

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN Special Meeting Minutes

Board of Selectmen
40 Old Farms Road
Wilmington, CT 06279
(860) 487-3100
(860) 487-3103 Fax
www.wilmingtonct.org

Town Office Building
Selectmen's Conference Room

February 26, 2019
5:30 PM

First Selectwoman Wiecenski called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM with Selectmen Makuch & Blessington and residents.

A. Board approval of hiring for Account Analyst Position

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that Bekah Rupert, who filled that position, has resigned and the normal procedure that the town follows is that the position is posted internally for 5 days to solicit interest internally within the union. Once the 5 day period ends, we then advertise for up to 2 weeks. She clarified that there is a process within our personnel policy which states: *In cases where the First Selectman shall determine the prior service of a current town employee properly qualifies him /her for promotion to a vacant position, the First Selectman may waive the above requirements and make a direct promotional appointment with the approval of the Board of Selectmen.* She then stated that we have an employee who is qualified and upon recommendation of herself and the Business Manager would like to proceed without seeking from the outside. The person is currently serving as an Elected Official and a town employee and in order for us to move forward and make an offer, this Board will need to approve this.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that we are talking about the positions that the employee currently serves in and in order for item number 1 to happen, we also have to look at item number 2 as well. The employee would have to resign from the Treasurer position as well as her position in Human Services, if she is hired for the Account Analyst position.

Selectman Blessington said that he isn't really worried about the Human Services position right now. Finding a Treasurer is rather difficult – when we got Tish in this position several years ago, it was hard enough to find someone at the time. Now we find ourselves having to find another Treasurer.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve to have the First Selectman waive the requirements of advertising the position outside as we have a qualified candidate who has submitted an application for the position.

Selectwoman Makuch seconded the motion.

Selectwoman Makuch said the motion is to not post the 2 week advertisement. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that we posted the internal union position for the required 5 days as outlined in the union contract. Then after that posting, the personnel policy states: *if the vacancy is a professional or semi-professional/technical position, it shall be advertised in a minimum of two publications. The position may also be placed in other publications including trade publications. The advertisement for the position shall be in print a combined total of a minimum of 5 days. Announcements shall specify the title and salary range of the position the nature of the work performed, the desired qualification of applicants, the closing date for receiving applications and other information as required.*

Selectwoman Makuch then stated that it was posted internally and no one in the union applied. Because we have a qualified applicant in house, do we decide that we don't need to continue with the recruitment process? First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that the personnel policy states that we can promote within if it is approved by the Board of Selectmen. Selectwoman Makuch then asked First Selectwoman Wiecenski if that is her recommendation. First Selectwoman Wiecenski said yes, she is qualified; she is familiar in the office and knows our software. The concern about the Treasurer position should be a separate issue. She then stated that she and the Business Manager both feel Ms. Ignatowicz is the most qualified person to fill this position and recommend that she be offered the job.

Selectman Blessington said she is qualified, but again, something about this does not seem right. We always seem to have to find the most qualified person for the position – how is this going to work? WE are going to offer the position to her she is going to resign as Treasurer, or will we wait to find a new Treasurer before she resigns?

First Selectwoman Wiecenski said that the Treasurer position is elected, so we would have to find a replacement and appoint the new person; who would fill the position until the next election. She then also clarified that Ms. Ignatowicz's term was already to expire at this election as well.

Selectwoman Makuch said if she is a qualified applicant and the hiring body would like to have her in that position, the point for her to resign as Treasurer is moot.

Selectman Blessington said you don't apply for the Treasurer position, it is elected and you run for it with the intention to stay there until the term is done. That is part of his problem; you sort of expect the person to stay until the term ends. Selectwoman Makuch warned that you can't fault her for this – a job opportunity has become available. First Selectwoman Wiecenski agreed; noting that she could terminate the Treasurer position to leave us for a job somewhere else. She added that this is not a one-time thing, where someone has left an elected position mid-term. While this is an important position to fill,

Peter Tanaka then stated most of the time when you are hiring internally, the reason behind it is because it is driven by the union contract. If you are hiring for a position that is not demanded to fill internally (via the union) are you looking for a qualified person, or THE most qualified person? Should you be opening the job up to a public search anyways? First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified that this person is highly qualified and can fill the position most adequately. The Business Manager is backing this person for this position. First Selectwoman Wiecenski then cautioned that she cannot skip the process without getting approval from this Board.

Selectwoman Makuch said she is wavering on this. She sees the benefit of opening this up to accept external applications – it doesn't marry us to have to interview anyone. If we collect applications for 5 days and don't find anyone with the qualifications that Tish has, then we can move at that point. A week of lost time is not awesome, however, she doesn't see the harm in opening it up. Then we will not need special permission. First Selectwoman Wiecenski reiterated that we have a candidate who is interested and is the most qualified to fill the position and it is almost insulting to say that we think she is ok but we are going to open this up to see if we can find someone better than you. Selectman Blessington then warned if we have to fill the Treasurer position, that person will have to be a resident of Willington.

Carl Pierson of Fermier Road said you cannot up and post for a temporary Treasurer within a 5 day period. He then clarified that this is an elected position you are talking about.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski then clarified that we wouldn't even advertise for the Treasurer position and we are not even talking about that right now. That is a totally separate discussion. Selectman Blessington agreed and said that would have to be handled differently. The only thing he is trying to settle in his mind if we are going to go ahead and hire Tish for this position, is how we are going to handle the situation because he cannot rush hiring her in this position while she is still Treasurer. He said he feels this is not right.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski agreed that she would have to resign as Treasurer and reiterated that the first motion on the table is to ask if the Board approves the First Selectman to waive the requirements to make a direct promotional appointment. Once we deal with that, then we can work on the Treasurer position. Selectman Blessington stated that he wants to know how the second issue (item B) is going to be handled before he approves the first. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated if we have someone in an elected position who is leaving for any reason; we have no control when they leave. In this case, however it seems as if we are trying to marry them together but they are two separate issues.

Selectman Blessington said he wants it on record here that she cannot assume the accounting position until such time she has resigned and is no longer Treasurer. If we can do that then he said he will go along with the first part. First Selectwoman Wiecenski agreed noting that she feels that would be a condition of employment for the accounting position. Selectwoman Makuch was also in agreement; noting why the treasurer position is item number 2 on the agenda.

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiecenski, Makuch & Blessington) 0 No.

B. Discussion of Treasurer position -- potential vacancy

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that she appreciates the conversation that was just held. When we offer this position to Tish, she will have to resign as Treasurer. After having a conversation with the Town Attorney, there is no legal precedent that keeps the treasurer from being an employee of the town, but there is a concern with her performing duties in the accounting office; the expenditure side and the revenue side. The Town Attorney stated that it is not good accounting practice for her to fill both positions.

One of the things we could do (as an option) - Tish would have to resign in her Treasurer position but is it possible to have her fulfil some of those duties in a very finite amount of time that would have to be documented and have another level of oversight in that finite amount of time as well- until we find a replacement. The combination would be that Ms. Ignatowicz would work as the Account Analyst for 32 hours per week and then perform the Treasurer duties for the remaining 8 hours per week. First Selectwoman Wiecenski added that she is not saying that we have to do this, but temporarily so we do not have an empty seat in the Treasurer position. She then reiterated that the Town Attorney does not find a conflict with this recommendation; so long as it is temporary. The Business Manager was also in agreement with the temporary option.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she told Donna that she would run this by both the Selectmen and Board of Finance; to see if they would be in agreement with it. Otherwise, we will have to leave the Treasurer position vacant and seek a replacement from the party in which the elected official belongs; which currently is the Democratic Party and then the Selectmen would appoint the replacement until the November election. She added at this point she is not sure who would be willing to serve the term (from either party; Democrats or Republicans) and what will we do in the meantime? She then cautioned that we are in the midst of budget season; the Treasurer is slated to present [her] budget next week to the Board of Finance and revenue is still coming in to the town.

Selectman Blessington just asked if he did not just vote at the previous item on the agenda that he would not be in favor of Tish working the new position and Treasurer. He then said that this is not an option. First Selectwoman Wiecenski then stated that is fine then; she reiterated that she was merely throwing out a suggestion on a temporary solution. She added that she would not move on that direction at all without discussing with the Selectmen and Board of Finance; noting that this is a very important position and we cannot have a gap on one side or another.

Selectman Blessington said as long as there are things that a Treasurer has to do, and right now, if she goes, she goes and we won't have anyone to do those things. He added that he would like to hold that we cannot let her resign as Treasurer until we have a replacement. He added that 9 years ago, we positively could not find anyone

in town who would fill the Treasurer position, until we found Tish. He then suggested that the Democrats and Republicans look for someone who is qualified together to fill it as not just anyone can be appointed.

Selectwoman Makuch suggested giving a two week notice between the two positions; which would give her time to close up loose ends. First Selectwoman Wiecenski cautioned that we are going to leave ourselves in a hole somewhere. Selectman Blessington then said we have gotten along without anyone filling this position for quite a while before; there is no reason we cannot do it again. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated if we have a choice, she would rather not and we cannot require Tish to give 2 weeks' notice from her elected position. Selectwoman Makuch reiterated if we gave 2 weeks that might give the Democrats time to come up with someone to fill the position. She added that she thinks it is fair to give the 2 weeks; as that is usually standard practice anywhere else; it would give us time to notify the party to see what they come up with.

Carl Pearson asked if it would be possible for the Business Manager to perform the work of the Treasurer in the meantime until it is filled? First Selectwoman Wiecenski cautioned it would be the same issue whether it be the Business Manager or the Account Analyst. Selectman Blessington then reiterated that he doesn't see why we can't just leave the Analyst position vacant until we can replace the Treasurer. First Selectwoman Wiecenski warned that she would not advocate for that --, especially this time of year (budget season) where our Business Manager is stretched pretty thin as it is with her own duties and attending all of the various meetings. The last time this happened was also very stressful and she pointed out that we are talking about a union position; where we are limited with who can provide those services. If the parties come to us with someone (to fill the Treasurer position) soon, then that would be good. Peter Tanaka asked if the DTC has been notified of the potential vacancy. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that they have been alerted that it was a possibility. Selectman Blessington stated that the Republicans had also been notified that there is a potential vacancy and might have someone who is interested if the Democrats cannot find anyone; noting that the RTC believes in the concept that the party who won the election has first choice to fill it with a qualified person. Selectman Blessington said he is not too worried about the political issue with that; as the Treasurer is not really political.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she understands Selectman Blessington's concerns and is fine with that. Selectwoman Makuch agreed and said the only question would be when she will resign and take the new position. Hopefully she will have some time to wrap up the Treasurer duties before she takes on the new position. First Selectwoman Wiecenski said that she believes Tish will leave the position in good standing.

Selectman Blessington said if we can find someone to fill the Treasurer position he is hopeful that they would be able to meet with Tish beforehand as well.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she will present the discussions to Tish and will also hold a discussion with the Democrats to see if they can find someone; and if not, she will encourage them to speak with the Republicans.

Selectman Blessington moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:10 PM

Selectwoman Makuch seconded the motion.

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiecenski, Makuch & Blessington) 0 No.

Respectfully Submitted:

Robin Campbell

Recording Secretary

TOWN OF WILLINGTON, CT

Received for record February 28, 2019
At 2:00pm Marianne Agostini