

Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Commissioners' Meeting

Meeting Called By:	Commissioners	Date, Time:	09/25/13 at 5:30 PM
Transcribed By:	Kathy Tobine	Place:	Northfield Town Hall, 21 Summer Street, Northfield

Commissioner Auger called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Present: Commissioner Paul Auger, Commissioner Patrick Clark and Commissioner Les Dolecal

Commissioner Auger stated they had picked out a fire chief search committee. Those on the committee are Kevin LaChapelle, Joyce Fulweiller, Scott Davis, Jim Clements, Joe Jesseman and Steve Bluhm. He thanked everyone for being on the committee. The Commissioners are looking for one of them to take chair and receive everything.

Fire Chief Search Committee

Committee Members Present: Scott Davis, Joyce Fulweiller, Kevin LaChapelle

Scott Davis stated he talked with Joe Jesseman and Kevin LaChapelle. He feels the perfect person for the chair would be Jim Clements. He has the most experience of anyone on the Committee in the hiring process. Joe agreed that was a great pick for chair.

Commissioner Clark agreed with Scott's take on that. He believes it is up to the committee to make that decision. Commissioner Auger stated it is the Committee's decision. Discussion ensued about the chair and vice chair.

Commissioner Clark stated the Commissioners want to have all the applicants send their letters and resumes in to them via email. Kathy Tobine has set up the email address. Initially we thought she would be the central figure to collect that information but we would like to pull it out of the firehouse so there can be no suspicion at all that any leak would come from there. They want to give that completely to the committee. They also feel the Commissioners don't want any of that information so that there are no partisan politics or anything else. They want the Committee to handle it. They do, however, want to know how many applicants there were.

Kevin LaChapelle nominated Jim Clements as Chair of the Committee with Scott Davis as Co-Chair. Commissioner Clark stated they don't have a majority to make that decision tonight. They can decide who will meet with Kathy to obtain the email address information so they can take ownership of it. It was decided that Scott Davis and Joyce Fulweiller will meet with Kathy tomorrow to get the information.

Discussion ensued about the number of members on the Committee. Commissioner Dolecal feels that they have a good group right now. If somebody withdraws, then maybe the Commissioners will add somebody else. It was felt that with the six people they have they would never have a gridlock.

Discussion ensued about where the meetings will be held. It was decided they could hold the meetings where it is convenient for the Committee to meet so long it is a public building.

Commissioner Auger presented everyone with a copy of the ad and time line.

Joyce asked if they are going to be a screening committee. Commissioner Clark said it is their intention for the Committee to screen the applicants and then present the Commissioners with three to five applicants to look at.

Scott requested the Commissioners provide the Committee with what they expect from them at the October 2nd meeting. Commissioner Dolecal stated that the search committee for the police chief in Northfield gave an interview to any internal candidates regardless of how they scored. That is something she would encourage the Committee to consider if there are any internal candidates. If

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there is a huge point spread between the top three and next group, that is a natural cut. If there are six and they are close within a point or two, then bring all six on.

The ad was discussed. Scott recommended the Commissioners nail down the residency. He would like the ad to say either residency is required or you say it is not required. Residency was discussed.

Commissioner Dolecal made a motion that the job announcement and the residency requirement be that the Chief must live within the boundaries of the Tilton-Northfield Fire District. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. Discussion: Commissioner Auger asked if they were looking the District as a whole or just the downtown area. Commissioner Clark stated the RSAs state that the District is the boundaries of Tilton and Northfield. There being no further discussion, vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

Kevin stated the only other thing in the ad that needs to be addressed is the benefits package. Discussion ensued. It was decided the ad would be modified to read *Salary: \$50,502-\$80,745 with a competitive benefits package DOQ. Residency within the Tilton-Northfield Fire District boundaries is required.*

Scott requested the Commissioners have answers to the questions Jim Clements asked in his email for the October 2nd meeting. He requested an email be sent to the other Committee members that if they have questions to please forward them so the Commissioners will be prepared to answer them at the meeting.

Commissioner Clark stated that all this information is confidential. Joyce will bring in a confidentiality statement for them to sign.

Kevin requested a solid list from the Board of Commissioners of what they expect from the Committee be provided to them.

Commissioner Dolecal expressed concern about how to develop the questions the Committee would ask the candidates. Kevin stated the Commissioners' concerns will help the Committee develop the questions they will ask. Discussion ensued. Scott stated that when the candidates are turned over to the Commissioners the list of questions will be turned over with them.

Discussion

Commissioner Dolecal asked who was going to send out the ad. Commissioner Clark stated Kathy can send that out as soon as Scott and Joyce meet with her. Commissioner Dolecal will scan and email changes to Kathy so she can modify the ad and have it ready to send once she meets with Scott and Joyce.

Commissioner Clark stated they need to give the Committee a list of what they feel they are looking for in a Chief and department looking ahead. They need to present the Committee with a summary of what they expect from them within the time line they have created. Scott Weden from LGC has offered limited help for free as he doesn't have a lot of time available. Don Jutton from MRI has offered free advice. They have a list of questions that they used when Brad was hired. He will get them to Commissioners Auger and Dolecal.

Discussion ensued about the members of the Committee and what they will bring to the search.

Commissioner Dolecal compiled information they should have for a hiring process. She will forward that to the other Commissioners for their review. Commissioner Auger stated he would like to see a Chief thinking about future regionalization. Discussion ensued about different issues they would like dealt with. Commissioner Dolecal explained that at the jail when they do a hiring or promotion process they do an oral interview, a written exercise and a written scenario. It may be very helpful to make this a written task for them. They would write a narrative about the strengths and weaknesses of regionalization in the Tilton-Northfield Fire District.

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Commissioner Clark asked what else they would like on the list. It was decided that Commissioner Dolecal would put the list together and send it to the other Commissioners. They would then rank them and present the list to the Committee.

Commissioner Clark stated they want the Committee to have complete access to the applicants information. They keep that completely confidential from everyone outside the Committee including the Commissioners. They need to come up with a process for reviewing the applicants and ultimately coming up with a list of strong candidates for the Commissioners to deal with. The Commissioners will be the final decision makers based on the information they provide to them. Commissioner Dolecal said they need to say the best suited candidates. Commissioner Clark stated they are looking for somebody well rounded. He has to be a working Chief; somebody who wants to be here.

Commissioner Dolecal asked if they were going to give the applicant a time frame to move here. Commissioner Clark stated that would be something they would negotiate that with the right person. Commissioner Dolecal commented that now is not too early to start on the contract. There is some boiler plate that is in there.

Commissioner Clark stated they want the Committee to live within the time line they gave them.

Commissioner Clark stated they should have down the right to refuse any and all candidates and to start over. The Committee should have the right to say they only have eight candidates and they need to do something different. The feedback they are getting is this.

They reviewed the email from Jim Clements. His questions were 1. What is the relationship between the search committee and the commission? Who makes the decision? Who does the actual screening and interviewing? It is important at the start to be clear about roles and responsibilities. 2. Is there any support staff available or should a member of the search committee take on this role? 3. Is there a job description that the Commission has signed off on? 4. Is the compensation package being offered competitive? 5. Is it likely there will be an in house candidate? 6. I would recommend we seek to develop a list of desirable characteristics, experience, training, etc - if we are in agreement on what we prefer before looking at actual resumes, it provides a yardstick to use in looking at candidates as opposed to each of us using our own. 7. How much of the process is open to the public/ Who gets to decide this? 8. Time line.

Commissioner Clark stated he is hoping that Kathy will be able to help as support staff. We need to protect her so no confidential information goes through her. Discussion ensued. It was decided Kathy will be the go to person so long as it does not put her in a compromising position. Copies can be made at Staples and they will be reimbursed for them.

It was decided a copy of the job description will be provided to the Committee.

Commissioner Clark commented that Kevin said the salary really isn't competitive. He feels that salary isn't everything. Commissioner Auger stated we have state of the art equipment. Commissioner Clark stated we have dynamite people and they will have the opportunity to work with some of the best. He feels they are about a three quarter level. They are better than Canterbury and Sanbornton but not as good as Laconia and Belmont. Commissioner Dolecal commented that there may be other things that are important to the individual applicant that they could accommodate that don't cost anything. Commissioner Auger stated they have a long term disability and short term disability. Commissioner Clark stated they need to get the benefits package from Kathy.

Commissioner Clark stated they discussed how much of the process is open to the public tonight and presented the Committee with a time line. The Committee members can provide Jim with that information. They want the Committee to review the applicants using their own process based on what the Commissioners feel is really important and based on the knowledge of fire service Kevin brings to the Committee a list of candidates they can scrutinize to make their decision within the time line they have been given.

Commissioner Dolecal will email everything she has to Commissioner Auger and Commissioner Clark by Monday.

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Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Tobine
Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting Date, Time, Place: 10/02/2013 at 17:30. Meeting to be held at Northfield Town Hall, 21 Summer Street, Northfield.