Town Administrator Search Committee

Harwich Town Hall – Selectmen’s Library

Minutes Wednesday, February 19,2020

The meeting was called to order by Larry Ballantine, Chairman, Board of Selectmen at approximately 6:30 PM.

 Members of the Town Administrator Search Committee attending were Julie Kavanagh, Norm Clarke, Dan Wolf, Linda Cebula, and Michael Hurley. Also in attendance were, interim assistant town administrator Robert Lawton, Michele Randazzo and Devan Braun, attorneys with Town Counsel KP Law and Harwich Town Clerk Anita Doucette.

1. Mr. Ballantine asked each member to introduce themselves along with the attorneys from KP Law.
2. Town Clerk Anita Doucette swore in the members of the committee and each member along with the town clerk signed the appropriate paperwork. The Town Clerk then left the meeting.
3. Mr. Ballantine briefly reviewed the charge of the committee and turned the meeting over to Ms. Randazzo to review the open meeting law, confidentiality issues, and other legal procedures. Ms. Randazzo distributed copies of information sheets prepared by KP law titled Search Committee Protocol and Reasons for Convening Executive Sessions. She then reviewed, in detail, various portions of the two documents which she believed applied to this committee. Ms. Randazzo stated that certain topics may be discussed in executive session by the Committee, but that discussion of such items as meeting dates, and process discussions including developing interview questions would be considered open session material. To go into executive session, you must have a roll call vote and the chair of the committee would determine the need for the executive session which can be, in this case, review and evaluation of applications, discussion of candidates, and interviews of applicants. The motion should also state if the committee is returning to open session or not. Executive session minutes can be approved in the executive session. Reference checks are normally not done by the screening committee, and oftentimes, the consultant can assist with completing reference checks. For confidentiality and privacy purposes, it is recommended that finalists be notified before their names go to the board of selectmen to determine if they wish to move forward with the process. Ms. Randazzo also stated that there should be limited email correspondence between members. This could involve sending documents for review at upcoming meeting(s), so long as the Committee members do not comment upon the documents or otherwise engage in any discussion of those documents. Indeed, email communications amongst Committee members should be limited to scheduling matters, distribution of meeting agendas, or distribution of reports or documents to be discussed at a meeting, provided that no Committee member expresses an opinion on any topic within the Committee’s purview. Several questions were asked by committee members for clarification of the executive session process. There was a question if tape recordings can be used for the open session and during the executive session for purposes of preparing minutes. Ms. Randazzo stated that taping of the meeting is not prohibited, but she explained the implications of maintaining such records after the official meeting minutes have been approved, under the public records law.
4. Mr. Ballantine asked that the committee discussed choosing a chair and a clerk. After discussion, it was moved by Mr. Wolf seconded by Mr. Hurley to nominate Mr. Clarke as chair and Ms. Cebula as clerk of the Committee. It was so voted 5 yes 0 no.
5. Mr. Ballantine reviewed a possible timeline for the work to be done but stated that it was a draft and could be changed by the Committee. He also referenced the position profile developed by the Board of Selectmen, which was in the Committee’s packet and stated that the process of selecting a consultant had started with proposals to be submitted by February 20. The Board of Selectmen tentatively would make a decision at their meeting on March 2.
6. Future meeting dates. The Committee members discussed their availability and determined that the next meeting would be held on March 25, 2020 at 6:30 PM. There was discussion as to whether Wednesday’s were good for members and if morning, afternoon, or early evening meetings were preferred. This item would be discussed at a later date. There was a discussion of possible remote participation by Committee members. Mr. Ballantine said there was a Board of Selectmen’s policy in place, but he would send it to KP Law for review and updating as may be necessary.
7. The Committee thanked Ms. Randazzo and Ms. Braun for the information they provided to the Committee. As there was not further business to come before the committee it was moved by Mr. Wolf and seconded by Ms. Cebula to adjourn the meeting. It was unanimously voted 5 yes -0 no.
8. Meeting adjourned 8:25 PM

Documents used at the meeting:

KP Law’s Search Committee Protocol and Reasons for Convening Executive Sessions

Harwich Town Administrator Position Profile

Town Administrator Selection Process Tentative Timeline

Town of Harwich Solicitation of Price Quotations, Executive Search Consulting Services for the Recruitment and Selection of a Town Administrator

Date approved\_\_\_4/8/2020\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_