

TOWN OF HOPKINTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Meeting Date: August 30, 2006
MINUTES

Members Present: Muriel E. Kramer, Chairman; Mary C. Pratt, Vice-Chairman; Leonard A. Holden, Ronald M. Clark; Michael W. Shepard

Others Present: Town Manager Screening Committee: Ezat Parnia, Chairman; Jean Vickers, Fred Hoskins, Michael Neece, and Kathy LaFlash; Geri Holland, Executive Assistant.

Open Public Session (Room 211)

6:40 p.m. Mrs. Kramer opened the public session and asked Dr. Parnia to give an overview of the Town Manager Screening Committee's (TMSC) progress with its search for a Town Manager.

Dr. Parnia reviewed the TMSC progress since their meetings began in July; and gave a synopsis of how the committee framed the Town Manager's salary range of \$110,000 to \$130,000. Dr. Parnia referred to a handout which said that the Human Resource Director, Amy Downing, had provided information of the various Town Manager positions from area Town's including the Town's budget and population, Town Manager's salary and their supervisory role. Dr. Parnia said that the TMSC is looking for a Town Manager with strong leadership skills; and that a consultant that the TMSC met with agrees with the TMSC's salary range especially with the caliber that they are looking for in a candidate. Dr. Parnia added that the TMSC has been deliberating the Town Manager's salary range for a month. Mr. Neece pointed out that the BoS needs to look at the dimension of the Town Manager's position rather than the position being a weak vs. strong manager. He said that the position is not an average managerial position and recommended "raising the bar" to attract a candidate with leadership characteristics.

There was a discussion regarding how much of the Town's budget that the Town Manager will be managing; and Mr. Clark pointed out that the Town Manager would be managing about 20% of the Town's budget as the rest of the budget falls under the School Department. He said that the Fire Chief, Police Chief, and DPW Director all manage larger budgets than the Town Manager.

Ms. Vickers asked if the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) would be controlling the DPW, Fire and Police Department's budgets. Mr. Clark responded no. Ms. Vickers asked if the CFO would be responsible for the Town audit. Mr. Clark again responded no and that the School Department is no different than the Fire, Police Department's and DPW's budget; and that the CFO has no authority over these departments and rather is a collector of information helping these Town departments through the audit process.

Mr. Hoskins pointed out that the Board of Selectmen recently said that appointing a new Town Manager would be the single most important decision that they could make this year, and asked what the Town Manager's role would be. Mr. Shepard responded that the candidate will have a bigger view of the town's department needs who would not have direct control, but who would coordinate and facilitate the town's needs. Mr. Clark said that the Town Charter created a weak Town Manager position whose role is to assist these departments. Mr. Hoskins said that the Town Manager has such little authority on paper, but needs leadership skills so that they can deal with the Fire and Police Department and dozens of volunteer committees.

There was a review of the Town Manager positions from the spreadsheet and how the salaries reflected the TMSC's salary range of \$85,000 to \$130,000; and it was pointed out that many of the higher end salaried

positions were strong manager positions whereas the position oversaw many more departments than the Town's newly created Town Manager's position.

Mr. Clark asked if anyone has considered how the TMSC's salary range of \$110,000-\$130,000 would cause internal impact on the Department Heads of the DPW, Police and Fire Departments. Mrs. Kramer said that those departments have a different structure than the Town Manager position's structure and that control over a single department is a less challenging circumstance than the Town Manager overseeing all the departments.

Mrs. Kramer asked each Board member to give their salary range recommendation: Mr. Clark recommended a salary range of \$90,000 to \$110,000; Mrs. Pratt's recommendation was \$100,000 to \$120,000/\$125,000; Mr. Holden recommended \$90,000 to \$110,000; Mr. Shepard recommended \$115,000 to \$130,000, and commented keeping the higher end as less could be offered. Mrs. Kramer recommended \$100,000 to \$120,000.

Mr. Clark said that the Town could "sell" more than the salary to a potential candidate such as offering benefits.

When Mrs. Vickers asked if the TMSC's list of candidates is limited because of a lower salary range, would the Board of Selectmen reconsider a new salary range, Mrs. Kramer responded yes. Mr. Hoskins believes that a low salary range would send a signal that the Town Manager position is weak. Mr. Clark said that he is concerned with the TMSC's salary range, as it appears that they are looking for an experienced Town Manager looking for a higher paying job.

Vote: Mr. Clark motioned to set a base salary for the Town Manager's position at \$100,000 to \$120,000. **Second Mr. Holden. Discussion:** Mrs. Pratt stated that she would like the high portion of the range at \$125,000. Mr. Shepard suggested a salary range of \$100,000 to \$130,000. Mr. Clark said that the downside of a higher range is that once a higher range is set, negotiations become more difficult, as there could be an increased expectation from the candidate. He added that the higher salary range could put pressure when negotiating the Fire and Police Chiefs' contracts. Mr. Shepard doesn't agree with Mr. Clark, but rather agrees with the TMSC. He said that he doesn't wish to miss an opportunity to hire a candidate if the range is not high enough. He believes that having to discuss this again, they would have the same outcome. Mr. Shepard said that he would support a lower beginning range at \$100,000 only. Mrs. Vickers commented that she doesn't think a higher range would change the Police Chief and Fire Chief expectations in regards to future negotiations. Mr. Clark disagreed and pointed out that he has sat in with the Police and Fire negotiations, and both Chiefs look at external and internal factors when negotiating their contracts. **The votes follow: Mrs. Kramer: yes; Mr. Holden: yes; Mr. Clark: yes; Mrs. Pratt: no; Mr. Shepard: no. So voted.**

The TMSC noted that they had decided not to bring in a consultant to assist with the process. Mrs. Kramer asked about a \$5,000 moving allowance, and Dr. Parnia responded that benefits would be part of the negotiations when hiring a Town Manager.

Meeting Adjourned:

8:00 p.m. Mrs. Kramer entertained a motion to adjourn the public meeting. **So moved Mr. Clark. Second Mr. Shepard. Unanimously voted.**

Respectfully submitted,

Geri Holland,
Executive Assistant
Date approved: 9/12/06