

MINUTES
SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2010 – 7:00 AM
MUNICIPAL BOARD ROOM

ATTENDANCE: Chairman Jim Rust, Rodney Lamotte, Bryon Quatrini, Bernard Timson, Daniel Kimbell Town Clerk Sandra Grenier and Town Manager Ralph Nelson.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge at 7:00 am.

Chairman Rust asked Sandy Grenier to report to the Board.

Sandy said that Assistant Treasurer Linda Bunnell had given her notice to be effective December 22 or 23. Sandy said she wanted to discuss the situation with Town Manager Ralph Nelson concerning pay range and benefits package before publishing an ad for the position. Mr. Nelson indicated that there was a freeze on hiring at the time and had suggested scheduling a Special Selectboard Meeting.

Sandy requested to the Selectboard that she be able to go forward with hiring so that Linda would have time to train her replacement. Sandy pointed out it is a unique job including ARRA reporting, governmental reports, grand list, tax collection, and other jobs that go with a municipal office. Sandy does some of the work but needs assistance and the year end reporting is very important, especially for budgeting and closing books.

Daniel Kimbell said he felt the position required someone with an accounting background, and quoted town auditor Randall Northrop as saying that losing Linda was a threat to “clean books”, and asked whether there a succession plan in effect. He suggested it is necessary to have people trained to backup specialized positions. Rod Lamotte questioned how many people work in the Clerk’s office at the present, to which Sandy replied that there were five, including Linda Bunnell, and that Ida Rainville in the Town Manager’s office filled in when necessary.

Jim Rust wanted to know, in going forward, what is in the budget? Is it really necessary to have 5 people in the Clerk’s office? Ralph Nelson pointed out that Linda had earned two weeks vacation to be paid out, and the Town Clerk’s salary budget should end up right about 100%. Jim Rust asked if Sandy Grenier knew how to do the work previously done by Linda Bunnell and if the work could get done without hiring another employee. Sandy Grenier replied that she could do Linda’s work but that it would involve more time and effort on her part.

Bryon Quatrini said he felt this was a crucial position in the office, and wondered if another employee in the office actually had the training or experience necessary to cover.

Bernie Timson asked if hiring a replacement would be a positive effect in the public eye. Jim Rust’s opinion (and the rest of the Board agreed) that Linda is a phenomenal employee who really knew what was going on. Ralph confirmed her salary at \$18.00 per hour, or \$37,440 per year.

Jim Rust said he did not want to hire someone, and then let somebody go because the 2011 budget would not allow for that many employees.

Daniel Kimbell suggested that there is no trained backup for this position, and suggested the Board could talk to Randall Northrop for his opinion. He urged the Board not to be short-sighted.

Sandy Grenier indicated she averaged 50 hours or more per week now. She would need at least temporary help. Rod Lamotte asked if a part time person would be sufficient, and Sandy replied that he or she would at least need to know payroll. Jim Rust said perhaps they should hold off for now. Sandy also indicated that she needed to be available to assist Ralph Nelson in his position as Town Manager, especially since it is his first year.

Bryon Quatrini moved to hire a full time employee to replace Linda Bunnell. Daniel Kimbell seconded. The motion failed (2-3) with Lamotte, Timson, and Rust voting against.

Rod Lamotte moved to hire a temporary replacement for less than six months, at 20 hours per week. Bernie Timson seconded the motion. The motion was defeated (2-3) with Quatrini, Kimbell and Rust voting against.

Daniel Kimbell moved to hire a temporary employee full time (40 hours/week) for less than six months, seconded by Bryon

Quatrini. The motion was defeated (2-3) with Lamotte, Timson and Rust voting against.

Jim Rust indicated the Board appeared to be at an impasse and suggested the matter could be brought before the next board meeting. At this point, the Board did not allow replacing Linda Bunnell in the position of Assistant Treasurer. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 AM.

Respectfully Submitted

Ralph E. Nelson
Town Manager