

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
January 27, 2016

THE WAYNESVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN held a special called meeting on Wednesday, January 27, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. in the conference room of the Municipal Building, 16 South Main Street, Waynesville, NC.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. with the following members present:

Mayor Gavin Brown
Alderman Gary Caldwell
Alderman Jon Feichter
Alderman Julia Freeman
Alderman LeRoy Roberson

The following staff members were present:

Marcy Onieal, Town Manager
Amie Owens, Town Clerk

Others Present:

Hartwell Wright, NC League of Municipalities, HR Division

The following media representatives were present:

Mary Ann Enloe, the Mountaineer

1. Welcome

Mayor Gavin Brown welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to begin discussion of the process for hiring a town manager.

Mayor Brown explained he had talked with Hartwell Wright before and asked for assistance from the NC League of Municipalities in beginning the search for a new town manager.

Hartwell Wright, NC League of Municipalities, HR Division noted that some members may be at a slight disadvantage if they had never been involved in this process, but he would like to assist in developing the understanding of the group. He noted that his overview will be basic not meant to demean anyone's intelligence. Goal is that when the board leaves this meeting, that a process will be in place for moving forward and the group finds the information useful in accomplishing that. Mr. Wright questioned if an interim manager had been named. Mayor Brown responded, yes, Mike Morgan had been appointed at the meeting on January 26th.

Mr. Wright provided information about managers in NC noting that as the board begins its selection process for a new town manager there are currently 41 entities looking for a

manager or executive director at this time. It is probable that Waynesville will be competing with other municipalities for managers.

Mr. Wright added that he had two rules for this meeting: 1) interrupt with questions at the time you have the question and 2) there were no more rules. This is meant to be a very informal conversation style meeting.

Mr. Wright explained the League's role in the process is to provide assistance; the League will not get involved in the hiring process. He added that this is a three step process - recruit, assessment, and hiring and the first decision to make is if the Town will do the process internally, or if a consultant or firm will be engaged to handle the process. Mr. Wright reminded the board that above all else, confidentiality during the process is paramount. At any time the confidentiality is broken, it is your responsibility to inform the candidate(s).

The board members agreed by consensus that the process would be conducted by a consultant.

Mr. Wright then discussed with the group what to look for in a consultant and the importance of unity of the board. This is the most important decision that will be made during time in office. The manager is the ambassador and face of the town. Manager works for the board as a whole, not individuals on the board. If candidate sees division in the board, they will move on.

Mr. Wright provided information on the development of a profile for the consultant to use in the recruitment of a town manager including education, salary, experience and board-collective desired traits. He cautioned against using absolute terms such as must or required; use language such as preferred. Mr. Wright encouraged open honest discussion of such traits and preferences when building the profile and suggested use of local media throughout the process to keep citizens informed about the process. Outline the process and so that the citizens know what you are doing.

Mr. Wright also noted that it is important for a consultant to give responses to all that apply, even if someone does not qualify as a professional courtesy at every stage in the process. He suggested using an application as it will provide additional information than a resume and provides information such as previous employers, references and confirmation that all is correct with signature attestation.

Mr. Wright instructed that once candidate pool is established (5 to 7) it is possible to have interviews via alternative methods such as skype or telephone. Alderman Feichter commented that paper only tells you so much. Mr. Wright noted that leaving the option open for the board to interject in the process is recommended. The consultants will do assessment but the key is to be sure that they do it to the level that the board requires.

Mayor Brown asked how does the Board choose a consultant. Mr. Wright explained that an RFP may be of benefit. A listing of consultants is available from the NCLM; the NCLM does not make recommendations as to any preferred consultant. Mr. Wright will email the listing to the board.

While the final decision is the board's, the consultant can take care of the reference checks. Mr. Wright cautioned against internal consulting firm background checks alone; do federal background check as well as driving, financial and criminal. Hiring firm that utilizes these checks or a private firm to do them allows for mitigation of the risk to the town.

Mayor Brown asked about citizen input on criteria for building the profile. Mr. Wright explained that based on the confidentiality of the process, the liability is greater with citizens on the interview panel. His advice was to develop a plan and work that plan – do not waiver based on citizen pressures. He also added that it is imperative that all members need to receive information at the same time. Not one at a time. The consultant should be instructed that no one member is allowed to have information – it goes out to all even if only one requests it.

Mayor Brown asked about employee input. Mr. Wright explained that employees can have thoughts about what they are looking for and the consultants may ask leadership team about what traits they are looking for in a manager. Finalists could meet the department directors if that is agreed upon, but again candidates need to know in advance and department directors must uphold strict confidentiality. Mayor Brown asked about input from former town managers or the interim manager. Mr. Wright noted that the interim manager is a good resource but that no input from former managers should be requested except possibly during the profile building.

Mayor Brown commented that this is the only employee that the board hires and it is very important. The consultant's role is to determine the technical/competency traits, it is the board that will choose and interview for the position. Mr. Wright added that at the time of final interviews, each board member should fill out an evaluation form for each candidate. This will allow for discussion of areas where there may be differences.

Alderman Feichter asked about the cost of a consultant. Mr. Wright answered that consultants average from \$20,000 to \$30,000 for services. Alderman Feichter continued by asking how do you make the offer? Mr. Wright added that this is something that you can work with the consultant on. Once you agree on what the offer is you can allow the consultant to help negotiate. Mr. Wright noted that it is imperative to have the town attorney review the offer letter before you send it and to have the attorney review any contract submitted by the candidate.

Mayor Brown clarified with the Board that all were clear on what the next steps were going to be related to hiring of a town manager. All acknowledged they understood.

Alderman Roberson noted that the board needed to choose a consulting firm first and then develop the profile. Alderman Feichter added that putting out an RFP for consultants will take some time. Mr. Wright agreed and suggested that after the RFP was developed and sent out that face-to-face meetings with the managing consultant be held. Mayor Brown asked if there should be some concrete timelines/deadlines developed. Mr. Wright noted that the first step is to select a consultant; he suggested allowing enough time to review/interview consultants before choosing.

Alderman Feichter inquired who builds the RFP. Mr. Wright explained that he had a generic template document available but that the specifics would be developed by this Board and indicated that the interim manager would also be an excellent resource for this document. Mayor Brown volunteered to work with Mr. Morgan to get a draft prepared for the board. The board agreed that they would like to begin this process as soon as possible and have an RFP ready within the next two weeks, if possible.

The board members agreed by consensus that this was the best plan of action and all were supportive of this plan.

2. ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

ATTEST

Gavin A. Brown, Mayor

Amanda W. Owens, Town Clerk