

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE TOWN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TOWN OF WILLIAMSTON, NC

May 10, 2016

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular session on Monday, May 10, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. in the Assembly Room at Town Hall.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Al Chesson, Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, William Coffield,
and Junious J. Horton
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Finance Officer: Linda Harrison
Town Attorney: Daniel A. Manning

ABSENT None

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Commissioner Rodgers led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Chesson offered the invocation.

AGENDA APPROVED AS PRESENTED

The Mayor asked if there were any items to be removed or added to the Special Meeting Agenda.

It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Horton and unanimously passed to approve the agenda as presented.

OPTIONS FOR REPLACEMENT OF RETIRING TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Hartwell Wright, Human Resources with the NC League of Municipalities, presented a basic informative presentation of the replacement process. There are two forms of municipal government, mayor-council and council-manager. The Town of Williamston has a mayor-council form and there is no state statutory requirement to have a town administrator. The administrator duties are directed by the Board. There are over 400 people in this state providing managerial duties. This is important as there are almost 40 entities performing the same search. The League's role is not to assist in hiring individual employees, but for reference on processes. This is a three step process: recruitment, assessment, and then to hire.

There are three decisions that need to be made very soon, before recruitment begins. First, determine who the contact administrative person to accept the applications and schedule interviews. Secondly, this process is extremely confidential. In North Carolina, every applicant has a statutory expectation of confidentiality when applying for the position. Without a signed document from the applicant, the Town will be in violation if the applicant names are revealed. Email in this process should be used with caution as email can be hacked. Finally, the Board will have to decide who will be involved in the process whether it is the entire Board, consulting group or piece-milled. It is very important that once the rules are set that the rules are strictly followed to ensure success.

Mr. Wright recommends a work session. Each Board member should bring a list of expectations for the next Administrator. The list will be combined and prioritized. The Board should be in agreement with the priorities listed which will become a profile of the potential candidate. Commissioner Chesson reported that historically a committee was formed to review the applications and forward their recommendations to the Board. The Board will then interview the recommended candidates with a predetermined list of questions and the Board will rate each candidate according to their responses to the list of questions. Due to the confidentiality, the public cannot be a part of the selection committee.

Mr. Wright recommends avoiding the use of any absolutes such as must and never but suggests the use of words such as prefer. While academics are very important, the new administrator must be an appropriate fit for the Board and community. This process usually takes approximately 6 months. He suggests the Board takes as long as needed to hire the right person and less important to meet a hiring deadline.

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The League does a salary survey every year for all employee's in participating towns. The only criteria used by the League to categorize the survey are the population size of the town. The salary is determined by market and the requirements listed on the profile the Board creates. He recommends advertising the position as an administrator acts as a manager. He recommends advertising in professional periodicals and in the local paper. Advertising locally could produce a retiree that might be interested and will keep the community informed while maintaining confidentiality.

It is important that all Board members receive the same information at the same time. Application forms will generate more useful information than a resume. Add a supplemental questionnaire to the application as the answers will inform how well they address the subject matter. Before interviews are scheduled, be certain to do background employment checks.

You may receive interviews from people out of state or country. A cheaper route of interviewing is to interview over the internet. When you invite an applicant for an interview, send a letter signed by the Mayor that includes an agenda. This is important as the candidate will have an expectation of meeting others, such as Town Department Heads, in advance so that the applicant's confidentiality will not be violated. It would be appropriate to send information about the Town and ask a question regarding the information. This will show if they had enough interest to read the documentation. Arrange for a tour of the town and include the candidate's family in the tour. Schedule the interview in a place with minimal distractions. Interview questions should be predetermined and have the same person ask the same questions of each candidate as consistency is important. Allow for two hours per interview and complete the evaluation form immediately after each interview. Many applicants will have the resume professionally done. He suggests having a project for the candidate to include complicated personnel scenarios to see how they will handle the situation or a scenario that will require an immediate response. No Title VII of the Civil Rights questions can be asked in the interview as that is illegal.

When you have narrowed the list to one candidate, he recommends hiring a professional firm to do a thorough background search to include federal and state searches. After the search is complete, he suggests the Board to authorize the Mayor call the candidate to discuss the hiring terms. Once the Board can agree on the employment terms, have the Town Attorney draft the offer letter. This is the beginning of the litigation. Require the candidate to accept the offer in writing. You have to make a motion in open session to hire the individual and the provisions of the contract in open session. The majority of the candidates will require an employment contract which should be drafted by the Town Attorney.

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Horton and passed to go out of regular session into closed session to address a Personnel Issue per N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (6).

It was moved by Commissioner Knox to go out of closed session and into regular session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Coffield and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor