

Town of Natick
Town Administrator Screening Committee
Approved Meeting Minutes
March 22, 2021, 4:00 PM

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

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

Steve called the meeting to order at 4:02, 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

Approval of corrected minutes for March 15 was moved by Alan, seconded by Carol and unanimously voted by roll call.

Interview questions

Steve noted that this was the primary item on our agenda. He had earlier shared a list of potential questions and wanted to identify the priorities within each question category to help identify the themes that were most important; we would get more precise later on.

Michael Hale went through the document, noting that this was also informed by the themes that were developed in stakeholder interviews. Mary added to this, noting we would go through each section and clarify our priorities, to refine questions at a later date.

For Leadership Style, Linda thought that some of the more open-ended questions from the committee's interviews were more helpful. The Committee's interviews can be broader, while for finalists, more detailed questions from Board members would be more suitable. Steve concurred. Members expressed different views on whether a detailed question was suitable for the leadership section, and regarding the mix of questions regarding interactions with staff and the Board.

The committee reviewed the TASC outreach interview questions for reference and to understand which questions would be best adapted to the candidate interviews. A goal of the leadership section is to start broad, and elicit follow up questions. Mary suggested that the importance of communication through stakeholder interviews should translate to a separate candidate interview question.

(Anna Nolin joined the meeting at 4:26.)

Communications were expanded upon in the section dedicated to this topic.

Goal setting: Members reviewed the draft question and noted its importance, but the need to have this be asked at a higher level.

For financial background, members sought to develop the candidate's approach to the use of data and financial management principles, and to understand how they would approach capital planning and investments.

For personnel and labor relations, the committee consensus was to focus on the candidate's approach to labor relations and negotiations as a constructive area to advance the goals of the organization in the interview, not to focus on the problematic aspects of this area such as grievances. There was discussion on creating a positive work environment, making Natick an attractive place to work, and succession planning.

On Conflict Resolution, members saw the value but thought it could be addressed without making this a focus area.

On Citizen Engagement, we will generally use the term Public Engagement, and not lead with social media. Q.33 was preferred.

On Community and Economic Development, members favored a version of Q.35 to help deal with competing visions and interests.

On Performance Related, this should be incorporated into questions about labor relations and leadership.

On other questions, the committee discussed how to encourage candidates to share non-budget challenges that they have overcome.

The committee further discussed learning from candidates on their approach to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to ensure that candidates have given this some thought, and have relevant experience and an approach to DEI that extends beyond hiring to foster an inclusive culture. We need to get beneath the surface and understand the work that candidates have done in this area.

Mary noted that we had not developed a specific question about sustainability, and needed to work that in. Alan and others spoke about the proposed question about "what question a candidate wished we had asked."

Steve suggested that Mary and Michael get back a revision by the end of the week, and we would refine this at the next meeting. Members can send Steve Mary or Michael anything we thought we was missing. We are now at about 17 questions.

Carol raised a concern about scheduling, and has a conflict on 4/26. We will meet at 1PM that day.

Josh moved to adjourn seconded by Alan and unanimously voted by roll call at 5:21.

Respectfully submitted,
Joshua Ostroff, Clerk

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