

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of July 5, 2016

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Joel Desilets called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Selectmen Bruce Breton, Jennifer Simmons, Ross McLeod and Roger Hohenberger were present; as was Town Administrator David Sullivan. Mr. Desilets opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**NON-PUBLIC SESSION:** Mr. Hohenberger moved and Mrs. Simmons seconded to enter into non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II c. Roll call vote, all members “yes”. The topic of discussion was reputations, and the Board, Mr. Sullivan and Ms. Devlin were present.

Mr. Sullivan updated the Board on a reputations matter relative to staffing. No decisions were made.

**PUBLIC SESSION:** Mr. Desilets called the public session back to order at 6:08 PM. He then announced that the purpose of this meeting was to discuss the Board’s plan to fill two very important positions in the Community Development Department, the Planner and Director. He noted that the Board has had some discussion regarding an Economic Development Director, as was presented by the Economic Development Committee, and that with a clean slate in the Department the Board would be discussing the responsibilities of the two positions and how to proceed forward.

Mr. McLeod noted that the Board was previously split on a direction, but he believed he had a solution about which he had spoken to Mr. Sullivan. He indicated that he had originally felt there should be a new Economic Development position, however, he now believed the key is to have a strong planner which will allow some of the Director duties to be offloaded to that position. Mr. McLeod proposed there be changes made to the Community Development Director position increasing economic development activities, that the Town Planner be elevated to “Planning Director” with a pay increase from grade 18 to grade 20, and that the Community Development Director’s pay grade be dropped from 25 to 24. He went on to note that this would allow the Community Development Director to focus responsibilities as follows: 20% on departmental management; 60% on new businesses; 10% on existing businesses, and; 10% on outreach.

Mr. Hohenberger indicated he agreed with much of Mr. McLeod’s points, however he is concerned that, right now, there is no one running the department and there is a significant amount of work required beyond economic development. He noted that the major part of Planning involves ordinances, the Master Plan, and residential/community development; adding that there needs be a focus on total development. Mr. Hohenberger then noted that, as to the percentage of time for new versus existing businesses, over the years Ms. Scott worked to establish programs with the existing businesses; thus there should be as much focus on them. He noted that, while he believed we need to find someone good at and interested in economic development, we need a strong planner as we remain a 91% residential community. Brief discussion ensued.

Mrs. Simmons questioned whether, if we were to do a Planning Director as suggested by Mr. McLeod, that one person would be able to perform all those duties. Mr. Sullivan noted that the key is finding a very strong planner, as well as an Economic or Community Development Director who has planning knowledge. Discussion ensued.

Mr. McLeod, in response to Mr. Hohenberger’s concerns, noted that he wasn’t proposing the percentages be part of the job description; rather he was more concerned with clarifying the types of efforts. He advised he had pulled sample job descriptions from Nashua, Durham and Derry. Mr. Desilets noted he also believed the focus on existing businesses needs to be increased; adding that there needs to be a strategy for higher levels for both.

Betty Dunn, Woodvue Road, approached noting the Board is facing a big decision, which she hoped they would not make tonight as it should involve much discussion and input. She suggested the Board bring in contracted services in the interim. Mrs. Dunn indicated that, having served on the Selectmen, ZBA, and Planning Board she has experienced over the years the various aspects of how staff interacts with each. She felt that the set up in the office over the last few years has resulted in an inherent conflict in trying to bring new business in while maintaining the intent and spirit of the ordinances. Mrs. Dunn

suggested the two be separated, having a Department Head and a part-time/liaison Economic Development Director. Discussion ensued regarding the prior public input received on this matter, and why this discussion had been scheduled on an off-night. The latter was clarified as being related to having a full Board present.

Mr. Hohenberger clarified consultants have been brought in to cover the Planner but, in looking for additional assistance no one is available to bridge the gap. Mr. Sullivan advised that two (2) consultants are in place who have committed to plan reviews and to one day in the office, each; reiterating that he has actively looked for further assistance that is just not there now. Discussion ensued regarding the departmental functions and the need to have a Department Head.

Mr. Desilets noted that, despite some limitations with the contractors, he believes it is pretty cut and dry. He noted that if we want to attract the best talent that could take a significant amount of time. Mr. McLeod noted that was why he had worked with Mr. Sullivan regarding adjustment of the Planner wages to grade 20, which is management rank, in that it would emphasize the Town is willing to both title the position as important and pay for it. Discussion ensued regarding responsibility conflicts and that the proposal will streamline duties.

Mrs. Dunn expressed concerns that the Community Development Director will still have authority over the Planner and Code Enforcement. Discussion ensued regarding the Code Enforcement Administrator being separate and that language in the proposed descriptions eliminates any conflict.

Mr. Dan Guttman, Heritage Hill Road, felt that the Board was setting the bar at an unattainable level as far as potential candidates. He noted Antioch in Keene could provide strong candidates for the Planner position; adding he liked Mrs. Dunn's idea of an Economic Development liaison while maintaining the Community Development Director and the Planner. Mr. Guttman noted that Ms. Scott was very good at outreach and re-development, both of which are also very important. Mr. McLeod noted that each are required in the proposed job description.

Ruth-Ellen Post, Stonhedge Road, expressed her agreement with Mr. Sullivan in that a new planner is urgently needed; citing the ongoing Master Plan, Town meeting items, and significant applications that are in the pipeline. She suggested that the idea of an Economic Development Director not be abandoned, but that the Planner is urgent and needs resolving now. Ms. Post indicated that the Economic Development position will hinge on how "economic development" is defined (eg what does it consist of). As to existing businesses, she noted that outside services already exist to assist them with hosting ribbon cuttings, promotions, etc., and that SCORE can assist any that are struggling. Brief discussion ensued regarding the proposed language in the job description, with Ms. Post feeling input should be sought from the Planning Board, the EDC, the business community, and the public.

Ms. Post then inquired whether the Planning Board could participate in the search process and/or preparation of the final job description. Mr. Sullivan noted this had never happened in the past, however, that is not to say the Board could not decide to include them. He noted he had been asked about the possibility, and was not an advocate for same as the individual(s) ultimately report to him and the Selectmen and not the Planning Board. He did note, however, that the Planning Board meeting with the final candidates could be considered.

Mr. Hohenberger noted that much input had been received this evening, which is how the Planning Board can participate in the process. Mr. McLeod indicated he believed this was a viable decision and, if the Board agreed, Mr. Sullivan could be asked to draft the job descriptions. Mrs. Simmons noted the Planning Director needed to be focused on, and Mr. Desilets concurred; adding that while this is the priority position both should be advertised.

Kathleen DiFruscia, Horseshoe Road, approached concurring with Mrs. Post that there is an immediate need for the Planning Board. She then inquired how, once Ms. Scott departs, the Planning Board will address their needs/matters. Mr. Sullivan noted that Ms. Scott is here for another 30 days or so; adding that CEA Dick Gregory has been doing some of the Director functions, along with Fougere and Keach who are reviewing plans and providing in office time. Mr. Sullivan reiterated that staff has reached out to three different consultant groups and there is nothing available at this moment.

To Mr. Guttman's earlier point, Mr. Sullivan advised he had spoken to Antioch in the past, and that no one from there had applied in the previous Planner recruitment round. Mr. Sullivan then advised he has a call out to a different consulting and is awaiting a reply, as there is a need for additional assistance, and that he hopes to have more news regarding same at the July 11 meeting.

Mr. Sullivan then indicated that the Board needs to focus on the planner's title, reminding the Board that it is currently a union position. He suggested that, perhaps, "Assistant Community Development Director"; adding it will not work if it remains a union position. Discussion ensued regarding the need to do something to attract viable candidates.

Mr. Hohenberger questioned how the new position would work versus the union position. Mr. Sullivan explained that the union position would not be filled and this would be a new position created as part of a reorganization. Discussion ensued regarding the responsibilities which need to be added to the Planner description.

Kristi St. Laurent, Range Road, approached noting that having one person in charge of both residential and commercial development would be helpful; adding that the Board needs to figure out the job description prior to filling the position which, right now, is more of an entry level one. She felt the Planner should be the point person and that there is a need for a greater "planning" aspect (eg working with what is already in place, zoning), as well as targeted marketing on a larger scale.

Mr. McLeod then reviewed with the Board his proposed changes to the Community Development Director and Planner job descriptions; including relocation/clarification of existing duties between the two and addition of duties to the Community Development Director relative to economic development. There was discussion regarding the hierarchy of the positions, and the proposed pay structure/budget impacts. Mr. Sullivan clarified that if the Community Development Director is lowered to grade 24 and the Planner raised to grade 20, then the net cost would be fairly consistent with the current cost, assuming that there is no change to the current benefit structure.

Mr. Breton suggested that the Board should be requiring candidates to be a certified planner. Discussion ensued, with the balance of the Board in agreement. Mr. Breton then suggested a budget discussion would be appropriate, and Mr. Sullivan reiterated that moving the grades as proposed would involve a negligible impact, barring benefit changes. Discussion ensued relative to the need to look at the salary if high level applicants are desired.

Mr. Desilets indicated that all suggestions should be implemented into the job descriptions and the positions put out there; adding he supports the title of "Chief Planner" or "Planning Director" at grade 20. There was brief discussion as to the time needed for staff to make the changes and provide redline drafts to the Board for review prior to the next meeting, and it was the consensus that staff proceed as discussed.

Jonathan Sycamore, Cobbetts Pond Road, approached expressing concerns in that it made more sense to hire the Community Development Director and then let him/her recruit their own staff; adding that the Board cannot put all planning duties on one person as it is too much. Brief discussion ensued regarding the current/previous staffing in the Department, and no further decisions were made.

Mr. McLeod moved and Mr. Hohenberger seconded to adjourn. Passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendi Devlin, Administrative Assistant

*Note: These minutes are in draft form and have not been submitted to the Board for approval.*