



TOWN OF KINGSTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
OPEN SESSION
MINUTES
TOWN HOUSE-26 EVERGREEN ST. ROOM 200 & VIA ZOOM
AUGUST 31, 2023

5:30 PM – CALL TO ORDER – ROOM 200

Chairman Kimberley Emborg called to order the meeting of the Board of Selectmen at 5:34 PM—selectmen in attendance: Donald Alcombright (virtual), Sheila Vaughn, and Eric Crone.

Staff Present: Gloria Mitchell, Assistant Town Administrator; Patricia Tucker, Assistant to the Town Administrator and the Board of Selectmen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- This meeting is recorded. Anyone intending to make an audio or video recording of this meeting should notify the Chair at this time.
- Financial Assistance Applications are available on the Town's website or by calling the Selectmen's Office.
- The Kingston Public Library will be closed on Friday, September 1, in preparation for the installation of new carpeting and will reopen on Tuesday, September 5, at 10 AM. Any delays to the reopening will be posted on the library website and social media. Please note that the book return will not be available from the 1st through the 5th, so we ask patrons to hold onto your materials until after the library reopens on September 5.

The meeting was opened with a roll call vote as Mr. Alcombright is virtual.

OPEN FORUM:

APPOINTMENTS:

Interview Police Chief Recruitment Firms

5:30 PM - MUNICIPAL RESOURCES, INC. (MRI)

Sean F. Kelly, Director of Police Services, provided his background, which included being a retired chief of police and having been with MRI for the last four years.

Mr. Kelly said that Municipal Resources, Inc. has 30 years of experience with public sector executive recruitment, and he discussed that their record for helping towns identify and select candidates with the right "fit" is impressive. Because of the scope of services offered by MRI across the region and our many contacts, particularly in Massachusetts, MRI can leverage those contacts to recruit quality candidates directly.

Mr. Kelly described to the Board the process MRI takes during recruitment.

Work with the Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator, community stakeholders, and designated key staff as needed to review the recruitment process and work toward developing a custom-crafted recruitment and selection process for Kingston.

MRI can interview other key officials, as identified by the Board of Selectmen, to include but may not be limited to the Town Administrator or other key stakeholders identified by the client. MRI will also open an e-mail address for this specific recruitment to provide electronic community input if the client requests.

Mr. Kelly discussed that MRI could administer a one-day assessment center that would have the candidates do exercises

most appropriately for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate.

Mr. Crone asked if the Town should have an assessment of the police department before hiring a chief.

Mr. Kelly stated it would depend on the desired outcomes and may help determine short-term and long-term assessments.

Mr. Alcombright asked what Mr. Kelly suggested as to when the study of the department should happen, and it was answered that it could be done at any time.

Ms. Emberg asked the following questions to all the firms:

- MRI's proposal indicates 12-14 weeks; can this be accelerated if necessary?
 - Yes
- What is the typical time for a currently employed chief to give notice to their current community:
 - Typically, 30 days.
- What do you find the most challenging part of these searches:
 - The pool of candidates has been shallow in the last two years, and in the previous 6-8 months, it has improved dramatically.
- Have you ever had a placement that didn't work? Why didn't it work out, and did you change your process
 - ?
 - One of the services MRI provides is an assistance package, which is a bare minimum package for recruitment; this particular community chose this package. The chosen individual was from out of state, and the candidate couldn't pass the physical test in the state.
 - No, MRI informs each community of all requirements when moving forward.
- Your process includes designating key staff to review the recruitment process and develop a custom-crafted recruitment and selection process for Kingston. What have you done in other communities to determine who those key staff will be and who is typically included?
 - The Board of Selectmen decides; it could be anyone from Police, Fire, Public Works, etc.
- After the assessment center of the top candidates, your proposal mentions that a follow-up written report can be provided if we request it. Is there an added cost?
 - Yes, it can be provided at no added cost.

Ms. Vaughn mentioned she would like the school resources officers and maybe the superintendent to be part of the process.

6:15 PM - BADGEQUEST INC

Dylan Cogswell introduced himself and spoke about BadgeQuest, which consists of individuals with unique technical skills, integrity, and a deep commitment to public safety. The lead consultant is a retired Chief of Police and attorney with extensive experience in personnel management. All assessment team members have been or are currently Police Chiefs with considerable expertise in Police personnel management and the Assessment Center process.

Mr. Cogswell discussed the process for BadgeQuest, which includes a Written narrative as a series of questions and an informal interview step. After that initial review, there is an Assessment center with the top 5 candidates and an analysis of the community and department.

If requested, BadgeQuest will provide a survey for employees and community members to offer their input.

The panel used by BadgeQuest is three retired chiefs, and they assess them.

Ms. Emberg asked the following questions to all the firms:

- BadgeQuest proposal indicates 15-17 weeks; can this be accelerated if necessary?
 - Yes, by reducing the in-person interviews.
- What do you find the most challenging part of these searches:

- Initial interest and the pool of candidates are low but have been trending to improve.
- Have you ever had a placement that didn't work? Why didn't it work out, and did you change your process?
 - Yes, one candidate didn't take the position after it was offered.
- Your process includes designating key staff to review the recruitment process and develop a custom-crafted recruitment and selection process for Kingston. What have you done in other communities to determine who those key staff will be and who is typically included?
 - This can vary by community and can be anyone that the Board decides on.
- After the assessment center of the top candidates, your proposal mentions that a follow-up written report can be provided if we request it. Is there an added cost?
 - Yes, there is no added cost.

The Board held a brief recess until 7:15 PM.

7:15 PM - PUBLIC SAFETY CONSULTANTS

Russ Stevens provided his background as well as Public Safety Consultants.

PSC offers over 18 years of progressive public sector consulting experience with a concentration in public safety management and human resources, including recruitment, testing, and assessment centers. They understand the uniqueness of Kingston, as well as the requirements of the Chief's position.

We have provided consulting services for over 180 Massachusetts communities and conducted and participated in over 500 assessment centers (over 200 Civil Service Assessment Centers) and supervisory promotional processes in the Civil and non-civil Service Massachusetts public safety departments.

Mr. Stevens said that PSC wants to learn about the department and the Town, what makes Kingston unique, and find the right fit.

PSC learns about the Town and the community by talking with designated people, union members, and employees. Then, they will work with the Town to create a job announcement and sell the Town to get the right candidate to come to Town.

There will be essay questions specific to Kingston.

Ms. Vaughn asked about the timeline, and Mr. Stevens provided the steps of how the timeline works and stated there would be plenty of time.

Mr. Stevens discussed that the Town would do the advertising, and Mr. Stevens would work with HR.

Ms. Emberg asked the following questions to all the firms:

- PSC proposal indicates 12 weeks; can this be accelerated if necessary?
 - Yes, but this will be plenty of time.
- What is the typical time for a currently employed chief to give notice to their current community?
 - No more than 30 days.
- What do you find the most challenging part of these searches?
 - Working with a committee as everyone has a different opinion, finding common ground.
- Have you ever had a placement that didn't work? Why didn't it work out, and did you change your process?
 - Yes, it was a personality issue with a town manager.
- Your process includes designating key staff to review the recruitment process and develop a custom-crafted recruitment and selection process for Kingston. Ms. Emberg recommends one or two members from the Board as the primary point of contact for the search.
 - There is no issue with that.
- Who have other communities chosen to include in the informal interview process, and whom do you recommend?
 - Each Town is different and has chosen someone from the dispatch, the Town Administrator, Department

heads, and someone from the schools.

- After the assessment center of the top candidates, your proposal mentions that a follow-up written report can be provided if we request it. Is there an added cost?
 - Yes, with no added cost

Mr. Crone asked, out of all the applicants you have been getting, what percentage are existing chiefs vs. lieutenants. Mr. Stevens, it all depends on the Town, and a seated chief typically will stay.

The Board had no other comments. The Board will reconvene at another date to vote on their decisions.

SELECTMEN COMMENTS:

Motion by Mr. Crone, second by Ms. Vaughn, and a 4-0-0 vote,
VOTE: I move to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Tucker
Assistant to the Town Administrator/Board of Selectmen

Documents used at the meeting:

Agenda