Fire Chiefs, NH Municipal Association, Vermont & Maine Municipal Associations; NH Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid.
October 2, 2013	Commissioners meet with Search Committee to give them their charge
October 25, 2012	Closing date (resumes received after this date will not be accepted).
Week of October 28, 2013	Application review begins.
November 16, 2013	Search Committee conducts interviews.
November 20, 2013	Search Committee/Spokesperson presents top 3 to 5 candidates to Fire Commissioners.
November 25, 2013	Interviews are conducted with Fire Commissioners.
December 2, 2013	Conditional offer is made by Fire Commissioners.
Week of December 2, 2013	Start background investigation: Reference, criminal, driving record and credit checks, Polygraph & Psychological testing.
Around January 1, 2014	Fire Chief should be able to start work by this date.

It was unanimously agreed that Commissioner Clark will contact Don Jutton of MRI to let him know of their decision to do the Chief search in-house with a committee appointed by the Board.

Commissioner Dolecal made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Auger seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was taken. Motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Tobine
Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place: 10/9/2013 at 17:30. Meeting to be held at Tilton Town Hall, 257 Main Street, Tilton.