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MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL AUDITOR SEARCH
COMMITTEE
TELECONFERENCE
WESTFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS
SEPTEMBER 25, 2020 AT 9:45 AM

WESTFIELD CITY CLERK

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the City of Westfield City Council Auditor Search Committee will be conducted via remote participation on Zoom.

Ralph Figy called to order the meeting at 9:46 PM.

Ralph Figy asked for permission for Bridget Matthews-Kane to record the proceedings for purposes of meeting minutes. No objections were voiced.

Ralph Figy conducted a roll call. The following committee members were present:

Chair, Ralph Figy, Westfield City Councilor, Ward 2
Matthew Barnes, Treasurer/Collector, City of Westfield
Tammy Tefft, Director of Purchasing, City of Westfield
Bridget Matthews-Kane, Westfield City Councilor, Ward 3
Robin Johnson, Assessor, City of Westfield

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of how to divide up the interview questions. Matt Barnes agreed to do the first six, Tammy Tefft agreed to do questions 7-12, and Robin Johnson agreed to do questions 13-16, with Bridget Matthews-Kane agreeing to provide a preface to question 15.

Discussion of how the questions were slightly adjusted for the first round, and how the committee would have to do the same again. As before, on number eleven, the words city council were added to the question. For question fifteen, Bridget Matthews-Kane will give an introduction.

Tammy Teft asked if we would vote to approve the minutes for the previous meeting. Ralph Figy explained that once the minutes were approved, we would have to release them to the public, and that would be unfair as it could potentially jeopardize the

integrity of the interview process. He asked to approve the minutes after all the interview were complete.

Ralph Figy made a motion to move into executive session for the purposes of interviewing. This request was made so that the discussion will not damage the ability of the committee to have a fair hearing for the two candidates. Having the discussion in open session would have a detrimental effect on the public body's ability to attract qualified applicants for the position. Tammy Tefft seconded the motion.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

Ralph Figy	yes
Matthew Barnes	yes
Tammy Tefft	yes
Bridget Matthews-Kane	yes
Robin Johnson	yes

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Minutes of meetings held in executive session per the Law Department will be sensitive to candidates' identities and personal information in accordance with the Personnel Department's rules and laws governing such interviews. That all candidates' resumes remain within the Personnel Department laws pertaining to the confidentiality of all applicants' information are recognized until the final candidates are determined at which times the final applicants only will be informed that their resumes will be made public if they proceed on with the process of City Council's open meeting to vote on the final candidates.

Matt Barnes reminded the committee that on the previous round of interviews, the committee asked a question about MUNIS software. The wording was added to question seven.

All candidates will be asked the same questions. (please see attached list.)

Candidate #3 was introduced to the committee and interviewed. The committee asked all questions and the committee listened to answers. Candidate #3 was asked to expand on answers by committee if considered necessary. Candidate #3 had the opportunity to ask questions of the committee.

The committee held a discussion regarding Candidate #3's responses and background.

The committee took a 5-minute break at 10:40.

Committee reconvened at 10:45

The committee decided the same committee members would ask the same interview questions.

Candidate #4 was introduced to the committee and interviewed. The committee asked all questions and the committee listened to answers. Candidate #4 was asked to expand on answers by committee if considered necessary. Candidate #4 had the opportunity to ask questions of the committee.

The committee held a discussion regarding the candidate #4's responses and background.

The committee took a 18-minute break at 11:12.

Committee reconvened at 11:30

Candidate #5 was interviewed. The committee asked all questions and the committee listened to answers. Candidate #5 was asked to expand on answers by committee if considered necessary. Candidate #5 had the opportunity to ask questions of the committee.

The committee held a discussion regarding the candidate #5's responses and background.

The committee held a discussion and weighed the three candidates' suitability for the Auditor's position.

Based on earlier conversations, reasons identified as the final candidate's suitability with the Auditor's position are:

Candidate #3: Candidate has requisite business and municipal background to run auditing department. However, could use stronger experience with budgets that are the size of Westfield's. Concerns about fit for department.

Candidate #4: While candidate has budgeting and auditing experience, lack of municipal experience does not make her a suitable candidate.

Candidate #5: Experience with and enthusiasm for MUNIS software, relevant municipal experience, personality a great fit for the department. Concerns about lack of experience in creating and presenting budgets, but compensated by fact she seems a self-starter and quick learner.

Committee discussed how to proceed. Ralph Figy asked if the committee should prioritize MUNIS experience over budgeting experience. Tammy Tefft argued that

budgeting was more important. Matt Barnes agreed, but added that municipal experience must be considered as well and that MUNIS was fairly easy to learn. Tammy Tefft agreed that MUNIS was important yet easy to learn, and talked of how people already working in Auditing Department could assist in compensating for some candidate's deficits. Ralph Figy discussed how a budget does not need to be created from scratch; auditors could use the previous year's budget as a template to create the next year's budget.

Ralph Figy requested a motion. Tammy Tefft made a motion to forward Candidate #5's name to full City Council for recommendation as City Auditor. Bridget Matthews-Kane seconded the motion.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

Ralph Figy	yes
Matthew Barnes	yes
Tammy Tefft	yes
Bridget Matthews-Kane	yes
Robin Johnson	yes

Ralph Figy asked if the committee would like to refer another candidate to City Council. Bridget Matthews-Kane asked if forwarding another candidate might forestall the situation that happened on the last round when another candidate dropped out of consideration after being recommended, thus leaving the City without the two requisite candidates. Ralph Figy felt both candidates were enthusiastic enough about the position that this issue would not be a concern. Tammy Tefft agreed with Ralph Figy.

Matthew Barnes talked about the timing of the next candidate interviews. The committee agreed that sooner was better than later, and that having the interviews at the next City Council meeting would be wise.

Committee reviewed the questions for the two candidates to be asked in front of the full City Council. John Liptak helped develop the questions. Bridget Matthews-Kane asked if reading the questions now was wise procedurally as the questions would be listed in the minutes. Ralph Figy said the minutes would be approved and thus publicly available only after the City Auditor was hired.

The questions were as follows:

1. Please give a brief accounting of who you are.
2. What is your philosophy regarding the role of the City Auditor in the overall financial functioning of the City of Westfield?
3. As the City Auditor, you will be working closely with the Mayor and other Department Heads, yet you are hired by the City Council. What potential

- pitfalls do you see in this arrangement and how do you plan on navigating them?
4. Have you developed any specific techniques for use during the development or implementation of policies or procedures to ensure that the city personnel follow consistent practices that improve chances for acceptance and adherence?
 5. Please describe in detail how you have handled an employee who was making too many errors in the performance of his or her duties and responsibility?
 6. Please describe the computer software that you are currently using or previously used to perform your job duties.
 7. Why should you be the next Westfield's City Auditor?

The committee wordsmithed the questions.

Tammy Tefft suggested there be a scenario-type question included in the list of questions. All agreed that a question that was relatable to the City Council would be a good idea. Tammy Tefft said that she would work on creating a question.

Matthew Barnes asked how the questions could be asked at a City Council meeting and not have the other candidate hear them. As the meetings must be broadcast, the second candidate could hear the questions asked of the first candidate. As the questions are fairly generic, Ralph Figy does not see it as a large problem and that the City Council is restricted by the open meeting laws.

Tammy Tefft made a motion to exit executive session and return to general session. Bridget Matthews-Kane seconded it.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

Ralph Figy	yes
Matthew Barnes	yes
Tammy Tefft	yes
Bridget Matthews-Kane	yes
Robin Johnson	yes

General Session

Ralph Figy requested a motion to move applicants #1 and #5 to City Council. Tammy Tefft made a motion and Bridget Matthews-Kane seconded the motion.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

Ralph Figy	yes
Matthew Barnes	yes

Tammy Tefft	yes
Bridget Matthews-Kane	yes
Robin Johnson	yes

Ralph Figy requested a motion to adjourn. Tammy Tefft made a motion to adjourn and Matthews Barnes seconded the motion.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

Ralph Figy	yes
Matthew Barnes	yes
Tammy Tefft	yes
Bridget Matthews-Kane	yes
Robin Johnson	yes

Ralph Figy adjourned the meeting at 12:15.

Minutes submitted by: Bridget Matthews-Kane