

CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 26, 2022 7:00 PM

TOWN CLERK
TOWN OF SANDWICH

OCT 21 2022

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Members Present: D. Sampson, J. Coogan, K. Renzi, J. Fitch, S. James, J. Roche

Mr. Sampson called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM

Review Minutes

Mr. Fitch moved to approve the minutes of September 12, 2022. Seconded by Mr. Coogan. Approved with Mr. Roche abstaining.

Old Business

Marie Buckner, Director of Human Resources

Ms. Buckner is here to talk about how department heads are appointed; she used the example of the hiring of the Senior and Community Services Director. The process begins with looking at the current job description and trying to look at things in a new way. Sometimes a title and/or responsibilities change, such as the change from Council on Aging Director to the current title and job. Human resources then looks at comparable communities and private agencies to see if a proposed salary is in line with what is being published. A screening committee is formed: Director of Human Resources, Town Manager, a member of the Select Board, and others as applicable (e.g. two members of the council on Aging for this position). The committee reviews applications and selects five or six candidates to interview; there is consensus as to whom to bring back for a second interview and a selection is made. The Town Manager brings the recommendation to the Select Board and describes why the candidate is the most advantageous. If the Board declines to appoint the recommended candidate, then the committee continues.

Looking at job descriptions is important because in some instances it is more efficient to combine jobs. In the case of the previously elected town clerk, she was elected as town clerk/tax collector. The jobs were reviewed, and the tax collector position became an appointed position, leaving just the town clerk as elected. The incumbent remained in the town clerk position and the tax collector and treasurer positions were combined. Job descriptions are reviewed and refined.

Mr. Fitch asked whether the process described is precise; Ms. Buckner answered no because it depends on the position. For example, if a board is involved, members of that board might be asked to participate, or if the position involves town-wide interests, appropriate participants would be asked to serve on the committee. This is usually decided by the Town Manager, the Assistant Town Manager, chair of the Select Board and Ms. Buckner. The process works well. Mr. Fitch asked if there might be an alternate process in other towns. Ms. Buckner said that often the interviews are public, which might be a problem for the applicants.

Ms. Renzi commented that the process can be more extensive, such as that which occurred when the police chief was hired. In that instance a company was hired to assist with the process. Mr. Roche asked which positions were the most recently involved. These include the Senior and Community Services Director, the Assistant Town Manager, the Facilities Director, and the promotion of assistant assessor to Director of Assessing.

Ms. Buckner addressed the issue of having the Town Clerk appointed and the issue of what if someone else is more qualified. She emphasized that she had no qualms about leaving the current Town Clerk in the position – he has done an excellent job and is qualified. In discussing the issue of qualifications for a position, she said that the basic qualifications for the position must be met and are not negotiable; other qualifications, such as experience, would be taken into account. Ms. James asked whether the job responsibilities could change after a person is hired. Ms. Buckner responded that job descriptions are set. Mr. Fitch asked where to find the job descriptions; they are all in Ms. Buckner's office. When asked about the risk of someone's best friend getting a job, she responded that she has never felt pressured by anyone and that the process diminishes that risk. Ms. Renzi also commented that there could be a liability risk for not following a fair process.



Continued Review of the Charter

Section 7.1. Financial Provisions and Administration Mr. Dunham requested that the dates for the budget process be removed, as they are "directive" and not binding. He and the School Superintendent meet regularly, even before certification, to begin to develop the budget. Discussion in the committee suggested that there be some mechanism to ensure that the budget process moves along. The February 1st deadline for submission of the proposed budget seems reasonable. The March 1st date may be necessary to allow time for input before the warrant needs to be printed. Mr. Coogan suggested using terminology such as "In reasonable due course" or "As deemed necessary" instead of the dates. Before changing 7.1 a, the committee would like to hear from the new Superintendent of Schools.

Section 7.1b Mr. Fitch would like to see the budget schedule that gets provided to the Select Board by November 1st. Ms. James will locate one and distribute it to the committee.

Section 7.3 b Public Hearings There was discussion about whether public hearings should be required. Ms. James suggested that there be at least one public hearing before town meeting. General discussion followed, with other committee members thinking that there should be two required. **Mr. Fitch moved to leave Section 7.3b as written. Seconded by Mr. Coogan.** The first public hearing shall be in February and the second prior to town meeting. **Motion passes. Mr. Sampson and Ms. Renzi opposed.**

Section 7.5 Audit We need to check with Mr. Dunham to see if an annual audit is necessary. **Mr. Sampson moved to amend Section 7.5 to read "Upon completion of the audit, the results in summary form, shall be available in any manner authorized and defined by Massachusetts General Law."** **Seconded by Ms. Renzi. Approved unanimously.**

Section 9.3 Charter Review Committee **Mr. Fitch moved to change "at least every 5 years" to "at least every 10 years or as deemed necessary by the Select Board".** **Seconded by Mr. Coogan. Approved unanimously.**

Mr. Coogan would like to see the vote on the Town Clerk's status on the next agenda. Suggested people to come before the committee include Mr. Dunham, the School Superintendent, the Moderator, and any interested members of the Select Board.

Future Meeting Schedule

The next meeting date falls on a holiday. Mr. Sampson will find out about room availability on October 17th and get back to the committee.

Adjournment

Mr. Fitch moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. James seconded. Approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan James, Recording Secretary