

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
AUDITOR SELECTION COMMITTEE-EXECUTIVE SESSION
Town Hall Council Chambers
April 13, 2007 – Friday

Present: Paul J. Leary, Chairperson
Gregory Shanahan, Co-Chairperson
Kenneth DiFazio
Susan Kay
Michael Smart

Recording Secretary: Julie Umamo

Councilor Leary called the Auditor Selection Committee Meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Auditor Selection Discussion

A list of questions for the auditor interviews was put forth and a brief discussion was held regarding who would ask which questions during the interview process.

Councilor Shanahan made a MOTION for the meeting to go into Executive Session and was seconded by Councilor Kay. The purpose of the Executive Session is to consider and interview applicants for employment by a preliminary screening committee. Roll call was taken as follows:

Michael Smart – y
Gregory Shanahan-y
Susan Kay – y
Kenneth DiFazio – y
Chairman Paul J. Leary – y

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Candidate #10

Kevin Kavanaugh was introduced to the Council. Councilor Leary asked if he would give a brief synopsis of his background.

Mr. Kavanaugh stated he was a graduate of Nichols College and majored in Management with a minor in Psychology. He stated that after college he started an internship at AT&T which later led to positions there including Accounts Payable Analyst and Regional Manager. He stated he then became a manager at Waste Management where his duties entailed full financial representation, which led to the position of Assistant District Controller. Thereafter, he began employment as Accounting Manager/Assistant Controller with Boston Sand & Gravel, overseeing five people, and dealing with issues such as prices increases and budgets.

Councilor Leary reminded Mr. Kavanaugh that the meeting would be conducted in Executive Session, but that the final decision with Town Council would be in Open Session.

Councilor Shanahan asked Mr. Kavanaugh if he felt he had a solid understanding of municipal finance and accounting.

Mr. Kavanaugh stated that he had never worked in a municipal finance and accounting setting, and that it was not his career path. He noted only his past experience in accounting.

Councilor Shanahan asked Mr. Kavanaugh to discuss his experience with local government operations.

Mr. Kavanaugh stated he has worked with Waste Management and has town experience, noting his involvement in town meetings, dealing with tonnage requirements, and speaking with representatives on those matters.

Councilor Kay asked Mr. Kavanaugh if he was familiar with Municipal Finance Law on Procurement and Contracts.

Mr. Kavanaugh stated he was not, but that checks and balances are very strict and he is familiar with the schedules for checks and balances.

Councilor Kay asked Mr. Kavanaugh if he felt he had strengths in Operational Performance auditing as required by the town charter.

Mr. Kavanaugh stated he oversaw the capital budget and was in charge of audits and tracking inventory in three previous employment positions.

Councilor Leary noted that the Auditor and Town Clerk are the only positions the Council selects.

Councilor Smart asked Mr. Kavanaugh if he had an understanding of the MUNIS system used by the town.

Mr. Kavanaugh stated he has never used the MUNIS system, but has used Excel and Access, and believes these software programs are all similar and use the same format.

Councilor Smart asked Mr. Kavanaugh if he was proficient in auditing software.

Mr. Kavanaugh stated that he was proficient in many programs.

Councilor Smart asked Mr. Kavanaugh that if he uncovered a significant wrongdoing in the town government, who would he notify first? He also asked what action he would want to happen.

Mr. Kavanaugh stated that he would inform his manager and get his/her feedback. He said he would document everything and try to find out how the error occurred. He further stated that if his manager wanted him to handle the situation, he would handle it in the proper way, whether it be placing an individual on trial notice or termination.

Councilor Leary asked Mr. Kavanaugh what level of detail he would get into regarding the audit of cash receipts and disbursements for the town.

Mr. Kavanaugh stated he would read and get a full understanding of procedures and would obtain receipts if needed.

Councilor Leary asked Mr. Kavanaugh why an annual physical inventory of town capital assets is important.

Mr. Kavanaugh stated the importance of knowing where the majority of the money is spent, noting how assets can move around. He also noted the importance of taking old inventory and going line by line to see where the assets are.

Councilor DiFazio asked Mr. Kavanaugh if he was aware of our form of government i.e., Administration, Town Council, and Auditor.

Mr. Kavanaugh stated he understood that the Auditor would report to the Town Council.

Councilor DiFazio also made it clear to Mr. Kavanaugh that the Auditor would be relied upon to scrutinize the budget and the Council would turn to him for expertise.

Councilor Leary asked Mr. Kavanaugh when he would be available to start. Mr. Kavanaugh stated that he could not start before May 15th as he is getting married in three weeks.

There were no further questions for Mr. Kavanaugh and the Council thanked him for coming.

Candidate #24

Nilsa Monteiro was introduced to the Council. Councilor Leary asked Ms. Monteiro why she was interested in the Auditor position.

Ms. Monteiro stated that she has worked with tax law in the private sector on a regular basis and that she is very interested in numbers.

Councilor Shanahan asked Ms. Monteiro if she felt she had a solid understanding of municipal finance and accounting.

Ms. Monteiro stated that she did, working for the Mass. Highway Department as a Business Manager, dealing with maintenance and repair of bridges and roads.

Councilor Leary reminded Ms. Monteiro that the meeting would be conducted in Executive Session, but that the final decision with Town Council would be in Open Session

Councilor Shanahan asked Ms. Monteiro to discuss her experience with local government operations.

Ms. Monteiro stated she has dealt with District Highway Directors and Planning Departments, as well as engineers from different districts, making sure guidelines were followed.

Councilor Kay asked Ms. Monteiro if she was familiar with Municipal Finance Law on Procurement and Contracts.

Ms. Monteiro stated that she was familiar with this, having dealt with many contracts and guidelines that towns had to follow.

Councilor Kay asked Ms. Monteiro if she felt she had strengths in Operational Performance auditing as required by the town charter.

Ms. Monteiro said she would feel comfortable with the government aspect of handling business.

Councilor Leary explained to Ms. Monteiro that the Auditor would report to the Town Council and would be relied upon by the Council to keep them apprised of what is going on.

Councilor Smart asked Ms. Monteiro if she had an understanding of the MUNIS system used by the town.

Ms. Monteiro stated that she has not used the MUNIS system, as the state uses another software program.

Councilor Smart asked Ms. Monteiro if she was proficient in spreadsheet software.

Ms. Monteiro stated that she was very comfortable using Excel.

Councilor Smart asked Ms. Monteiro that if she uncovered a significant wrongdoing in the town government, who would she notify first and what action would she want to happen?

Ms. Monteiro stated that she would notify her supervisor and follow the guidelines to resolve the problem and take it from there.

Councilor Leary asked Ms. Monteiro what level of detail she would get into regarding the audit of cash receipts and disbursements for the town.

Ms. Monteiro stated she would be very specific, logging everything into the books, along with maintaining receipts.

Councilor Leary asked Ms. Monteiro why an annual physical inventory of town capital assets would be important.

Ms. Monteiro replied by saying that when dealing with the public, the people of the town want to be kept apprised of where money is going.

Councilor Leary asked Ms. Monteiro how she would go about accomplishing this.

Ms. Monteiro stated that she is very organized and that if she was not, she would not get anything accomplished.

Councilor Leary asked Ms. Monteiro when she would be available to start.

Ms. Monteiro stated that she would be available to start immediately.

There were no further questions for Ms. Monteiro and the Council thanked her for coming.

Candidate #23

Maureen Treacy-Duffy was introduced to the Council. Councilor Leary asked if she would like to give an overview of her background.

She stated that she grew up in Weymouth and graduated from UMass Boston. She moved to Texas later in life to be with her children who were attending college there. Her youngest will be graduating next month and she wishes to come back to Weymouth.

She stated she is very comfortable in her current job situation in Austin, Texas, working as an auditor for the school system. However, her peers encouraged her to apply for this position, considering her desire to come back to Weymouth.

Councilor Leary reminded Ms. Duffy that the meeting would be conducted in Executive Session, but that the final decision with Town Council would be in Open Session.

Councilor Shanahan asked if she felt she had a solid understanding of municipal finance and accounting.

Ms. Duffy stated she had a very strong understanding. She reassured the Council that if she did not feel as confident as she does about her qualifications, she would not have invested her time by traveling to Boston for an interview. She further stated that she visited the Town's website and has reviewed many documents. She added that if she had any questions, she knows her resources.

Councilor Shanahan asked Ms. Duffy to discuss her experience with local government operations.

Ms. Duffy stated that she has not worked with local government, but does report to the Board of Trustees, who are elected officials.

Councilor Kay asked Ms. Duffy if she was familiar with Municipal Finance Law on Procurement and Contracts.

Ms. Duffy stated she was, and that it is a major part of her job entailed making sure that laws are being abided by.

Councilor Kay asked Ms. Duffy if she feels confident that she would be able to get up to speed with Massachusetts Laws.

Ms. Duffy stated that the only thing she thought might spoil her chances for the position might be that she was not a current Massachusetts resident. Other than that, she stated she firmly believes she is qualified based on the detailed job description for the Town Auditor which she reviewed. She further stated she had to learn Texas law quickly at her current position and commented that she is a quick learner.

Councilor Kay asked Ms. Duffy if she felt she had strengths in Operational Performance auditing as required by the town charter.

Ms. Duffy stated she has completed performance audits, as the Board of Trustees requests. She further noted that her work is not just in dealing with receipts and disbursements, but also entails conducting audits to see if procedures are being followed. Ms. Duffy added that she has strong office management skills and procedures.

Councilor Leary stated that the only positions the Council is in charge of are the Auditor and Town Clerk.

Councilor Smart asked Ms. Duffy if she has an understanding of the MUNIS system used by the town.

Ms. Duffy stated that she does not have MUNIS experience, but has strong skills and is proficient in learning programs quickly. She stated she currently works with a similar type of program.

She further informed the Council that the Board of Trustees had asked her to work on an embezzlement case in which all the numbers reconciled, but she had to manipulate the software system to uncover the means whereby the individual performed the embezzlement.

Councilor Smart asked Ms. Duffy that if she uncovered a significant wrongdoing in the town government, who would she notify first and what action would she want to happen.

Ms. Duffy stated she would ask the Council for their advice. She stated that she would never accuse, but if she suspects, she would certainly contact the Council.

Councilor Leary asked Ms. Duffy what level of detail she would get into regarding the audit of cash receipts and disbursements for the town.

Ms. Duffy stated that she would get an understanding of what the process is, including who reconciles the accounts, who approves the disbursements, and who has the authority to approve so as to report findings and recommendations.

Councilor Leary asked Ms. Duffy why an annual physical inventory of town capital assets is important.

Ms. Duffy stated that it is important to determine whether or not funds are spent properly.

Councilor Leary asked the Council if they had any further questions for Ms. Duffy.

Councilor DiFazio made aware to Ms. Duffy that the Town Council Office consists of one full-time and one part-time employee, but she would be working primarily with Administration. Councilor DiFazio asked Ms. Duffy if she would find it difficult to work with Administration on a day-to-day basis, even though the Town Council is who she ultimately would report to.

Ms. Duffy stated that it would not be difficult for her at all, as that is how her current job situation operates. She noted her great rapport with people, indicating that she has a very positive approach.

Councilor DiFazio made a request to have Ms. Duffy review our Town Charter, as well as the Annual Report, in order to get her input. He said that Diane Hachey could furnish those for her.

Councilor Leary informed Ms. Duffy that they were looking for the best qualified person for this position, noting no favoritism, and the fact that her residing in Texas would have no bearing on their decision.

Councilor Leary asked Ms. Duffy when she would be available to start if the position was offered to her.

Ms. Duffy noted that while she would be eager to begin working in this position, she feels she would need some time to wrap things up in Texas, noting her son's graduation on May 18th, and the fact that she would need to tie up loose ends with regard to her current job. She further said she hoped the Council would consider her time constraints when making their decision.

Councilor Leary asked Ms. Duffy about her availability for April 30th should she be asked to come back for a second interview.

Ms. Duffy requested to the Council that they let her know how many candidates will be selected for final consideration. She stated that this would have a large bearing on her decision to come back on the 30th for a final interview, considering her work obligations and personal expense. Ms. Duffy also expressed her willingness to review the materials Diane Hachey will be furnishing to her.

Ms. Duffy inquired about the length of time the current Auditor spent in the position.

Councilor Leary indicated that the current Auditor has been in the position since the year 2000.

Councilor DiFazio brought up the fact that the Auditor is expected to attend meetings approximately twice a month, noting the importance of attending the Budget/ Management Committee meetings and the instrumental role the Auditor plays.

Ms. Duffy asked what the biggest challenge would be as Auditor, especially in the first year.

Councilor DiFazio stated that the biggest challenge would not be in the technical expertise, but probably working closely with the CFO and Chief of Staff on a daily basis. Councilor DiFazio stated an example in which the Council may be looking for information and the Auditor would have to obtain that information from administration on behalf of the Council.

Ms. Duffy stated she has a strong work ethic and high level of confidentiality.

Councilor Kay reiterated, explaining that some requests will come through Town Council, and if the Council needs further information, they would utilize the Auditor to obtain such information. As a result, situations may get tense on occasion.

There were no further questions and the Council thanked Ms. Duffy for coming.

Adjournment

At 7:35 p.m., there being no further business, a MOTION to reconvene in Open Session for purpose of ADJOURNMENT and UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Approved by: _____

Paul J. Leary, Chairman