



Town of Bridgewater
Town Council

October 22, 2024

7:00 PM

Town Manager Preliminary Screening Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

The meeting was held virtually via Zoom.

MEETING MINUTES

A quorum of the Town Council may be in attendance

A. CALL TO ORDER

A quorum of the Town Council being duly present, Town Council President Perry called the meeting to order at 7:00pm on Tuesday, October 22, 2024.

A quorum of the Town Manager Preliminary Screening Ad Hoc Committee being duly present, Chair Paul Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:00pm on Tuesday, October 22, 2024. The meeting took place via Zoom.

PRESENT

Fred Chase, Dr. Kevin Perry, Susan Robinson, Paul Murphy and Timothy Fitzgibbons.

Also present were Councilors Mark Linde and Mary McGrath.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) September 30, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Councilor Chase made a motion to approve the minutes from September 30, 2024. This was duly seconded by Councilor Perry.

A roll-call vote was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Fitzgibbons – Yea; Chase – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Robinson – Yea.

Motion Passed 5-0.

C. CITIZEN COMMENTS - None

D. INTERVIEWS

a) 7:00pm to 7:45pm

Municipal Resources, Inc.

Alan Gould, MRI President

Robert Mercier, Senior Consultant

Buzz Stapeczynski, Senior Consultant

In attendance for Municipal Resources was Alan Gould, Robert Mercier and Buzz Stapczynski. The interviews began at 7:05pm with each member of the Ad Hoc Committee introducing themselves and their role within the Town.

Mr. Gould introduced himself and noted that he was the President of MRI, a retired police chief and Town Administrator and oversaw all recruitments.

Mr. Stapczynski introduced himself and noted that he was with MRI for approximately 9 years and was the Town Manager in Andover for 25 years.

Mr. Mercier introduced himself noting that he was the Interim Town Manager in Wayland where he met Mr. Gould and started at MRI. He held positions in Burlington and Billerica prior to starting with MRI.

Mr. Stapczynski noted that they have worked in towns with colleges and universities and Mr. Mercier added that the relationship the Town has with BSU is a real asset. Mr. Mercier also added that they recently finished a search for Lexington and there were a total of 24 candidates with 9 sent to the screening committee.

Councilor Chase asked MRI to discuss examples of Town Council/Town Manager structures among clients for whom their firm had successfully placed candidates.

Mr. Gould noted that this form of government is not unusual for them and have worked with many towns and cities with that form of government.

Mr. Mercier noted that they have had success with city council becoming Town Managers, their experience is that it works well.

Councilor Perry asked MRI how extensive their firm's professional network is and how will their firm use them to bring qualified candidates to Bridgewater.

Mr. Gould noted that many people follow them and they have a ready made database, some candidates reach out to them.

Councilor Robinson asked MRI to share some specific examples of gathering community input and how those insights were used in a Town Manager search.

Mr. Gould noted that Lexington is very engaged, interviewed staff, councilors, opened an email address and had listening sessions. Learned a lot about the community in order to create a profile to attract qualified candidates.

Mr. Mercier also added that they want involvement from school side to show solid relationship. The meet 1:1 with department manager and keep it anonymous.

Mr. Fitzgibbons asked about the timeline and if it was a fair assessment.

Mr. Gould noted that they move through deliberately, not rushed. Ad runs for 30 days, full community information on webpage. Phone interviews are done within 2 weeks. Candidate to Town within 60 days; 30 days to discuss and then comprehensive background checks are completed.

Councilor Murphy asked how marketing materials are development and what strategies are used to ensure transparency.

Mr. Gould noted preliminary interviews are done in executive session, names are kept confidential for as long as possible.

Mr. Mercier noted that essays are done for serious applicants to determine how they would solve a problem.

Mr. Gould added that there would be 3 to 5 essay questions targeted around Bridgewater issues, want an engaged candidate.

Councilor Murphy thanked Municipal Resources Inc. for submitting their proposal and joining the interviews.

b) **7:45pm to 8:30pm**
Groux-White Consulting, LLC.
Richard J. White, Principal

In attendance for Groux-White Consulting, LLC was Richard White. The interview began at 7:45pm with each member of the Ad Hoc Committee introducing themselves and their role within the Town.

Mr. White introduced himself and gave a brief update. His daughter attended BSU so he has some knowledge of Bridgewater, invest efforts into town, style and approach is the real challenge, use farming metaphor. Go to community and network with people. Offer 18 month guarantee.

Councilor Chase asked Groux-White to discuss examples of Town Council/Town Manager structures among clients for whom their firm had successfully placed candidates.

Mr. White noted that both Winthrop and Southbridge have Town Council and hired them twice. Need a Town Manager who builds strong relationships, has worked with town who have had bad recruits, need to understand the town.

Councilor Perry asked Groux-White how extensive their firm's professional network is and how will their firm use them to bring qualified candidates to Bridgewater.

Mr. White noted that he was an officer in the MMA and has a large network. Have had 30 interns and 20 are sitting managers who he calls upon for help or to make recommendations. Send out emails, letters, updates website.

Councilor Robinson asked Groux-White to share some specific examples of gathering community input and how those insights were used in a Town Manager search.

Mr. White noted that he would create surveys for community feedback and talk to people who could provide feedback.

Mr. Fitzgibbons asked about the timeline and if it was a fair assessment.

Mr. White noted that he would need 6 weeks to get stuff done, pool and quality of pool. Holidays will be in the middle of this process so could be hard to gather a quorum of the screening committee. Works closely with the Council President and is very responsive to all questions that may arise.

Councilor Murphy asked how marketing materials are development and what strategies are used to ensure transparency.

Mr. White noted that he works with the town, he is their staff. Candidates have a lot of risk, asks for confidentiality. Will have public hearings but craft whatever process or strategy without giving details of the candidates.

Councilor Murphy thanked Municipal Resources Inc. for submitting their proposal and joining the interviews.

The interview with Mr. White ended at 8:16pm so Councilor Murphy asked for a 12 minutes break until the next interview session began.

c) **8:30pm to 9:15pm**
Community Paradigm Associates, LLC
John Petrin, Senior Associate
Julie Jacobson, Senior Associate

In attendance for Community Paradigm Associates was John Petrin and Julie Jacobson. The interview began at 8:30pm with each member of the Ad Hoc Committee introducing themselves and their role within the Town.

Mr. Petrin introduced himself and thanked the committee for the opportunity to interview. Mr. Petrin noted that Community Paradigm was formed in 2014 by Bernie Lynch. Mr. Lynch had a 35 year career in local government and is familiar with council/manager form of government. Mr. Petrin also noted that they have a communication expert who would work with the Town and is heavily involved with reference and background checks.

Ms. Jacobson noted that she was recently retired (1.5 years) from being Auburn MA first Town Manager (12 years) and has 38 years of experience in local government. Has been with the firm since retirement and has been involved in 10 searches.

Councilor Chase asked Community Paradigm to discuss examples of Town Council/Town

Manager structures among clients for whom their firm had successfully placed candidates.

Mr. Petrin noted that Watertown, Winthrop and East Longmeadow are council/manager format and they worked on those. Also noted that their firm does 60% of all searches in MA. Councilor Perry asked Community Paradigm how extensive their firm's professional network is and how will their firm use them to bring qualified candidates to Bridgewater.

Ms. Jacobson noted that many in the firm were active in MMA and MMMA; stay in touch and involved with many town managers in the state. Have an extensive database.

Councilor Robinson asked Community Paradigm to share some specific examples of gathering community input and how those insights were used in a Town Manager search

Mr. Petrin noted that they will speak with each member of the council and put together a questionnaire, council/town goals/projects. Will meet with Department Heads to understand what is happening and noted that a community survey works best.

Ms. Jacobson added that it was important to meet with department heads, council and community to incorporate feedback into the recruitment process.

Mr. Fitzgibbons asked about the timeline and if it was a fair assessment.

Mr. Petrin noted that it comes down to the accessibility of the screening committee to do interviews. Try to identify dates early; 16 week process. First is to speak with each councilor, up against the holidays. Will discuss timelines if hired.

Councilor Murphy asked how marketing materials are development and what strategies are used to ensure transparency.

Mr. Petrin noted that they will draft a citizen input survey and work with council on it. Role is to help understand position, transparent all the way through.

Councilor Murphy thanked Community Paradigm Associates for submitting their proposal and joining the interviews.

E. NEXT STEPS

Councilor Murphy noted that the next Town Manager Preliminary Screening Ad Hoc Committee will be taking place on Monday, October 28th at 7:00pm via Zoom.

F. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Donna Jewel, 50 Keith Place: thanked the committee for the meeting tonight, thought it was good. Only comment as that the first firm recruited the Town Manager away from the town.

G. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Chase made a motion to adjourn the Town Council meeting which was seconded by Councilor Murphy.

A roll-call vote was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Chase – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Robinson – Yea; Perry – Yea; McGrath – Yea and Linde – Yea.
Motion Passed 6-0.

Councilor Perry made a motion to adjourn the Town Manager Preliminary Screening Ad Hoc Committee meeting which was seconded by Councilor Robinson.

A roll-call vote was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Fitzgibbons – Yea; Chase – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Robinson – Yea.
Motion Passed 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:06pm.

In accordance with the applicable provisions of the Town of Bridgewater Home Rule Charter and Town Council Rules and Procedures, the Town Manager Preliminary Screening Ad Hoc Committee assembled voted, at their meeting on Tuesday, October 28, 2024, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted.