

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

SPECIAL COMMITTEE – RECRUITMENT OF A CITY MANAGER

January 26, 2017      9:00 AM      Conference Room, City Hall

Members Present:

Mitchell H. Greenwald  
Janis O. Manwaring  
Thomas F. Powers  
Carl B. Jacobs  
George S. Hansel

Staff Present:

Patricia A. Little, City Clerk  
Elizabeth Fox, ACM/Human Resources Director  
Thomas Mullins, City Attorney

Mayor Kendall Lane, Ex-officio Chairman

Members Not Present:

David C. Richards

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM. He welcomed Catherine Tuck Parrish from the Novak Consulting Group.

Minutes

On motion by Councilor Greenwald, voted unanimously to adopt the minutes from the meeting of December 29, 2016.

Developing Position Requirements

The Mayor noted he was not able to attend the Committee’s previous discussion regarding the use of the Primex DISC assessment tool in the recruitment process. He inquired of Catherine’s perspective on the usefulness of this type of assessment, to which she responded that it was very helpful, but that she would not want to see it narrow the profile of a successful candidate. She continued that she viewed the assessment as more of a supplementary tool and not a “in or out” criteria. The Novak Consulting Group does not typically use that type of assessment tool in their recruitment process. Comments from the Councilors focused on the change in membership on the Council since the initial assessment and the fact that during the previous recruitment effort there was little time to explore the results before having to take action on the final selection.

Catherine shared the key themes that she heard from her telephone conversations with the City Council members as “a collaborative partnership and a team relationship.” She also distributed two wordles – one that reflected why the staff liked working for the City and the second captured the community members’ thoughts about why they liked living or working in Keene. She commented that she was struck with the positive words that all focus groups shared, noting that in most communities there are both positive and negative comments. As expected, her

conversations with senior staff represented both the viewpoints of long tenured employees who thought it was important to honor existing systems versus and the viewpoint of newer employees who thought it was important to move forward and look at new ideas. She also heard from many current staff that it was important to take a fresh look at problems.

### Recruitment Plan and Ideal Candidate Description

Catherine shared with the Committee the job posting and outreach recruitment plan, a description of the ideal candidate, and a typical listing of various benefits in an employment agreement for a City Manager. The Committee offered their perspective on the target area, ICMA membership, educational requirements and residency. The Committee requested that the Florida and Connecticut be added to the targeted State municipal league outreach efforts.

Catherine commented that a survey would be posted on the City's website to solicit comments from the general public as to the next City Manager. She will bring forward any new ideas that are provided via this forum. She confirmed that the City would reimburse any candidates for their travel expenses to the City.

### Schedule

Catherine distributed a schedule of activities and deadlines. She noted she would be meeting with the Special Committee on April 27<sup>th</sup> to review the top candidates and to select who to interview. A two-day interview process with the full City Council was scheduled for June 19 and June 20. The finalists from the first day of interviews would meet with the senior staff and have a second interview with the Councilors – this time in the Standing Committee format. The first day of interviews would be fully scripted with the Standing Committee having refined the questions to be asked. Although there would not be an interview panel comprised of senior staff, Catherine will be looking for their perspective through the meet and greet session. In terms of a role for the community, Catherine stated there was a balance necessary between the openness and public transparency of the process and the respect for the governance of the decision and the confidentiality of the candidates. She continued her objective was to bring the best applicant pool to the City Council. A community “meet and greet” would be appropriate with the finalist.

For the two day Council interview process it will be very important that all Councilors commit to the entire two days, which could be expected to go until the evening on both days. It is anticipated that the negotiated contract would be ratified by the City Council at their first meeting in July or at a special City Council meeting the last week in June.

### Confidentiality of the Process

Attorney Mullins indicated that he had been invited to the meeting to update the Committee on a Superior Court decision dealing with a similar recruitment process that had occurred in Dover, New Hampshire. He noted that the judge's decision held that there was no expectation of privacy from a potential candidate and it distinguished the interview process from the public record. The decision held that any internal scoring sheets of potential candidates was a public record subject to right-to-know. That decision has been appealed and it is anticipated that a

decision would be made over the next several months. He noted that decision might influence the level of confidentiality that can be provided to any candidates for the City Manager's position.

Catherine noted she would inform any potential candidates of this situation and will update them when a decision is made and offer them an opportunity to withdrawal their candidacy. In terms of the recruitment process, Catherine noted that she will only be sharing written information with the Councilors and will be retaining any documents created during the recruitment process.

### Ideal Candidate Description

The Committee returned its attention to the ideal candidate description and in particular the residency requirement of the final candidate. Catherine noted the current language states "Residency is strongly preferred and has been a requirement for past city managers." She stated she understood that residency was not a requirement under the City Charter or the City Code and that this language provides for a larger pool of candidates – noting that residency could be a negotiated requirement. Councilor Powers suggested there was language in the Charter which stated that the candidate need not be a resident at the time of hire and that this inferred residency after the hiring process.

The City Attorney reminded the Committee that under the State Constitution there is an open question as it relates to whether a City Manager could be required to reside in the City. He continued that the previous court decisions have supported the requirement of residency for public safety employees; but this has not been held for a position such as a teacher. It could well be that if residency were a contractual requirement and it was appealed that it could be determined to be a violation of the Constitution. The Mayor requested that the Councilors indicate their preference for a residency requirement. Councilors Powers, Manwaring and Jacobs indicated their preference of a Keene residency requirement. The Mayor indicated that he too preferred the requirement. Councilor Hansel stated he was not supportive of a residence requirement.

Catherine noted she would indicate Keene residency as a requirement for the position, but noted that it would not necessary guarantee that the final candidate would become invested in the community.

In terms of the educational requirement, the Committee spoke to their preference for a Master's Degree and asked that Catherine screen for that level.

In terms of the compensation level, Catherine noted that it was unusual to have the position of City Manager a classified position with a range of salary in the Code. Typically this position is market driven. She suggested that the range be extended to \$165,000 during the upcoming budget deliberations. She noted that assistant city managers in large metropolitan areas are well above the current range (\$122,321 to \$152,497) offered in Keene. It was noted that a 2% COLA would bring the position to \$155,000.

### Next Meeting

It was recommended that a report on the recruitment process and timeline be provided to the City Council at their February 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. The next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for February 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:0 AM to have a final review of the recruitment documents. The Committee was also scheduled to meet on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting concluded at 11:20 AM.

Submitted,

Patricia A. Little  
City Clerk