

Town of Natick
Town Administrator Screening Committee
Approved Meeting Minutes
February 16, 2021, 4:00 PM

Members Present: Lindsey Galvao, Carol Gloff, Alan Grady, Anna Nolin, Ed Hudson, Joshua Ostroff, Linda Wollschlager, Glen Glater.

Also present: Dorothy Blondiet, HR Director; Randy Brewer, Natick Pegasus; Mary Aicardi, Collins Center at UMass Boston; members of the public.

Steve is in transit with a bad connection and may not be able to join; Carol will chair this meeting.

Carol as Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 4:03, noting that a quorum was present, and referenced the requirements for a public meeting pursuant to the Governor's March 2021 Executive Order.

Citizen's Concerns

No one sought to be recognized.

Meeting Minutes

Linda moved to approve 2/4 minutes with corrections, seconded by Alan and unanimously voted by roll call. February 8 minutes were tabled to a future meeting.

RFP Process

Carol noted that the Select Board had formally rejected the previous bid on 2/10. Josh recapped the process to date, including outreach to the Collins Center, and introduced Mary Aicardi, who would be the lead for this engagement should we engage with the Collins Center.

Mary provided her background and outlined the elements of the proposal that had been provided. She emphasized that the goal was to bring forward the best candidate. They would not "poach" anyone they had placed in the last two years, which did not prevent a candidate from applying on his or her own initiative.

They would give the screening committee every resume. They do not limit who we can see. They will help compile the output we are getting from outreach.

They use a dedicated email address for inquiries. Once the deadline is closed, they send a packet to the screening committee. They use a consensus approach to review applicants and determine who we want to interview.

If they are hired, we will have a meeting on how to move forward; map out a timetable and review the process. Mary can be the point of contact for determining questions, etc. The most

important meeting is when we determine whom to interview; interviews then follow perhaps a week later.

At the last session of interviews, there is a discussion about whom to advance with yes/no/maybe. Anyone who is moved forward should be someone who could be hired.

Then they do a background check on prospective finalists.

Then it is a Board process, which can include a public session.

Ed asked about an assessment or testing approach. Mary noted that they have in the past utilized a written assessment, but this implies that they are moving past preliminary screening, which has implications for the Open Meeting Law. There are ways to incorporate this as part of the interview process. Note, however, that while any assessment is going to be subjective, there can be an exercise as part of the interview.

However we proceed, it is important to be consistent.

Alan asked about the observation that the pool was challenging. Mary noted that for a desirable opportunity like Natick, the pool should be strong, but it may not be a diverse pool. In smaller towns, it is common for a community to hire people without a lot of experience, but those towns are now feeding into larger communities like Natick. She thinks we will get exceptional candidates.

Natick is highly engaged, and that will be attractive to the best candidates. The location is great, we are well known, so we will get experienced applicants.

Linda asked about reference checking at the early vs. later stages; what kind of questions are asked and does the screening committee have input. They do not do anything that could hurt someone's current job. It's also important to not do anything that could be construed as bias. We should not do this (reference checks) until we are determining finalists.

They get a signed release for reference checking from candidates who would move forward. Screening Committee members should not be doing the checking, though; Collins does this through a private investigator.

To clarify, Linda asked and Mary confirmed that we would not have reference checks in determining whom to interview.

If there are issues that people have concerns about, ask about them in the interviews.

Be cautious about asking about stylistic things, like management style, as a screening committee. Focus on quantifiable criteria; we can then give advice to the Select Board about things that all candidates should be asked.

Carol referred to the outline provided by Collins. How does the list go from a tentative list to a finalist list? Mary explained that usually those who are tentative get to be finalists. That can be something we discuss as a committee. From her experience, there are occasionally issues like DUI and bankruptcy that are uncovered and which may be explainable – or may not be.

Josh sought clarification about when the background checks would be done; it was only for the finalists who would be brought to the Select Board that they would be checked and we would only be doing background checks with the consent of the applicants who would be finalists.

There could be a scenario where people withdraw, and then we can add in other candidates.

Ed asked about compensation analysis. Mary explained that they would work with the Town and the Select Board to determine what the salary range would be.

Carol asked about the timeline. In discussion, Mary thinks that three months is aggressive, but in the current environment scheduling interviews is generally not an issue.

Mary added that they are just a facilitator for the interviews, and do not conduct them or participate.

Linda asked about how these work with OML. Mary explained that everything we do with candidates and the names of candidates is in executive session under one of the exemptions provided under the OML.

Mary left the meeting. There was further discussion about references. There was discussion about the process that they would undertake and how it would work with our RFP; it was noted that Collins was adaptable to our needs.

Carol noted that she was looking for something like an assessments center, and on page 3 they state that they could work with the screening committee to ensure that the benefits of this could be done through the interview process.

Members discussed the proposal and process and how we would work with the consultant.

Josh moved to recommend that the TASC recommend to the Select Board that the Town engage the Collins Center to consult with the Town Administrator recruitment. Ed seconded. In discussion, members commented on the process and noted that the Collins Center's flexibility would be an asset. There was a concern about how we got to this point, and that more choices would be better, but we had no realistic alternatives and the one choice before us was a good one with a track record.

On the motion, all were in favor by roll call vote.

On Outreach, we will table that until the next meeting. Members should add their comments to the Google doc that Steve shared and which Linda has reformatted slightly.

Anna left the meeting at 5:28.

Ed moved to adjourn, seconded by Lindsey and unanimously voted by roll call at 5:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Joshua Ostroff, Clerk

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